

Maryland Rural Health Association

Issue 19

Fall (September-October-November) 2005



For more information on MRHA call 410.226.5527

Or visit our web site at:

WWW.MDRURALHEALTH.ORG

2006 Rural Health Conferences—Save the Dates!

- AHA-Rural Health Care Leadership Conference, January 18-21, 2006; Tucson, AZ ; 800.821.2039
- Rural Health Policy Institute; Grand Hyatt Washington, D.C.; Feb 27-March 1, 2006
- NRHA Annual Conference and Minority and Multicultural Health Conference; May 15-19, 2006; Reno, NV
- State Rural Health Association Skill-building Workshop, June 2006, Date/Location TBA
- Rural Clinicians and Quality Conferences, July 2006, Date and Location TBA
- Rural Health Clinics and Critical Access Hospital Conferences, October 2006; Date and Location -TBA

Presidents Message:

Interesting and informative programs, great facility, good food, excellent opportunity to network, were all trademarks of the 8th Annual Rural Summit. From the opening plenary session to the last workshop the Summit flowed smoothly during our two and a half days in Western Maryland. Attendees were very positive with their comments and our Legislative Forum sparkled with interest. We are certainly indebted, and owe a round of applause, to all attendees, presenters, and our Legislators for the Summit's success. If you missed the Summit stay tuned for next year's event which will be held on the Shore

While many worked very hard to bring off a successful Summit, MRHA offers special recognition to Marita Novicky who lead our 10th Anniversary Celebration (an outstanding success) and who, working with the University of Maryland School of Medicine arranged to televise the Legislative Forum (another success). Well done Marita!!

On a more somber note the news from Congress on funding rural health programs continues grim. Many programs face sever reductions in not total elimination. This includes medical education and training programs for future health care workers, rural outreach and network grants, Rural Health Policy and Research, and Rural EMS programs. Rural America already faces shortages of health care workforce and health services and the continue assault on these will only aggravate an already serious situation. As I write this final decisions remain open so it is important that we all contact our Federal representatives urging adequate funding for rural health care programs. Make time for this contact - it is important for rural Maryland and America.

Jacob F. Frego
President

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Rural Maryland Council

Stacy Kidd, MPH

Administrator, Rural Health Projects
Office of Rural Health and Primary Care Services
DHMH

Please feel free to submit information to be included in this newsletter and on the Calendar of Events.

You may reach our Executive Offices at the following address:

Phone 410.226.5527 or Fax 410.226.0177

PO Box 400 Oxford, MD 21654

Or via email at:

aoc@shore.intercom.net

SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE:

Shore Health System Adopts Slidell Memorial Hospital

Shore Health System, Easton, MD adopted Slidell Memorial Hospital in Slidell, Louisiana in an effort to support the victims and healthcare workers rocked by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in September. Slidell Memorial Hospital (SMH) is located near the center of Slidell, 30 miles north of New Orleans on the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

Initial contact was made to determine what support was needed that would allow for continuing patient care services even as Slidell's staff reeled from their own personal losses and disrupted lives. Trucks from the Shore soon arrived and unloaded pallets packed with boxes of clothing, food, and personal supplies collected through Operation Shore Cares. Members of Slidell Memorial's management team told the Shore Health System visiting team what they had learned while managing their disaster plan. They commented on what worked well and what they would do differently.

To read the full articles from September 14, 21, & 28 visit www.shorehealth.org

Providing Hospice and Palliative Care in Rural and Frontier Areas

The NRHA and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization announce the publication of [Providing Hospice and Palliative Care in Rural and Frontier Areas](#) (PDF 4.8MB). This toolkit funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Office of Rural Health Policy, offers support to rural and frontier providers seeking to enhance access to hospice and palliative care. The content in this unique publication was informed by interviews and site visits with rural and frontier providers of hospice and palliative care from across the United States. Order a hardcopy with CD online from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. [\[Click Here\]](#)

NEW MEDICARE RULES CUT DOCTOR REIMBURSEMENT, INCREASE HOSPITAL PAYMENTS (AP/Yahoo!)

Final federal rules have been issued that will cut Medicare's reimbursement rates for doctors in 2006 by 4.4 percent while increasing payments for most hospitals by at least 3.7 percent

<http://www.healthleaders.com/news/newspage1.php?contentid=74287>

2006 MRHA Membership Dues
invoices will be sent out beginning December 1st via email. Hard copy will also be mailed.

Please contact our offices at 410.226.5527 if you have any questions regarding your

MARYLAND RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION NEWS



HHS Appropriations Bill

Late last week, we received word that rural health funding is in jeopardy. In the last few days, you, the members of NRHA, have placed hundreds of calls, faxes, and emails to key members of Congress. In addition, staff made personal calls to hundreds of grant recipients and organizations that would be affected by the cuts. It is not too late to contact your Representatives and Senators to warn them of the dangers of slashing the Rural Health Safety Net. On our end, we will update the membership on this bill as soon as we have solid information.

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## Rural Health Victory in the House We Did It!

### House Defeats FY06 Labor/HHS/ Education Appropriations Bill

Today (November 17<sup>th</sup>), the US House of Representatives defeated the FY06 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Bill (HR 3010), as reported by the conference committee. The bill would have eliminated or severely cut more than \$200 million from federal programs that form what the NRHA calls the "federal rural health safety net" – a group of programs, created either specifically for rural areas or for all underserved areas, that work together to address the pressing health care needs of Rural Americans.

The bill now returns to the conference committee for revision, and the House has passed a continuing resolution for funding of these programs until Dec. 17th. You can see how your Representative voted by visiting the NRHA [Legislative Action Center](#). **Remember: a vote AGAINST the bill was a vote FOR Rural America.**

## Medicare

### Prescription Drug Plan Finder Tool

CMS has released an online Prescription Drug Plan Finder Tool for Medicare providers that will soon be released to the general population. The tool will ask questions based on the coverage beneficiaries have now to provide them with tailored plan comparison information based on what is most important to them, including cost, coverage and convenience. Medicare beneficiaries who don't use the Internet will be able to get the same information by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). Not all of the data is in the plan finder since the deadline for many employers to submit their applications was Oct. 31 and some applications for those beneficiaries applying for extra help have not been finalized. For more information: [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**"Medicare Rx: A National Conversation"** Medicare's new prescription drug coverage can help you save money and bring you peace of mind now and in the future. But how does it work? Which type of plan should you choose? Join host John Palmer as he leads a lively conversation about this very important coverage. Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. EST on CNBC, Paid program sponsored by the Department of Health & Human Services.

The Fall 2005 Issue of the [Rural Monitor](#) is now available on the RAC web site and can be accessed at:

HTML version: <http://www.raconline.org/newsletter/web/fall05.html>

PDF version: <http://www.raconline.org/newsletter/pdf/fall2005.pdf>

In this issue:

Cover Story: Family Caregiving - A Gesture of Love / Interview with Governor David Beasley, Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services / Rethinking Human Services: Getting Started Toward Integrating Service Delivery / Look What's Coming: The Price of Privacy / Around the Country: EMS Live at Nite; Special Series - Rural Health Technical Assistance Centers / Spotlight on Rural Research: Health Care Quality - Rural Research Centers Produce Results

## 2005 Annual Maryland Rural Summit Awards

These awards are sponsored each year by the Maryland Rural Health Association, the Rural Maryland Council and the five Regional Rural Councils and the MD DHMH- Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. These awards are truly a great opportunity to show both appreciation and admiration for those who have worked tirelessly and have demonstrated results that are changing their rural communities for the better.

This year, the Awards Committee received nominations in seven rural award categories. Each category received multiple nominations, so the selection process proved to be very challenging. All of the nominees inspire us to tackle head on the many challenges that face rural citizens and the communities in which they live. *“And the winner is” .....*

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
Outstanding Rural Economic Development Award

The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy  
Outstanding Rural Community Development Award

Delegate Robert McKee & Delegate David Rudolph  
Outstanding Rural Legislator Award

Garrett County Health Department-Dental Care Program  
Outstanding Rural Health Program Award

Wicomico County State’s Attorney’s Office for the Wicomico EXILE Program.  
Outstanding Rural Health Achievement Award

Michael A. Stevens  
Outstanding Rural Health Practitioner Award

Annie Kronk, Ph.D.  
Outstanding Rural Volunteer Award