

Rural Health Coordinating Council

Minutes | July 18, 2019

Oregon Dental Association | Wilsonville

Call to Order

Wayne Endersby, Chair, called to order the July 2019 meeting of the Rural Health Coordinating Council (RHCC) at 10 am.

Roll Call

RHCC Members

Donald Benschoter, DMD, Oregon Dental Association; Linda Callahan, PhD, PMHNP, Oregon Nurses Association; Bruce Carlson, MD, Oregon Medical Association; Wayne Endersby, Oregon EMS Association; Kristen Plunkett, ND, Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Curt Stilp, EdD, PA-C, Oregon Health & Science University; and Allison Whisenhunt, Consumer — Oregon HSA #1.

Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) Staff

Rebecca Dobert, Robert Duehmig, and Eric Jordan

Guests

Jennifer Lewis-Goff, Oregon Dental Association, Jackie Yerby, Office of Governor Kate Brown

Approval of July 2019 Agenda

Approval of the July 2019 Agenda as written, but with fluidity around the schedule of Jackie Yerby, was moved by Dr. Carlson, seconded by Ms. Callahan, and approved unanimously.

Approval of April 2019 Minutes

Approval of the April 2019 Minutes as written was moved by Ms. Callahan, seconded by Ms. Whisenhunt, and approved unanimously.

EMS Listening Tour Update

Ms. Dobert presented an update on the Rural and Frontier EMS Listening Tour, funded by a supplemental Flex grant. The primary goal of this listening tour is ensuring access to quality emergency medical care in rural communities. The timing of the tour dovetails with a 3-year data collection project of the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) EMS/Trauma Division.

Utilizing existing data, a scoring matrix was utilized across registered agencies, with the tour focusing on a mixture of those which scored higher and lower. 35 stakeholders and agencies participated in the 10 meetings held by the tour. The top reported challenges were recruiting and training; reliance on a volunteer model and unpaid personnel; billing and reimbursement barriers; and maintain communications and equipment. Most of the higher scoring agencies were either hospital-based and/or located in a health district, meaning they had a better source of funding, support staff, and Medical Directors.

The next steps are a final report, with publication anticipated in early September 2019. A summary report was presented to State EMS Committee on July 12. The full report will be presented at an October meeting, a presentation is scheduled for the West Region National Association of State EMS Officials meeting in early October, and the published report will be distributed to state and federal legislators, state EMS policymakers and organizational leaders.

ORH Updates

Staff Changes

Mr. Duehmig informed the RHCC that he has been named Interim Director of ORH following former ORH Director Scott Ekblad's retirement. The search for a new Director of Field Services is in the process of interviewing candidates.

Loan Repayment and Forgiveness Programs Update

Mr. Duehmig presented updated numbers on the various loan repayment and forgiveness programs administered by ORH, outlining the overall growth of the various programs.

ORH Staff Report

Highlighted by Mr. Duehmig:

- The ORH is awaiting approval on the new RHC Manager within the Field Services team. Once we have that approval, we will begin the interview process for that position.
- Ms. Potter has been working on finishing up on the last Forum on Aging, and moving forward with the upcoming Rural Health Conference.
- Mr. Jordan has been working on wrapping up our web site changes, which persist due to the new technology.
- Ms. Hubbard has transitioned to writing content for our social media accounts and newsletters.
- Ms. Reed has been working one-on-one on new placements with sites and practitioners.
- The Field Services team has been doing outstanding work, all without a Field Services Director.

ORH Event Updates

Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

The recent Forum in Lincoln City was well attended and based on the evaluations, quite successful. Planning for the next one is underway and will be at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes in Bend in May 2020.

Oregon Rural Health Conference

Registration and room blocks are open. We hope for 350 attendees this year.

Jackie Yerby – Governor’s Office

Ms. Yerby, Deputy Health Policy Advisor to Governor Kate Brown, outlined her role and responsibilities within the Governor’s Office.

There is a ballot referral for 2020 which will levy a tax on tobacco and vape sales. A coalition might form around this, and if so, they might reach out to the RHCC for inclusion and/or support.

Other topics which might come up in the short session in 2020 are closing exemption loopholes for vaccines, Hepatitis C elimination, and mental health availability expansion. There will hopefully be more on these topics by October 2019.

Legislature/Policy Update

- The EMSP Tax Credit was continued unchanged.
- \$17.7 million was approved for the Provider Incentive Fund, with \$9.2 million for the HOWTO Program.
- The Office of Broadband was created using existing funds and staff to bolster broadband Internet state-wide. The Universal Service Fund for broadband was unfortunately shot down.

RHCC Member Reports

Donald Benschoter, DMD, Oregon Dental Association

Umatilla County received HOWTO grants for two training positions.

Linda Callahan, PhD, PMHNP, Oregon Nurses Association

The rural OHSU campus in Klamath Falls has been a great learning environment over its 3 years of existence, as the population there really bears out a great swath of determinants for rural health care. We are now looking at addressing long-term measures – such as the effects of social isolation – in addition to the short-term ones we’ve been focusing on.

Bruce Carlson, MD, Oregon Medical Association

The recent physician hires at the hospital in Pendleton have already moved on to another site elsewhere. The Eastern Oregon IPA has a new Executive Director.

The community paramedicine program in Hermiston showed up recently at a community meeting, and were awarded \$20,000 at that meeting. They will require a great deal more than that to remain solvent.

The Umatilla Fire Department gave their ambulance to the Hermiston station due to lack of volunteers in Umatilla.

Kristen Plunkett, ND, Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians

The pay parity bill did not pass the legislature this year. There is good support to move it through or at least forward in next year’s session.

Curt Stilp, EdD, PA-C, Oregon Health & Science University

Oregon AHEC is at about the half-way point in their 5-year grant. We are launching another cohort of approximately 80 students. There are summer camps keeping us busy at the regional AHECs.

Allison Whisenhunt, Consumer — Oregon HSA #1

We were worried about a second CCO coming into Columbia County, but they've done great work in bringing in a paramedic. The behavioral health support in rural counties is still really lacking in many ways, especially substance abuse treatment. Telehealth is showing great results, especially for those with travel as a barrier.

Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

New Business/Public Input

The October RHCC telephonic meeting conflicts with a required conference for Mr. Duehmig, so will be moved from the 17th to the 24th of October.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 PM.