

Rural Health Coordinating Council

Minutes | October 24, 2019

Telephone Meeting | ORH Conference Line

Call to Order

Mr. Duehmig called to order the October 2019 meeting of the Rural Health Coordinating Council (RHCC) at 10:05 am.

Roll Call

RHCC Members

Donald Benschoter, DMD, Oregon Dental Association; Kathy Ottele, Consumer Member, HSA#2; Kristen Plunkett, ND, Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Curt Stilp, EdD, PA-C, Oregon Health & Science University; Claire Tranchese, OPCA; Allison Whisenhunt, Consumer — Oregon HSA #1; Nancy Wiley, Oregon Board of Pharmacy.

Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) Staff

Robert Duehmig, Sarah Andersen, Rebecca Dobert, and Laura Potter

Guests

Jackie Yerby, Office of Governor Kate Brown

Approval of October 2019 Agenda

Approval of the October 2019 Agenda – unanimous approval.

Approval of July 2019 Minutes

Approval of the July 2019 Minutes cannot be done since there is no full quorum.

Conference

Thanks to Claire and Allison for attending and helping with the Conference; Mr. Duehmig went through the overall approval ratings for the conference sessions and talked about the return to paper surveys for session. Allows for better collection of data on attendees to sessions; there was a larger number of partners this year than in the past and there he reviewed the various numbers. Attendance was high at the state and ending of the conference and it is attributed to having Patrick Allen, OHA Dir. and Steve Allen, Behavioral Health Dir. as opener and closer for the conference. Rebecca Dobert reported on the RHC Workshop; attendance was at its highest in over three years. Laura Potter gave an overview of the evaluation rates and the ability to crunch data more on who our attendees are. Allison Whisenhunt share her experience. She thought the trick of tickets to encourage doing evaluations helped people stay to the end. Claire Tranchese was able to bring a colleague and especially enjoyed having time with Steve Allen to go over behavioral health issues. Robert stated the challenge every year is what our broad swath of HC professionals are looking for. Any input and ideas are most welcome; ideas for new partnerships always welcome. Two sets of scholarship funding for students: AHEC and TFFF. Our goal is to figure out ways to increase the focus of the conference to

ORH Updates

Staff Changes

Mr. Duehmig informed the RHCC that we have had staff additions: Rondyann Gerst, RHC Program Manager. This is a new position, funded jointly by the Flex and SORH grants that will focus on certified Rural Health Clinics. She will work closely with Rose Locklear on the 2020 Rural and Frontier Listening Tour; Sarah Andersen, new Field Services Director, who will join shortly. Sarah will supervise the ORH Field Team.

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 Event Updates

Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

Planning for the 4th Annual Forum is underway and will be at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes in Bend in May 2020. The 2021 Forum will be in Seaside.

Oregon Rural Health Conference

Planning is underway for the 37th Annual Conference and contract negotiations are underway for the 39th. The conference size means we will probably stay in Central Oregon for the foreseeable future.

National Rural Health Day

- We will be posting the videos of Ron Wyden with the students and sending them out as we have the run up to Nov 21, National Rural Health Day
- The documentary, "The Providers," about how rural New Mexico community works with students to increase rural healthcare and workforce – will be viewable for free soon during the NRHD week
- Comp NW students now do a health fair regularly that they developed in conjunction with NRHD
- If anyone wants to do something, please let us know and we will help
- Providers in schools, students in hospitals, community events to meet providers

Staff reports

- Admin team worked well on logistics for Conference and Forum
- Stacey Reed is doing a great job of working with practice sites
- Sarah Andersen is training Rondyann Gerst
- Rebecca Dobert is winding up the EMS Listening Tour and she will have an increased focus on EMS in this new grant year
- Rose Locklear is working hard on the next Aging Forum and has made a couple of Elder Service Innovation Grant Awards, Klamath County and Rebuild Rogue Valley
- Stacie Rothwell is the person who focuses on improvements in quality measures

Legislature/Policy Update

- Membership meeting of ORHA had conversation about rural provider tax credit, which is due to sunset 2021. Other states are using Oregon's tax credit as a model. It has been around since 1989 and there are those in the legislature who do not see it as an effective tool. Asking for feedback from ORHA membership. Mixed results: many felt that it was effective and could be tweaked to be more effective (limited areas, greater value); others suggested that housing would be a better place for the state to invest in order to encourage providers to practice in rural areas. Probably no changes until full session in 2021.
- Lots of focus at the federal level on a rural health package; we have been working with Senator Wyden, who is working with Sen. Grassley R-Iowa, who is retiring, and who may see this as his legacy. There could be bipartisan support for rural health. However, the impeachment discussions may shut down any bipartisan cooperation. It could perhaps be part of an omnibus bill that will be part of the budget at the end of the year. Will keep RHCC apprised
- Increased focus on mental and behavioral health at state level, in legislature and in the Governor's office. Jackie Yerby: a group is meeting today for the first time, to try to get its arms around behavioral health, particular comorbidities with mental health issues and substance use disorders. Sometimes people can get one visit, but not follow up visits. Not 'severe and consistent' but 'severe and chronic' disorders. Trying to be comprehensive and strategic, as they contemplate the budget process. There have been news articles saying that the Governor is not doing enough to deal with substance use disorders, and they have been trying to tell those reporters that they are going about it deliberately and responsibly because there have to be dollars behind any plan. The committee is staffed by Tina Edlund, 35-member advisory council, and will meet monthly, but most of the work will be done in subgroups meeting monthly (public meetings). New program focused on mental and behavioral health – loan repayment program. Could be as much as \$800,000 - \$900,000 for increasing this workforce.
- Alcohol and Drug group has been working on a plan as well, and the Governor's goal will be to get this into the 2021 budget. There are some legislative committees working on behavioral health as well; Rep Salinas focusing on behavioral health workforce.
- Jackie will send press release for newsletter.
- August 2020, National Association of Rural Mental and Behavioral Health is meeting in Portland.
- If we have interest in having Governor come and speak, we can complete that form on the website and Jackie could work with us; and they could do a proclamation as well.
- Jackie has not seen the National Rural Health Day Proclamation yet.

RHCC Member Reports

Donald Benschoter, DMD, Oregon Dental Association

Have interviewed several advanced practice providers; have not yet landed one. An urgent care clinic has opened up associated with Praxis, staff by two PAs and have a fellow with 20 years of experience helping too. The new family practice clinic says open to all, but he has heard that that may not be so as to Medicaid patients.

Kathy Ottele

Nothing to report but wants to talk with Robert off line about how she can coordinate with us in her capacity as American Cancer Society volunteer.

Kristen Plunkett, ND, Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians

If we are getting rid of tax credits, could we use the funding for relocation? Robert: It is not necessarily going away, though it is coming up for sunset and we do not know what the legislature will do. Conversations about maybe helping providers with down payments on houses, for instance. It is partly complicated because of the clinics' involvement as well.

The Committee had discussion about holding a meeting in conjunction with either the Rural Health Conference or the Aging Forum. The answer will depend on the ORH's ability to make it financially viable. Robert will report back to next meeting.

Claire Tranchese

They are in the process of planning the OPCA HRSA grant application. HRSA has put out 5 areas of interest: Increase access to comprehensive primary care (mental and dental too); accelerating value-based care delivery; foster a workforce to address current and emerging needs; enhance emergency preparedness and response; and advance health care clinical quality and performance – specific metrics for diabetes care, and thinking about diabetes prevention; hypertension, depression, or HIV (chose depression); and social risk factors/ SDoH – how to deal with that data; and development of community partnerships. Trauma-Informed Care conference in Sunriver – huge cross-section of people there. Corrections, foster care, education – all present. Grant deadline is December 10.

Allison Whisenhunt, Consumer — Oregon HSA #1 (might have lost her)

We were worried about a second CCO coming into Columbia County, but they have 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.

Nancy Wiley – Board of Pharmacy

Flu zone high dose – shortages; but it is important that seniors get vaccinated, even if it is not the high dose. No shortages of normal dosage flu vax.

Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

New Business/Public Input

Jackie Yerby: Governor's office is still trying to figure out whether there is a legislative path forward on vaccination, and whether that can happen in the short session. They are focused on carbon pollution legislation so there is a question about whether there is spare attention for vaccination, limited exemptions.

Public Charge rule released by the Dept. of Homeland Security in August to limit access to public services by immigrants. Public Charge concept has been around for a while; last year, the Trump Administration put out a proposed rule, got many comments, mostly opposed, but came out with a new rule anyway. Two national injunctions now in effect so the rule is not in effect. “Any ‘alien’ who is using certain public benefits (SNAP, Medicaid unless pregnant, 60 days post-partum, or under 18) may have that used against them when they apply to change their immigration status.” If seek to extend visa, then ICE can use of such benefits against them. The rule does not affect eligibility at all, but creates negative consequences for use of public benefits. Even though not in effect, profound chilling effect – people are calling to disenrol themselves from various programs. Have RHCC members heard about this in their communities? Jackie can send FAQs. OPCA has many member clinics who serve this population and has heard similar stories of disenrollment. The number of people truly affected would be very small, but the chilling effect is huge. Reported that there is a DOJ rule that says being a public charge could make someone subject to deportation. There was a proclamation a couple of weeks ago that said that people seeking to enter the US have to be able to prove that they have healthcare insurance. Immigrants are also reluctant to call EMS when they need help. As people who are eligible for the OHP disenroll, what’s the impact on community health centers – people will still need care, but will have no insurance.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.