

WEATHERING *the* PERFECT STORM: *Challenges & Changes*
8th NW Regional Critical Access Hospital Conference: March 23, 2010
23rd NW Regional Rural Health Conference: March 24-25, 2010
Red Lion Hotel at the Park in Spokane, Wash.

Join colleagues at the Northwest's largest gathering on rural health. Presenters from Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Washington will discuss strategies, innovations and success stories on how to weather these economic times that may be brewing the perfect storm.

"There is a threatening storm gathering over rural health care, the advance winds of which we can already feel." said John Hanson, 2010 conference chair and rural health specialist with the Washington State Department of Health. "But like the buffalo, rural health providers, administrators, and commissioners will face the storm and move into it, having faith in the firm foundation of their own creative thinking and the mutual support of colleagues and other experts. We hope you will join us as forward-thinking people from our region and the nation converge to talk, listen, discuss, and learn the best ways to make it through the storm."

Several activities return to this year's conferences.

- Connect with colleagues from around the Northwest at the **Joint Conference Reception** from 5 – 6:30 p.m. immediately following the NW Regional CAH Conference on Tuesday.
- **First-time attendee** ambassadors will be on point Wednesday morning at the NW Regional Rural Health Conference to help first timers navigate the conference, make introductions, and get the most of out their experience.
- Our very own Secretary of Health, Mary Selecky, is sure to make the annual **WA Rural Health Association Awards** memorable with her stories and personal connections with the award recipients. (Remember to submit your nomination by March 2!
www.wrha.com/events/awards.asp)
- **Round Tables** now follow the WRHA luncheon on Wednesday to facilitate earlier networking for those with common interests – not to mention offer an interactive activity right after lunch!
- Experience one of many wonderful Spokane dining experiences with **dinner out** on the town Wednesday evening. This is an informal, no-host function. The only requirement is to enjoy yourself!
- Get your conference legs moving Thursday morning with the ever-popular **Fun Walk/Run** on the beautiful Centennial Trail located along the Spokane River.

8th NW Regional Critical Access Hospital Conference: March 23, 2010

This one-day conference is designed specifically for CAH administrators, staff, clinicians and board members. Attendees learn, share, plan, and maximize the opportunities offered through the CAH designation as experts present on quality/performance improvement, finance, CMS, and more.

"Once again, this year's program has a lot to offer," said Mike Lee, chair NW Regional CAH Conference. "From federal and CMS updates to patient care, HIT, and finance, there's valuable information for everyone." The full conference schedule is at www.ahec.spokane.wsu.edu.

Keynote topics and speakers include:

"Office of Rural Health Policy Federal Update"

Kristin Martinsen, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration

"Public Policy Demands for Improved Health Care Quality and Their Effect on Rural Health Care"

David Schulke, American Health Quality Association

"Strategies for CAH's in Transformational Times"
Charles Wells, Jr., Healthcare Financial Advisors Inc

Choose from 9 concurrent breakout sessions that include CAH-specific information on quality/performance improvement, finance, CMS and more.

Conference Objectives:

- Deliver useful information and tools that attendees can apply to their scope of work.
- Provide presentations from high level federal program leaders and Northwest fiscal intermediary staff, thus offering an opportunity to prepare your organization for upcoming changes.
- Highlight board development, health information, quality improvement, and staffing "best practices" from CAH peers.

This conference is produced and supported by state offices of rural health for Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Funding provided by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

Plan to stay and network at the joint conference reception from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. co-hosted with the NW Regional Rural Health Conference, which follows the NW Regional CAH Conference on March 19-20, 2009 in the same location.

23rd NW Regional Rural Health Conference: March 24-25, 2010

This year's conference focus is on weathering economic challenges and changes through sharing proven tips, tools, methods or initiatives. Sessions will focus on an exchange of information about programs and innovative strategies that can be models for changing rural health and health care delivery at the state and regional levels.

Our theme, *Weathering the Perfect Storm: Challenges and Changes*, is the perfect lead-in to our conference," said John Hanson, 2010 conference chair. "There are forces converging on rural health care right now that hold the threat of disaster, yet it is under pressure like this that we find our best creative thinking. We hope you will join us as we gather some of the best thinkers and doers in our region and the nation to seek and to find the most effective ways to survive these trying times."

This annual gathering is designed to be of interest to a wide range of rural health advocates including providers, community leaders, administrators, board members, commissioners, policy makers, public health professionals, and others.

The conference strives to stay abreast of the current policy and regulation developments at the federal, regional, state and local levels which impact healthcare delivery. While at the same time delivering content inclusive of collaborative rural models, innovative community projects, quality, healthcare information technology and other underlying themes that shape the way business is done.

Keynote speakers and topics include:

Northwest Health Leaders Panel opens the conference.

- Alaska: Barbara J. Doty, MD, FAAFP, Alaska Family Practice Residency
- Idaho: Mary Lou Kinney, MEd, Idaho AHEC, a project of Mountain States Group, Inc.
- Montana: Jay S. Erickson, MD, WWAMI Montana Department of Family Medicine, University of Washington School of Medicine
- Oregon: Stephen Kliever, MDiv, MS, Min, Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness
- Washington: Jeff Mero, MHA, Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

Thursday WRHA Awards Luncheon includes:

- Emcee: Mary Selecky, Secretary of Health, Washington State Department of Health
- Tom Locke, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Clallam and Jefferson Counties in Northwest Washington State, will share his vision of health care reform that focuses on an integration of public health and medical care systems with the goal of improved community health not the amount of health care services delivered.

Friday's plenary features Tim Skinner, MEd, Executive Director of 3RNet, the National Rural Recruitment & Retention Network who will present on recruitment, retention, and the importance of partnering with the community and workforce development

Objectives:

- Provide information on the effects of various system changes from state, regional and national perspectives.
- Equip workshop participants with the tools to decide on the best course of action for their situation.
- Disseminate information and strategies on rural health policy, research, management and practice issues.
- Provide a forum for discussion and idea exchange on rural health issues.

The conference is presented by the Washington Rural Health Association and the Washington statewide Office of Rural Health including the Area Health Education Center of Eastern Washington, WSU Extension; Community Health Systems Office/Rural Health, Washington State Department of Health; University of Washington School of Medicine; Washington State University; and Western Washington Area Health Education Center.

Conference Schedules and Registration

For full conference schedules or to register online go to www.ahec.spokane.wsu.edu. For added convenience, register for one or both conferences at the same time using just one registration form.

Registration is required to attend the conferences and preferred by March 10, 2010. CAH Conference registration is \$60 and Rural Health Conference fees range from \$125-\$245. For a copy of the brochure containing information for both conferences, go to www.ahec.spokane.wsu.edu or contact the Area Health Education Center of Eastern Washington, WSU Extension at (509) 358-7640, 800-279-0705 or ahec@wsu.edu.

Sponsors for both conferences include: Silver Level – Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts, Keith Lundberg Lectureship by Virginia Mason Medical Center, Providence – Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children's Hospital, Qualis Health; Bronze Level – Community Health Plan, GCI ConnectMD, LHC Group, The Neenan Company, Orion Health, Parker, Smith & Feek, Phoenix Health Systems, and Washington Casualty Company/FinCor Solutions.