

Debriefing the Rural Health Clinic Association Conference — What does the future hold for rural health clinics in Washington?

We're just back from the annual [Rural Health Clinic Association of Washington conference](#). While there we got a fresh look at what rural health clinics are facing and how they are thinking about the future. The opening speakers Nathan Johnson from the Health Care Authority (HCA) and Sue Grinnell from the Department of Health, discussed the [State Health Care Innovation Plan](#). Implementing such a large-scale change is going to require many partnerships at the state and local level.

Representatives from rural health clinics asked about how this plan will affect their communities and how they can support it or voice concerns. Nathan Johnson acknowledged that predictable funding must be a cornerstone of this statewide planning process. Both HCA and the rural health clinics have been coping with unpredictable funding for a while now. While it may not have eased the minds of clinic representatives, it set a forward-thinking tone for the rest of the conference.

The breakout sessions were filled with technical skills development opportunities, such as billing and coding, process improvement training and regulatory compliance. Our section staff held a session introducing [our staff and what we do](#), with little-known facts included just for fun. You would never guess who bombed an oboe solo in high school, who was fired from an ice cream company in eighth grade for overgenerous scooping, who peeled hundreds of pounds of potatoes a day to pay for college, or who had a 1,400-pound steer land on her foot at a 4-H fair.