

Rural Health Coordinating Council (RHCC) Minutes
Summer Meeting
July 22, 2022

Call to Oregon

Kim Lovato, PA-C, chair, called to order the July 22, 2022 RHCC meeting to order.

RHCC members in attendance:

John Begert, Chuck Wardle, Wayne Endersby, Donald Benschoter, DMD, Oregon Dental Association; **Kristen Plunkett**, Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians; **Allison Whisenhunt**, Health Service Area 1, **Dr. Eric Wiser**, AHEC, **Jennifer Little**, Public Health,
Guests:

Katie Harris, Danielle Sobel, Courtni Dresser, Laura McKeane, Cathy Brittain

ORH Staff

Trixie Ortiz, ORH staff, Robert Duehmig, ORH staff.

Approval of July Agenda and April Minutes – no quorum

ORHA Introductions:

ORHA Board members introduced themselves and who they represented. ORHA gave background/history on the creation of the organization and its role in rural health in Oregon. ORH Director has a permanent seat on the ORHA Board of Directors.

RHCC Background

Robert Duehmig gave background/history on the development and role of the RHCC as an advisory body to the Office of Rural Health.

ORH Updates:

Robert Duehmig gave an update on ORH activities related to aging in rural, EMS and Workforce. **Aging** areas of activity are currently broken into two groups:

Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon - 2022 Forum was held in person in Seaside Oregon. Agenda and session information can be found on the ORH [website](#).

Elder Service Innovation Grants – Grant information can also be found on the ORH website. This year's awardees were:

[Wallowa Memorial Hospital](#) is using ESI funds to create the first state of an outdoor fitness trail with equipment for older adults.

[Medical Professional Educators](#) (MedProEd) will use ESI funds to create educational materials and provide specialized training for Oregon EMS providers to promote excellence in geriatric patient management by providers involved in the delivery of prehospital care.

[Douglas Public Health Network](#) (DPHN) will leverage the ESI grant to increase emergency preparedness and resiliency of older adults living in Douglas County by creating senior specialized emergency preparedness education and materials, distributing emergency kits to seniors and coordinating preparedness educational events.

EMS:

ORH awarded equipment grants to three rural EMS agencies. This was a one-time award that ORH was able to give because of available funds. While ORH was very excited to make these awards, there were many more requests than money available. ORH will continue to make these grants available when funds allow, but there is not regular cycle.

HERO – Helping EMS in Rural Oregon

Workforce:

Recruitment Activities: Trixie Ortiz, Program Manager for Recruitment gave an overview of recruitment efforts of rural facilities. She included updates on 3Rnet.

Incentive Programs: Updates were given on the move of Behavioral Health Loan Repayment back to the OHA. Additionally, ORH is supporting efforts to include Public Health workforce in the provider incentive programs. This will need to be change in the Oregon Legislature. OHA has agreed to provide \$300K to match remaining federal SLRP funds for loan repayment. SLRP is also waiting for final award of an additional \$400K. State loan repayment continues with no change.

Workforce Resilience: Dr. Eric Wiser gave an update on work being done by AHEC and partners to support provider resilience.

Transfers: Allison Whisenhunt raised concerns that rural facilities have been unable to find space for patient transfers. While this has been a long-term problem with mental/behavioral health, it has grown to other medical patient issues as well. Urban centers are reporting lack of beds to take patients.

ORHA Update

ORHA gave an update on the current campaign cycle and its impact on the next legislative session. The three primary points of focus going into the 2023 Legislative session are:

Structure – who will control which committees and level of knowledge of rural healthcare

EMS – need for continued support for rural EMS.

Workforce – focus on workforce shortages at all levels and pipeline and incentives to help meet the need.

Conference Update

Robert Duehmig gave update on conference planning.

Announcements

National Rural Health Day – November 17th

Flex/CAH Program celebrates 25 years

Adjournment

DRAFT