

Wednesday, October 7

Pre-Conference Sessions

8:30 am – 9:20 am
Room EF

Putting Compliance into Action: Regulations to Results

Kate Hill, RN | The Compliance Team

Compliance is more than preparing for a survey – it's about creating reliable processes that improve patient care, reduce risk and strengthen your RHC every day. This session moves beyond reviewing regulations to focus on practical strategies for turning compliance requirements into meaningful results. Participants will explore recent regulatory updates, common survey findings and proven approaches to integrating compliance into daily operations. Leave with actionable tools to build a culture of continuous readiness, improve quality and position your clinic for long-term success.

9:30 am – 10:20 am
Room EF

Boundaries of Care: Navigating RHC Commingling Regulations

Charles James, MBA | North American HMS

Commingling is a misunderstood topic for RHC professionals. In this session, we will review CMS commingling restrictions. We will differentiate between non-RHC services and commingling concerns. Topics will include clinic configuration scenarios, specialist integration and common carve-outs. Participants will learn how to avoid commingling and duplicate payments.

10:30 am – 11:20 am
Room EF

RHC Compliance Clarity

Janis McDowell | Oregon Health Authority

Join Janis McDowell, patient safety surveyor and CMS representative, for an engaging presentation to explore the current regulatory requirements. Attendees will learn valuable insights on how their RHC can effectively prepare for the upcoming recertification survey. Let's ensure your clinic is ready to shine!

11:30 am – 12:45 pm
Deschutes North

CAH CEO Meetings and Lunch (invitation only)

Conference begins at 1:00 pm

Check in opens at 8:30 am

1:00 pm – 1:10 pm
Main Room

Welcome and Introductions

Robert Duehmig | Oregon Office of Rural Health

1:10 pm – 2:00 pm
Main Room

The Future of Healthcare in Oregon

Former Governor John Kitzhaber, MD | The Foundation for Medical Excellence

The future of healthcare in rural Oregon depends both on the stability of the larger healthcare system, of which it is a part, and on addressing the unique challenges facing rural communities across our state. This presentation will explore the nature of these challenges and offer a roadmap to a more stable and sustainable future, for Oregon's healthcare system as a whole, and for our rural healthcare infrastructure in particular.

Concurrent Sessions

2:10 pm – 3:00 pm
Main Room

Strengthening the Rural Public Health Workforce: Lessons from Oregon's 30-30-30 Initiative

Dawn Richardson, DrPH, MPH | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Alice Gates, MSW, PhD | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Cimone Campbell, MSW, LCSW | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Timothy Lynch, DrPH, MHA | Coos Health & Wellness

Becky Jungbauer, DrPH, MPH, MA | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

The Oregon Legislature's funding of OHSU's 30-30-30 Plan provides a unique opportunity to strengthen the state's health workforce. This session highlights how the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health has maximized this investment to build the rural public health workforce by reducing barriers to graduate education access, strengthening partnerships with governmental and public health practice, and engaging rural workforce partners in curriculum development. Presenters will share early implementation lessons and practical strategies for building pathways, supporting rural learners and aligning training with workforce needs in rural areas.

2:10 pm – 3:00 pm
Room AJ

As One We Rise: How a Rural Hospital Became a Community Health Catalyst

Merritt Driscoll, MPH | Sky Lakes Medical Center

Casey Bennett, MPH | Sky Lakes Medical Center

What if your hospital could reduce tobacco use, feed thousands of food-insecure families, build ADA-accessible playgrounds and create healthcare career pipelines? As the only nonprofit, full-service hospital across 10,000 square miles of Southern Oregon, Sky Lakes became a community health catalyst and did exactly that. Presenters will share the approach and real outcome data behind five innovative initiatives: a wellness center, food systems, built environment/placemaking, tobacco prevention and health career pathways. Attendees will hear what worked, what didn't, and what it takes to move from good intentions to measurable impacts.

2:10 pm – 3:00 pm
Room CD

Oregon MBQIP Data: Quality Infrastructure Assessment Results | Flex Monitoring Team

Maddy Pick, MPH | Flex Monitoring Team

This session will provide an overview of Oregon's Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) quality measures, with a focus on CAH quality infrastructure, highlighting statewide trends, strengths and opportunities for improvement among CAHs. Participants will explore best practices and proven strategies for strengthening key areas identified through the assessment, including quality in the organization's strategic plan, workforce engagement and ownership, engagement of patients, partners and community, and culture of continuous improvement through behavior. Attendees will leave with practical tools to enhance their hospital's quality infrastructure and support sustained improvement efforts.

Wednesday, Oct. 7
2:10 pm – 3:00 pm
Room EF

Rural Health Clinic Strategy and Updates

Katie Jo Raebel, CPA | Wipfli

RHCs are continually broadening the range and depth of services they offer to their communities. However, deciding on the best approach can often feel overwhelming.

This session will explore emerging strategies and provide insights on how to effectively implement them while navigating the financial and operational challenges they may bring.

Concurrent Sessions

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm
Main Room

Elevating Revenue Cycle Performance: How Leadership Alignment Drives Cash Collections

Amy Graham, MBA, CRHCP | Stroudwater Associates

Elevating revenue cycle performance requires more than process fixes. It relies on intentional strategy, cross-departmental collaboration and the active involvement of cross-functional leaders who champion revenue cycle priorities across the organization. This session will explore how engaged leadership at every level can directly influence efficiency, accountability and financial outcomes. Attendees will learn the foundational components of revenue cycle excellence, how to identify and prioritize the KPIs that matter most, and how cross-functional leaders can align teams around shared goals to drive sustainable improvement.

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm
Room AJ

HCI Workforce Development in Rural and Frontier Oregon

Felicity Ratway, PhD, MA, CMI | Oregon State University

Courtney Valenzuela, MPA, CHW | Eastern Oregon CCO

Health care interpreters (HCIs) enable communication between patients and care teams, addressing inequities rooted in language barriers. In 2024, less than 15% of patients needing HCI services received them, and rural and frontier patients are often less likely to receive these needed HCI services. An OHA-approved training addresses a workforce gap in rural and frontier areas through an innovative, blended remote and in-person format, growing the workforce already in place and most likely to stay in their communities. This presentation will discuss effective course design strategies to respond to rural and frontier HCI needs and challenges.

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm
Room CD

Zero Harm in a Rural Setting: How Two Critical Access Hospitals Eliminated Hospital-Acquired Conditions

Jessica Hubbard, MPH, BSN, RN | Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital

In 2025, two Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) on the Oregon coast achieved zero hospital-acquired conditions, including CLABSI, CAUTI, and C. difficile infections. Samaritan North Lincoln also reported zero surgical site infections. This success was driven by daily maintenance of lines and drains, Epic tools and embedding best practices into clinical documentation. The antimicrobial stewardship program ensured antibiotics were fully infused within 30 minutes prior to every incision, and multidisciplinary hospital-acquired condition (HAC) teams focused on prevention strategies and rapid problem-solving. Attendees will learn practical strategies to replicate these results, reduce harm and build reliability in rural settings.

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm
Room EF

The Change in Scope Process for RHCs and FQHCs

Adrienne Cooke | Medicaid Division, Oregon Health Authority

RHCs and FQHCs are paid by the prospective payment system (PPS) encounter rate and are eligible to have this rate adjusted through the change in scope (CiS) process. A

CiS looks at changes these clinics and health centers make that affect type, intensity, amount and duration for services provided. This session will review the rules around this process, needed documentation and common issues.

3:10 pm – 4:00 pm
Deschutes South

Making Respiratory Viral Risk Data Accessible: Tools for Public Awareness in Rural Communities

Marta Fisher | North Central Public Health District

Rebecca Falender, DVM, MPH | Oregon State University

Public health departments have an obligation to report current issues to residents; however, in rural communities, small numbers lead to more volatile data. North Central Public Health District created a respiratory risk rating that aggregates percent positivity, syndromic and wastewater surveillance data from across the region into a single rating. Wastewater surveillance strengthens case-based surveillance systems by providing community-level data independent of symptoms, healthcare-seeking behavior, and testing access. Oregon's program now includes COVID, influenza A/B/H5, RSV and measles, and data can be accessed through state and national dashboards. This presentation will discuss the program's creation and challenges, with specific background on wastewater surveillance.

Plenary Session

4:10 pm – 5:00 pm
Main Room

Legislative Panel

Representative Rob Nosse | Oregon House of Representatives, District 42

Representative Mark Owens | Oregon House of Representatives, District 60

The 2027 Oregon Legislature will face many challenges relating to healthcare, transportation, economic development and natural resource. Economic uncertainty and cuts to federal support will impact those challenges. This session will focus on how the legislature is looking to address healthcare and prioritize issues that are important in our rural communities.

5:05 pm – 7:00 pm
All rooms and halls

Welcome Reception and Cocktail Hour

7:00 pm
Cascade Board Room

ORHA Board Meeting

Thursday, October 8

8:00 am – 8:50 am
Downstairs

Breakfast | Oregon's Political Landscape

Sean Kolmer | Hospital Association of Oregon

Election day is coming, and the outcome will have an impact on the 2027 Oregon Legislative Session. This presentation will provide an overview on the political landscape in Oregon and what that might mean going forward.

Concurrent Sessions

9:00 am – 9:50 am
Main Room

Strengthening Oregon's Healthcare Workforce: Rural Workforce Needs and Provider Incentive Outcomes

Jill Boyd, MPH | Oregon Health Authority

Alyssa Sloane, MPA | Oregon Health Authority

Neelam Gupta, MPH, MSW | Oregon Health Authority

Deepti Shinde, MPP | Oregon Health Authority

OHA staff will present on two interconnected efforts to strengthen Oregon's healthcare workforce, focused on primary care, behavioral health and oral health.

Part one: Will provide an overview of preliminary findings of the Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment, produced every two years as required by legislation. This will include a discussion of challenges and opportunities surrounding healthcare workforce with a focus on rural areas.

Part two: Will provide a Health Care Provider Incentive Program review of new workforce incentives for students and practicing professionals: Health Care Workforce Career Pathways Scholarships; Health Care Workforce Scholarships; and Health Care Workforce Retention Scholarships.

9:00 am – 9:50 am
Room AJ

Integrated Care as Community Infrastructure: Lessons from Wallowa County

Max Holfert | Bridgework Collaborative

Winding Waters is doing something rare: integrating medical care, dental care, mental health and public health across a small network of clinics in Wallowa County. This presentation will frame rural clinics as community anchors rather than just healthcare providers and look at what integration takes operationally and financially. Presenters will explore what a replication framework might require for other rural Oregon communities and how technology can support quality and access.

9:00 am – 9:50 am
Room CD

From Reactive to Reliable: Building a Culture of Patient Safety in Rural Hospitals

Lisa Carhuff, MSN, RN | HomeTown Health, LLC

This interactive session will empower healthcare leaders, clinicians and staff to foster a culture of patient safety and high reliability, where every team member is committed to preventing harm and continuously improving outcomes. The presentation will cover the core principles of high reliability organizations, share how attendees can identify and mitigate systemic risks before harm occurs, describe strategies to promote psychological safety, transparency and accountability, and identify practical tools for engaging frontline staff in safety initiatives.

9:00 am – 9:50 am
Room EF

RHC Federal Regulatory and Legislative Update

Sarah Hohman | National Association of Rural Health Clinics

Sarah will provide an analysis of the regulatory changes and legislative actions impacting rural healthcare delivery for RHCs as we head into 2027. She will break down recent federal rulemaking, changes to Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, and the status of key rural-focused health bills in Congress.

9:00 am – 9:50 am
Deschutes South

The Rural Front Line: Strengthening EMS Recruitment and Retention and Expanding Mobile Integrated Health in Oregon

Joan Field, EMT-I, CP-C, CHW | Oregon Office of Rural Health

Melissa Varnum, MPH | Oregon Office of Rural Health

Rural EMS agencies are essential to healthcare access, yet they face significant training, workforce and sustainability challenges. This session will highlight ORH's EMS and Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) programs, which offer workforce support, education and training resources, and collaborative strategies aligned with Oregon's broader EMS modernization efforts. Presenters will share findings from a statewide needs assessment of rural EMS agencies and early outcomes from two federal grants that focus on workforce recruitment, retention and expansion of MIH in rural areas. Attendees will leave with practical, actionable ideas they can use to collaborate with ORH to strengthen and sustain EMS systems in their communities.

Concurrent Sessions

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Main Room

Collaborating Across Sectors: How Clatsop County's Hospitals, Clinics, CBOs and Public Health Department are Creating a Healthier Community

Christopher Laman, PharmD, MBA | Columbia Memorial Hospital

Jason Plamondon, RN, MSN | Providence Seaside Hospital

Jill Quackenbush, MS | Clatsop Public Health Department

Viviana Matthews | Clatsop Community Action

Stacy Loretta | Clatsop Behavioral Health

Clatsop Rural Health Coalition partners will share how they built a collaborative effort to create better relationships, a stronger health system and a healthier community. The team will highlight how the Clatsop Coalition aligns priorities and strategies across the region, shares resources and undertakes collective projects that have improved the health system. The presentation will demonstrate how independent partners moved from informal collaboration to a more structured, aligned approach, and provide tangible ideas for attendees to take back to their own communities so they can replicate the initiative.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room AJ

No Time, No Space, No Problem: Big Education in Small Spaces

Nikkita Titus, MSN, RN | Grande Ronde Hospital

Breanne Rollins, MSN, RN, CEN | Grande Ronde Hospital

Rural hospitals across Oregon face persistent barriers to delivering consistent, high-quality education. This presentation explores how one education team addressed these challenges, conducted a gap analysis, built interdisciplinary stakeholder support, secured funding, and navigated contracting and deployment processes to bring one program to life. Presenters will also highlight a targeted monthly education initiative designed to expand access for traditionally hard-to-engage staff. Attendees will gain actionable strategies and a replicable framework to expand educational capacity, strengthen workforce engagement and leverage emerging technologies to support rural healthcare sustainability across Oregon.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room CD

MBQIP Measure Think Tank

Susan Runyan | Runyan Health Care Quality Consulting

This is a fast-paced, collaborative session designed for quality leaders who want to move beyond basic reporting and into deeper interpretation and action. Participants will explore MBQIP measures through a strategic, real-world lens — identifying meaningful signals, understanding variation and uncovering opportunities for

improvement. Through facilitated discussion and peer learning, this session helps leaders strengthen reliability, interpret trends with confidence and co-develop practical approaches to improving MBQIP performance.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room EF

Blueprint for Confidence: The RHC Evidence Binder

Tressa Sacrey | Health Services Associates, Inc.

Preparing for an RHC survey can feel overwhelming, but the right evidence binder makes all the difference. This session will walk participants through how to organize policies, documentation and key compliance elements into a clear, survey-ready evidence binder that demonstrates readiness and confidence during a survey.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Deschutes South

Regionally Grounded Solutions for Oregon's Rural Behavioral Health Workforce

Alice Gates, MSW, PhD | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Eli Kinsley, MSW, LCSW, CADC III, CGAC II | Bridgeway Community Health

Robin Sansing, MSW, LCSW | Behavioral Health Talent Council

Monica Vines | Central Oregon Community College

Sommer Wolcott | Continuum Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

KC LeDell | Office of Governor Tina Kotek

Oregon's behavioral health workforce crisis is especially acute in rural and frontier communities, where provider shortages, limited access to training and supervision, recruitment challenges and high turnover make it difficult to sustain care. This session highlights how Oregon's Behavioral Health Talent Council (BHTC) translated statewide analysis and frontline expertise into action plans designed to address these barriers. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the council's recommendations, including strategies to strengthen supervision, expand education and licensure pathways, and support regional collaboration, while considering how these approaches might be applied in their own communities.

Plenary Session

11:00 am – 11:50 am
Main Room

Managing the Impacts of H.R. 1

Clare Pierce-Wrobel | Oregon Health Authority

Maria Waters | Oregon Department of Human Services

H.R. 1 is bringing major changes to healthcare and social services in Oregon, which will impact Oregonians' ability to access care and needed services. This session will outline those changes and how Oregonians can retain benefits moving forward.

12:00 pm – 1:10 pm
Downstairs

Lunch and Awards

Concurrent Sessions

1:15 pm – 2:05 pm
Main Room

Policy in Practice: Accelerating AI Innovation, Governance and Workforce Upskilling in Rural Health

Laura Kreofsky, MHA, MBA | Microsoft Elevate

Tina Burbine, PMP | Rural Health Community

Presenters will draw on deep experience in healthcare operations, digital transformation and AI governance to explore how rural hospitals, clinics and public health organizations can responsibly adopt AI while investing in their most critical asset—the workforce. Participants will gain practical strategies for aligning AI innovation with organizational, state and federal policy, building sustainable workforce education and upskilling models and measuring KPIs of success.

1:15 pm – 2:05 pm
Room AJ

Leveraging CCO Community Advisory Councils to Align CHA and CHIP Priorities

Monica Gutierrez, CHW, ACP-F | AllCare Health

Leah Swanson | AllCare Health

Community advisory councils (CACs) help ensure that community members, especially those most affected by inequities, have a voice in shaping health systems. This session will explore how CACs serve as a link between community needs and decision making and strengthen Community Health Assessments (CHAs) and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) by incorporating lived experience, community narratives and partner insights. Attendees will learn how aligning CAC input with CHAs and CHIPs leads to more relevant priorities, effective interventions and improved health outcomes. Practical strategies and rural examples will highlight how a CAC's role can address workforce challenges, improve access to care and inform health policy.

1:15 pm – 2:05 pm
Room CD

Quality in focus: Reporting That Matters to the Board and Staff

Susan Runyan | Runyan Health Care Quality Consulting

This session gives quality leaders practical tools to turn data into clear, meaningful stories that drive action. You'll learn which metrics matter most to boards and frontline staff, how to translate data into insights that support decision-making and how to connect measures to daily work and patient outcomes. Using simple frameworks and real examples, this course strengthens your ability to communicate with clarity, build engagement and make reporting a catalyst for improvement.

1:15 pm – 2:05 pm
Room EF

Partnering to Implement Federal Policy Changes to the Oregon Health Plan

Alma Ponce | OHA Office of Community Health and Engagement

Cristina Hernandez, MPH | OHA Office of Community Health and Engagement

As eligibility requirements and renewal processes shift under HR-1, Oregon is experiencing a growing need for culturally responsive, community-based support to help people maintain health coverage. This session highlights the work of OHA's Office of Community Health and Engagement (OCHE) to implement federal policy changes, expand training access and strengthen a statewide network of OHP assisters and Hospital Presumptive Eligibility Program partners. Participants will learn how OCHE is preparing communities for changes to eligibility, supporting its OHP assister network and partners, and strengthening collaboration with hospitals, RHCs, CBOs and FQHCs.

Concurrent Sessions

2:15 pm – 3:05 pm
Main Room

The Future of Rural Care Coordination: Improving Outcomes While Reducing Cost and Complexity

Riya Pulicharam, MD, CMO | Caret Health

Rural hospitals face rising patient acuity, workforce shortages and increasing financial pressure—making traditional care coordination models unsustainable. Leading health systems are responding with next-generation approaches that proactively identify high-risk patients, enable earlier intervention and improve outcomes without adding operational burden. Dr. Pulicharam will share real-world insights through practical case studies and evidence-based strategies. Attendees will learn how to transform fragmented care coordination into a streamlined, scalable model. The presentation will highlight how to identify and manage high-risk patients, reduce redundant workflows and lower the cost of care coordination, improve CCM and TCM performance, optimize swing bed utilization and revenue, and expand remote patient monitoring (RPM) without increasing staffing burden.

2:15 pm – 3:05 pm
Room AJ

Monitoring Drug prices and PBM Market Conduct at the Oregon Division of Financial Regulation

Sarah Young, MPH | Oregon Division of Financial Regulation
Keith Turner | Oregon Division of Financial Regulation

Prescription drugs are a critical part of patient care and a key tool for managing disease. Patients and clinicians both report challenges with access to medications due to cost and availability barriers, and these challenges can be particularly acute in rural communities. Learn how the Department of Financial Regulation monitors and publicly reports drug pricing and oversees the conduct of pharmacy benefit managers to increase transparency in these markets. This session will discuss what rural pharmacies and other rural health care organizations need to know about the Prescription Drug Price Transparency Program, the Oregon Prescription Drug Affordability Board, and Oregon's pharmacy benefit manager licensing and oversight.

2:15 pm – 3:05 pm
Room CD

Tillamook's Collaborative Journey to Address Substance Use Disorder

Bridgette Conn | Adventist Health Tillamook
Melody Ayers | Adventist Health Tillamook
Erin Skaar | Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

OUR Tillamook, a consortium of local healthcare, social service and public safety partners, began a countywide effort in 2019 to address opioid and substance use disorder (SUD). The group produced a three-year strategic plan to strengthen prevention, treatment and recovery services, and have since established a Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN), laid the groundwork for community-based deflection pathways that connect people to treatment instead of justice involvement, and secured additional funding to support the launch of preventative deflection programs. This presentation will share key challenges, successes and lessons learned from this collaborative, cross-sector approach.

2:15 pm – 3:05 pm
Room EF

Supporting Access to Healthcare Among Rural Farmworker Communities

Fabiola Herrera Hernandez, MPH | OHA Office of Community Health and Engagement

Jorge Martinez Zapata, MBA | OHA Office of Community Health and Engagement

An estimated 258,000 farmworkers and family members, about 6% of Oregon's population, live and work primarily in rural areas and provide essential labor that drives the state's agriculture and related industries. Despite their economic contribution to

Oregon business, farmworkers continue to experience high levels of poverty and lack of access to healthcare. The Protecting Oregon Farmworkers (POF) Program was created in 2020 to help address these challenges. The program works with local community partners to help farmworkers access healthcare services along with critical SDoH supports like food and housing. This presentation will cover the origins and growth of POF, and the strategies it has implemented for successfully engaging and delivering services to Oregon's farmworker communities.

3:05 pm – 3:35 pm
All rooms and halls

Snack Break with our Partners

Concurrent Sessions

3:40 pm – 4:30 pm
Main Room

Connecting Care: How Health and Social Service Partnerships Improve Rural Access

Kate Drummond, MPA, MS | Comagine Health

Lavinia Goto, PhD, DHA, MBA, MPH, BSN | Oregon Wellness Network

The Community Integrated Network of Oregon (CINO) is a diverse partner network strengthening statewide infrastructure to sustain evidence-based health education, including diabetes prevention and chronic disease self-management education. Through partnerships between health care and social service agencies, CINO improves access to in-person and virtual programs, aligning delivery with sustainable funding pathways to support long-term program delivery. This session highlights CINO's model and engages participants in applying it to address rural health access challenges.

3:40 pm – 4:30 pm
Room AJ

Beyond the 911 Model: Mobile Integrated Health from Home to Statewide Impact

Sabrina Ballew, MHA, CP-C, CHW | Mercy Flights and Oregon MIH Coalition

What if care reached people before crisis, beyond the emergency department, and directly into the home? MIH is making this possible. This session combines real-world program leadership at Mercy Flights with statewide collaboration through the Oregon MIH Coalition to showcase how MIH is transforming care delivery. From in-home emergency care to behavioral health response and rural access, participants will explore innovative models, workforce design and sustainable partnerships. More than program development, this shifts how healthcare shows up for communities.

3:40 pm – 4:30 pm
Room CD

MBQIP Grant Panel Presentations: Rural Hospital Quality Improvement

Dani Nodine | Blue Mountain Hospital

Karen Reed | Harney District Hospital

Erin Kraus | Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital

Three Oregon CAHs, Blue Mountain Hospital, Harney District Hospital and Providence Hood River, will share their experiences implementing MBQIP award-funded initiatives and the outcomes achieved. Presenters will highlight projects focused on increasing HCAHPS survey response rates, strengthening CAH quality infrastructure through CQI behaviors, and improving OP-18 performance by reducing the median time from emergency department arrival to departure for discharged patients. Attendees will gain practical insights, lessons learned and strategies that can be adapted to support quality improvement efforts in their own organizations.

3:40 pm – 4:30 pm
Room EF

Community Health Workers Impact Healthcare Utilization in the Columbia Gorge

Elizabeth Perez, CHW | Columbia Gorge Health Council

June Reckmann, CHW | Columbia Gorge Health Council

Rosie Strange, CHW | Columbia Gorge Health Council

The Columbia Gorge Health Council's (CGHC's) Bridges to Health (B2H) Program was established in 2015 to address priorities identified in the Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan. Based on health care claims data, this cross-sector network of CHWs increased preventative care appointments and decreased high-cost utilization by providing culturally appropriate service to Native American, Latinx, and rural and frontier communities. This presentation will demonstrate how a team of CHWs can lead a regional collaborative, facilitate state-approved CHW certification training, support continuing education and provide mentorship.

3:40 pm – 4:30 pm
Deschutes South

Hidden in Plain Sight: HIV Prevention and Care in Rural Oregon

Christopher Fox, MSN, RN, ANP-BC, AAHIVS | OHSU HIV Clinic, OHSU Tele-PrEP Program

HIV is often perceived as an urban health issue, yet rural Oregon faces unique challenges in HIV prevention, diagnosis and long-term care. This presentation reviews current epidemiologic trends, advances in HIV prevention and treatment, and practical strategies for overcoming barriers such as stigma, geographic isolation, limited specialty access and substance use.

4:40 pm – 5:30 pm
Deschutes South

Gilead Product Theater: Say Yes to PrEP Innovation: Clinical Review of a Long-Acting HIV Prevention Option

Jane Babiarz, MD | OHSU School of Medicine

The purpose of this program is to review advancements in HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). The content will include an overview of the efficacy and safety results of the PURPOSE 1 and PURPOSE 2 clinical trials, while touching on important aspects of future preventative care, including identifying opportunities to discuss PrEP, current guideline recommendations on HIV prevention and best practices surrounding administration and dosing.

Friday, October 9

8:30 am – 9:45 am
Downstairs

Breakfast | AHEC Scholar Presentations

Concurrent Sessions

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Main Room

Bridging Health and Social Care: Promising Practices from Oregon's Rural Communities

Nancy Goff, MPH | Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network

Liberty Avila | Northeast Oregon Network

Michael Couch | Crossroads Communities

The launch of the Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) benefit for certain Medicaid members in 2024 marked a significant step toward formally recognizing and addressing

the impact of social needs on health outcomes. While this connection has long been understood, investments through the 1115 Medicaid waiver accelerated efforts to formalize infrastructure supporting local partnerships. Oregon communities are adopting diverse approaches and strategies to meet these needs, and include expanding the role of CHWs, developing social care networks and community care hubs, and establishing formal agreements through data-sharing partnerships and governance structures. This presentation will highlight two rural regions that have implemented innovative approaches to advancing this work.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room AJ

Maximizing the Utility of a Mobile Clinic in a Rural Community

Casey Bennett, MPH | Sky Lakes Medical Center

Stewart Decker, MD, MPH, FAAFP, FWMS | Sky Lakes Medical Center

Access to healthcare remains a major challenge in rural communities. To address this gap, Sky Lakes launched a mobile clinic that brings care directly to patients and provides treatment for minor illnesses and injuries, chronic disease management, testing, health education and care coordination. While not revenue-driven, the model delivers strong community impact and supports provider engagement and medical education. This presentation will highlight how mobile care can reduce disparities and expand access by meeting patients where they are, in addition to supporting provider recruitment and education efforts.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room CD

Cybersecurity at the Edge of the Safety Net: Keeping Rural Oregon (and America!) Safe

Scott McEachern | Southern Coos Hospital & Health Center

Rural hospitals are often the only source of care for miles, and increasingly they are prime targets for ransomware and other cyberattacks. With thin margins, small IT teams and aging infrastructure, a single breach can divert ambulances, delay care and threaten a facility's survival. In this panel, we will share candid, practical lessons: how to prioritize security investments with limited budgets, build resilience through downtime planning and regional partnerships, meet regulatory expectations, and make the case to boards and communities that cybersecurity is patient safety. Attendees will leave with realistic strategies that scale to the smallest organizations and a clearer picture of what the rural safety net needs from policymakers, vendors and peers.

10:00 am – 10:50 am
Room EF

Strengthening Rural Continued Education Through Collaboration

Edna Murrieta, MS Ed, CHW | Northeast Oregon Network

Rosie Strange, CHW | Columbia Gorge Health Council

This presentation highlights a training focused on strengthening continued education in rural areas by building sustainable infrastructure through collaboration and partnerships. Participants will learn how collaborative systems can reduce burden, expand reach and improve consistency by sharing facilitators, resources and responsibilities across partner organizations. The training highlights facilitation-centered, learner-focused approaches that support equitable access to high-quality learning experiences. A train-the-trainer model was embedded to develop local facilitators, build regional capacity and ensure sustainability while maintaining fidelity to the shared system.

Concurrent Sessions

11:00 am – 11:50 am
Main Room

Building Early Public Health Career Pathways Through Rural Youth Experience Camps

Tawnie Goetz-Kennedy, MA | AHEC of Southwest Oregon

Alice Gates, MSW, PhD | OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

In 2026, AHEC of Southwest Oregon (AHECSW) piloted public health-focused youth experience camps for middle and high school students in Roseburg and Coos Bay. The session will describe the design of the camps and explore the opportunities and challenges involved in making public health careers more visible and meaningful to youth in rural communities. Presenters will share preliminary implementation lessons and reflect on how local partnerships grounded the camps in community priorities and regional education and workforce pathways. Attendees will participate firsthand in one of the camp activities from the “Disease Detectives” curriculum and join a formative discussion designed to strengthen and refine an emerging model for public health workforce development in other rural contexts.

11:00 am – 11:50 am
Room AJ

Lights and Sirens in Critical Care Transport: Safe and Impactful? Think again!

Karen Charlton, MSN, MBA, RN, CFRN, CCRN, CEN, CNRN | Life Flight Network

This presentation will explore the utilization of lights and sirens, or code three usage in the space of critical care transport. While many points of lights and sirens research have been completed in the 911 and EMS space, research has not crossed to critical care transport. After analysis of lights and sirens utilization at Life Flight Network, specific observations, trends, rationale for utilization of lights and sirens, estimated time saved and meaningful recommendations for system improvement can be made for future endeavors in our industry.

11:00 am – 11:50 am
Room CD

Launching a New Health Occupations CTE Center to Expose Rural Students to Healthcare Careers

Bryan Fix, SHRM, SCP | Sky Lakes Medical Center

Adam Randall | Klamath Union High School

In 2025, Sky Lakes and Klamath Union partnered to launch a new CTE center, partially funded by a Future Ready Oregon Grant. The partners launched core health occupations classes, career exploration rotations in 30 hospital and clinic locations, and a new CTE center that now serves three urban high schools and four rural high schools across Klamath County. This session will explore the collaboration between school districts, Klamath Community College and Oregon Tech that led to the rapid expansion of education opportunities for underserved high schoolers to explore vibrant healthcare careers. This initiative captures excitement for the future through on-site observation, dual-credit classes and mentorship for job-ready skills or collegiate programs for over 300 students in the 2026/27 school year.

12:00 pm – 12:15 pm
Main Room

Closing Remarks and Prize Drawings

Robert Duehmig | Oregon Office of Rural Health

1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Room CD

RHCC Meeting (open to the public)

RHTP Statewide Convening and Vendor Fair
Downstairs Exhibit Hall | By invitation only
Friday, Oct. 9

9:45 am – 1:00 pm **RHTP Vendor Fair**

10:15 am – 10:30 am **Welcome and RHTP Updates from OHA**
Sarah Andersen, MPH | Oregon Office of Rural Health
Steph Jarem | Oregon Health Authority

10:30 am – 11:30 am **RHTP Awardee Panel**
Hear from organizations that received Catalyst Awards, Transformation Awards and Immediate Impact Awards as they discuss their projects and reflect on what they are learning through implementation. This conversation will highlight innovative projects underway across Oregon that may inform efforts in other communities.

11:30 am – 12:30 pm **RHTP World Cafe Networking Session**
Building on the discussions held during the RHTP regional convenings, this interactive networking session will bring participants together from across Oregon to share experiences, exchange ideas and explore common challenges and opportunities. Through facilitated small-group conversations, attendees will have an opportunity to connect across regions, learn from one another and generate new ideas that inform the state's approach to the RHTP moving forward.