



A Few Words From Jill:

RHC PDSA Quality Improvement Project is Now Open – [Register Here](#)

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the RHC PDSA Quality Improvement Project, and we invite you to be a part of this exciting initiative!

Our primary aim is clear: to elevate patient care in rural communities to new heights. But that's not all - we're also dedicated to advancing the quality measurement agenda and providing comprehensive training for RHC staff. Through this project, we're empowering RHC professionals like you to implement effective practice improvement models that make a real difference.

One of our key objectives is to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement within RHCs. This means not only honing your skills in data collection and reporting but also fostering a mindset of innovation and growth. We understand that every RHC is unique, which is why our project is designed to be flexible and adaptable to your clinic's specific needs.

But here's the best part - all webinars, resources, and access to technology are provided to your organization at absolutely no cost. That's right - zero dollars! Access to high-quality training and support should never be a barrier to improving patient care.

What can you expect from the project? Well, for starters, we'll be hosting a series of engaging webinars led by industry experts. These sessions will cover everything from the fundamentals of quality improvement to advanced techniques for data analysis. And don't worry if you can't make it to every webinar - all sessions will be recorded, and related materials will be made available to you afterward.

I encourage you to include as many team members from your clinic (and hospital, if applicable) as possible. After all, improving patient care is a team effort, and the more minds we have working together, the greater the impact we can make. A schedule of the Core Project and optional webinars, including registration links, can be found [here](#). Please join these informative sessions and incorporate these best practices into your organization's quality initiatives.

Join us in this exciting journey towards better healthcare for all. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of rural communities.

We can't wait to see you at our upcoming webinars!

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need

any guidance (oester35@msu.edu).

Thanks,
Jill

Register for the 27th Annual Rural Health Conference April 25-26



Registration is now open for the 27th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference being held April 25-26, 2024 at Soaring Eagle Resort in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

This conference targets those working in rural health, including rural health clinics and hospitals. It also welcomes individuals and organizations from local public health, community mental health, substance use disorder treatment centers, and those working to positively impact social drivers of health. The conference aims to provide engaging education on relevant topics for rural health providers.

This year's agenda is nearing the final stages, packed with dynamic presenters and programming, to deliver our best Rural Health Conference to date. Please click [here](#) to view the draft agenda.

After registering, please visit [Soaring Eagle's website](#) and enter room block code **MCRH042323** when making your hotel reservation for the event.

If you have additional questions regarding partnerships for the Michigan Rural Health Conference, please contact Renee Calkins (renee.calkins@affiliate.msu.edu).

[Click Here to Register](#)

[Click Here for More Conference Information](#)

Nominate the 2024 Rural Health Professional of the Year

Nomination Deadline Is March 1

Since 1994, the Michigan Center for Rural Health (MCRH) has celebrated an outstanding rural health professional for achievements they have directed to advance Michigan's rural health initiatives. The recipient is chosen through a nomination process and will be celebrated with a special award during the 27th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference on April 25, 2024, at Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

"The Rural Health Professional of the Year Award" formally acknowledges someone deserving of recognition for their distinctive efforts to elevate rural health in Michigan. The award is granted to an individual who has carried out exemplary work in promoting health in rural areas, shown excellent leadership in the improvement of health care services to the rural areas of Michigan, and has made worthy contributions to the improvement of health to the people in rural Michigan.

If you know someone who fits this description – nominate them TODAY!

[Click Here for the Rural Health Professional of the Year Nomination Form](#)

Registration for the OsteoCHAMPS Camp for High School Students Closes March 1



OsteoCHAMPS
College of Osteopathic Medicine
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Each year since 2000, the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine has held an on-campus summer OsteoCHAMPS program to foster health career interests among disadvantaged Michigan high school students.

To help them achieve their career goals, the following are provided through OsteoCHAMPS:

- Greater academic preparation and competitiveness for higher education
- Lifelong learning and problem-solving skills
- Development of individual responsibility, appreciation for diversity, and teamwork
- Tools needed to set worthy goals toward attaining health care careers

This year's OsteoCHAMPS program will be held June 22-29 on MSU's East Lansing campus. ***The application form is now live and available until March 1.***

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Michigan State Loan Repayment Program (MSLRP) Applications Now Being Accepted



The Michigan State Loan Repayment Program (MSLRP) application program opened on Thursday, February 1.

MSLRP assists employers in the recruitment and retention of medical, dental, and mental health primary care providers who continue to demonstrate their commitment to building long-term primary care practices in underserved communities designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

MSLRP will assist those selected by providing up to \$300,000 in tax-free funds to repay their educational debt for up to ten years of participation.

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

The State of Rural Provider Compensation in 2023



STROUDWATER

Stroudwater Associates, in partnership with the NRHA, has developed a physician and advanced practice provider compensation survey for rural organizations. Representing over 6,000 rural providers, the survey results illustrate the enormous variability in provider pay across rural organizations and the pressing need for rural healthcare to align its provider pay to the organization's goals.

The first-of-its-kind report provides a path forward for rural healthcare organizations by outlining provider compensation trends, best practices, and potential challenges leaders might face when recruiting and retaining top talent in rural.

[Click Here to View the Survey Results](#)

National Rural Health Resource Center Releases Updated Population Health Toolkit



The National Rural Health Resource Center's recently updated Population Health Toolkit — which includes the newest population health data from a half-dozen publicly available data sets — is now available.

Developed and maintained with support from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, the Toolkit is designed to assist State Offices of Rural Health, state Flex Programs, and individual healthcare facilities as they seek to better understand, manage, and improve population health in their communities and state.

The toolkit includes a population health readiness assessment, tools, and resources to support healthcare facilities as they build their population health management capabilities, a web-based dashboard that displays county, state, national and, when available, facility-level data, tutorial videos, and more.

[Click Here to Read More About the Toolkit](#)

Just Released: CMS Interoperability and Prior Authorization Final Rule

CMS.gov

This final rule will improve the electronic exchange of health care data and streamline processes related to prior authorization through new requirements for Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations, state Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) programs, state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) FFS programs, Medicaid managed care plans, CHIP managed care entities, and Qualified Health Plan (QHP) issuers on the Federally-facilitated Exchanges (FFEs).

This final rule will also add new measures for eligible hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAHs) to report under the Medicare Promoting Interoperability Program and for MIPS eligible clinicians to report under the Promoting Interoperability performance category of the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

These policies, taken together, will reduce overall payer and provider burden and improve patient access to health information while continuing CMS's drive toward interoperability in the health care market.

[Click Here to View the Policy Fact Sheet](#)

[Click Here to Read The Final Rule](#)

Interested in Lifelong Learning for Older Adults - Introducing Get Set Up



GetSetUp is a fast-growing online community of older adults who want to learn, connect with others, and unlock new life experiences. GetSetUp partners with entities such as state and local government agencies, health providers, and community organizations to offer interactive programming taught by peers who are experts in their field, social hours hosted by community members, and special events with speakers who directly address areas of interest to older adults.

Classes are taught in English, Spanish, Hindi and Mandarin by older adults on a highly interactive, custom-built video platform where participants can connect during and in between classes.

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Two Videos to Get Started with Pulmonary Rehab in Rural Communities



Two new educational videos are now available from the National Rural Health Resource Center highlighting the prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in the country's rural communities and the steps that critical access hospitals and other small rural hospitals can take to improve access to much-needed pulmonary rehabilitation services.

The videos, developed as part of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy-funded Expanding Rural Access to Pulmonary Care Demonstration Project, are designed to help hospital staff, administrators, board members, and community members better understand the seriousness of COPD in rural communities and the benefits of improving access to local pulmonary rehab programs.

Download the two videos below.

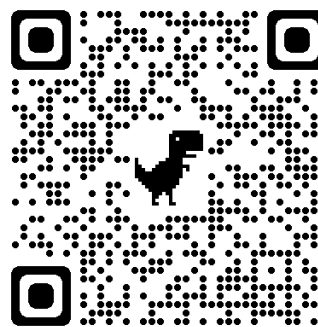
Video 1: Understanding COPD and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Video 2: How to Launch a Pulmonary Rehab Program

Download Provider Handouts on Treating Women with Bleeding Disorders



FOUNDATION FOR
Women & Girls
with Blood Disorders



Here are two great resources from the Foundation for Women and Girls with Blood Disorders to utilize in your RHC. Both documents have been extensively reviewed to provide the most up-to-date information in an easy-to-absorb format.

Handouts include:

- *Menstruation Tear-Off Sheets*
- *Sickle Cell Disease and Pregnancy Fact Sheets*

Scan this QR Code to download Provider Handouts

Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Services in the RHC Setting



Recently, CMS released guidance on how to bill for Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Services in the RHC setting.

As of January 1, 2024, Section 4124(c) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (CAA, 2023) establishes Medicare coverage and payment for IOP services that FQHCs and RHCs provide for people with mental health needs.

An IOP is a distinct and organized outpatient program of psychiatric services you provide for patients who have an acute mental illness, which includes but isn't limited to, conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders.

[Click Here to Read the Full Document](#)



Upcoming MCRH Educational Events

Grand Rounds:

February 22, 2024, 12-1 PM EST

Pediatrics Grand Rounds: E-cigarette Prevention & Cessation in Youth

Speaker: Brittany Tayler MD, FAAP

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Community Health Workers

March 7, 2024, 12-1 PM EST

Dietetics Grand Rounds: Sleep and Health Care Providers: Incorporating Sleep Education to Reduce Chronic Disease Risk

Speaker: Robin M. Tucker, PhD, RD, FAND

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Physicians

March 14, 2024, 12-1 PM EST

NEW! Special Topics Grand Rounds: Chronic Kidney Disease: General Overview & Risk Factors

Speaker: Cynthia Nichols-Jackson, MSN, BSN, RN & Jaclyn Ellis, MA, CHES

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Community Health Workers

Project ECHO:

March 20, 2024, 12-1 PM EST

Infectious Disease ECHO: Hepatitis C for Medical Providers

Speaker: Dr. Peter Gulick

[Register Here](#)

CME Provided

EMS:

March 13, 2024, 6-7 PM EST

The Intersection of Social Determinants of Health and EMS

Speakers: Laura Mispelon, MCRH Social Drivers of Health Manager, and Andrea Abbas, MCRH EMS Programs Manager

[Register Here](#)

CME Provided

[Please visit the MCRH EMS Continuing Education Website](#) for the complete 2024 EMS Webinar Schedule

Additional Resources

Here are some topics impacting the RHC Community in Michigan this month.

- [NEW: 14 HPSA Designations Withdrawn Across Michigan - Does the Change Affect Michigan Communities for Better or Worse?](#)
- [NEW: American Heart Association Rural Midwest Library Grant](#)
- [NEW: Whole Kids Foundation School Garden Grant Program](#)
- [The Michigan Health Council \(MHC\) Offers Five Virtual One-Hour Implicit Bias Training Courses](#)
- [HRSA Payment Program for RHC Buprenorphine-Trained Providers](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates and Resources

This a reminder that COVID-19 is still having an impact on our rural neighbors and those providing care and solutions. **Please click on the links below for important information regarding the latest on vaccines, boosters, testing, and other recommendations:**

- RESOURCE: [Updates to Coverage for COVID-19 Tests](#)
- RESOURCE: [CMS Recinds COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Requirements](#)
- RESOURCE: [RHC Vaccine Confidence News and Information - UPDATED](#)
- RESOURCE: [One Stop Online for COVID Prevention and Treatment in Every County](#)
- RESOURCE: [COVID-19 Impact on Emergency Preparedness for RHCs](#)
- RESOURCE: [The Implications of Long COVID for Rural Communities](#)
- UPDATE: [MDHHS Medicaid Policy Bulletins](#)
- UPDATE: [MDHHS L-Letters Guidance](#)
- ONGOING: [Understanding the Federal COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates: Practical Considerations for Covered Employers](#)

**A Special
Thank You
to MCRH's
2024
Organization
Sponsors**



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website**

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news and information:**



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