

**Rural Health Coordinating Council
Draft Minutes
October 17, 2025**

I. Call to order – Kim Lovato, Chair 9:02 a.m.

Present:

Jamie Daugherty - ORH Assoc. for Home Care

Alison Whisenhunt – Behavior Health Services Representative

Eric Wiser – ORH AHEC at OHSU

Jon Cabrera – HSA 2

Ray Hino – Hospital Association of Oregon

Mona McArdle – Oregon Medical Association nominee

Kim Lovato – OR Society of Physicians Associates

Yoon Koo – State Board of Pharmacy nominee

ORH Staff – Robert Duehmig, Sara Mishalanie

II. ORH Updates

Grant Update

Mobile Integrated Health

- Mobile vs Mobile Integrated definition
- Community-based grants, 250K x 4 yrs
- Mobile Integrated Health Consortium
- Based out of Wheeler Co. They will develop and disseminate tool kits, tech assistance.
- The goal is for it to replicate to other areas and communities.
- ORH will have a new hire to drive this grant and work with Mobile Integrated Health Coalition

Conference Update

- The 2025 Conference went really well—highest partnership dollars ever.
- 2026 will be at Riverhouse. No contract yet for 2027 but should be completed by year's end.
- Concerned about HR1 starting and how it will impact 2026 and beyond.
- Will we need to go virtual?
- RFI's are out for Forum.
- 2026 Forum will be virtual (as we alternate in-person with virtual every other year)

III. Legislature & Policy update

Oregon 2026 Short Legislative Session – February

- Opponents collecting signatures to stop the gas increase/tax package passed during the special session. If successful, it could really change the discussion the 2026 budget conversation
- 31-day short session budget focused; How to rebalance the budget; HR1 will be part of the discussion.
- The Legislative session held at the Conference was popular this year.

Charity Care Bill

- This is a well-intentioned bill designed to assist people in need, but the current system used is broken.
- Bill is costing facilities – rural and urban – millions of dollars that were not intended.
- ORH is trying to move conversations forward and will keep the RHCC apprised.
- ORH may eventually ask the RHCC to take a position on the issue, and we will address this further at the January 2026 meeting.
- The Hospital Association of Oregon is asking for relief to make the guidelines more reasonable.
- The Oregon Association for Home Care is working with Senator Patterson on new hospice licensing. Jamie Daugherty can present on this at the January 2026 meeting.

Federal Updates

- Alexa McKinley Abel is joining the Policy Update session that is following today's RHCC meeting.
- Because of HR1, Congress has made a late start on agency bills.
- Legislation had a significant impact on the Affordable Care Act.
- Because of rescission legislation, the Democrats do not trust in the process right now.
- ACA subsidies expire 12/31/25 and the impact on premiums will show up after November 1.
- 24 million people will see prohibitively higher insurance premiums, so many will drop off ACA and facilities will have to cover their cost of care as charity care, which is not sustainable, and they will close.
- 18% median increase for Marketplace Insurance.
- The Republicans are saying they will take a look at it, but open enrollment happens before they will likely get to it.
- SNAP funds are running out as well.
- Jamie D. input: Medicare [Medicaid?] is cutting home health reimbursement. Please forward her email/letter to others to sign and show opposition to the cuts. The cuts are not sustainable. Absolute crisis for rural areas.

Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP)

- OHA came to the Conference to discuss the RHTP.
- OHA survey just closed 10/15.
- Application review by leadership next week and application submitted by Nov. 5th.
- Cooperative agreement – lots of input and partnership. We will strive to keep politics out of funding decisions.
- Nov 5-Dec 31 negotiations will happen.
- How will gov't shutdown impact all of this?

CMS

Strategic Goals CMS

1. Make Rural America Health Again
2. Sustainable access
3. Workforce development

4. Innovative care
5. Tech support

- Need detailed plans for Oregon's goals and key components.
- How do you make them broad enough, yet specific enough to entertain many options?

Three goals in the Oregon application for the RHTP:

1. Improving access
2. Tech/data driven solutions
3. Workforce integrations/innovation

Concerns/challenges:

- How will we be able to spend the funds in the time allotted? No carryovers.
- So many 'consultants' coming out of the woodwork offering to help. Many are not helpful or legit. Transparency will be paramount. Politics involved will be heavy.
- Need to educate the people of OR so no matter what happens, they understand the challenges and OHA's efforts to meet them.

Link to slide deck from the state:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP/Documents/RHTP-Public-Forum-Slide-Deck.pdf>

- How will it be doled out? Yearly? Multi-year?
- Who will be part of the award process?
- ORH will play a role but we don't know exactly how big at this time.
- Will there be a role for the RHCC?

IV. **RHCC member reports**

Ray Hino for the Hospital Association of Oregon:

There is a lot of fear and concern about access to care, especially with the hospitals. Bay Area Hosp is operating with a lower bed count. They are in financial distress with \$45 m in debt. They have a new CEO just appointed from Legacy System. Big goal: how to keep doors open without affiliating with a health care system, which has been tried before without success. Reductions are coming in the form of downsizing and elimination of services. Ray is hopeful Coos Hospital can somehow assist them and is in conversation with the State about help with the \$45 m debt. They just opened a retail pharmacy in the hospital this past summer. The local FQHC merged with Adapt Integrated Health care, and they hope that Adapt will help with the Coast Community Health Center. There is a geriatric behavioral health services outpatient program coming very soon.

Jamie Daugherty for the Oregon Association for Home Care:

There's only one pharmacy in their area, which puts a huge strain on the community. The nearest alternative is a small pharmacy in Gold Beach. They looked into how to open a retail pharmacy but abandoned the idea once they had assessed the challenges.

Eric Wiser for OHSU:

It has been a summer of chaos when it comes to federal funding. AHEC has been funded at its baseline, for now, and expects level funding going forward. AHEC has just held its statewide advisory board meeting and symposium, and had great engagement by holding it in Portland; they were able to save money and have more attendees than in the recent past, while also offering CME credits. Grant funds covered registration, so it was all no charge. There was good representation by students, and they had a large poster presentation session and sent two to the ORH Conference. They are planning for how to use RHTP as AHEC and working with ORH on this.

Alison Whisenhunt, non-voting member at large, focused on mental and behavioral health services. The RiteAid closure on the North Coast is hitting the community hard. They are very concerned about the upcoming cuts. One hospital OB dept shut down and that leaves only one hospital with OB services.

Introducing:

Mona McArdle, new Oregon Medical Association representative as soon as approved through the Governor's Office.

Yoona Koo, new Oregon State Board of Pharmacy representative as soon as approved through the Governor's Office process.

Jon Cabrera, new Health Service Area 3 representative, as soon as approved by the Governor's Office. He is based in Morrow County.

Kim Lovato for PA Association

asked about Community Health Workers (CHWs) and how the training grant is progressing. ORH received a grant through the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CHLO) to train CHWs through Northeast Oregon Network (NEON). We will see training and support programs coming through the RHTP. How that will be covered is a current issue. Alison reported that they are working on a CHW billing pilot.

The RHCC still has vacancies for: the Oregon Dental Association, the Oregon Optometric Association, the Oregon EMS Association (which doesn't really exist any more), Health Service Area 1, Health Service Area 2, the Oregon Nursing Association, the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians, and one of the Representatives of Communities of Less than 3500. Robert Duehmig is actively recruiting for these positions.

Officer election:

Ray Hino – Chair

Jennifer Little - Vice Chair

Nominated by Kim Lovato, seconded by Ray Hino, unanimously approved.

VI. Old Business

VII. New business

Robert will work with Ray and Jennifer on a meeting schedule for 2026, with the first meeting scheduled for January 16, and focusing as ever on legislation in the coming year. Please get Robert any issues for the agenda by January 9.

Jamie Daugherty suggested that we serve our communities better if we had more active involvement from members; Ray Hino agrees. We will work to create a mechanism to help the RHCC focus on what to accomplish as a group. Robert will send the by-laws to all. Members are asked to think about what they want to work on for the year so the full RHCC can consider those ideas. Please send ideas to Robert by November 15.

VIII. **Announcements**

Next meeting is January 16, 2026.

IX. **Adjourn**

11:50 PM