A Few Words From Jill:

I look forward to seeing a great turnout of Rural Health Clinic providers at the 27th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference in Mt. Pleasant!

I hope you come away feeling inspired and ready to take what you’ve learned back to your clinics and communities. I also encourage you to attend the Practice Management Workshop on June 12, 2024, at Soaring Eagle in Mt. Pleasant.

Once again, we are thrilled to welcome our friends Tressa Sacrey and Michelle Renee of Health Services Associates who will be on hand to share their expertise. The PM Workshop is a unique hybrid, live and virtual, event.

Tressa and Michelle have developed a terrific agenda that includes strategies that will improve your everyday operations in your RHC from discussing auditing HR and medical records, examining ongoing compliance requirements, effectively navigating leadership and conflict resolution, and other hot topics.

Please take a look at the full PM Workshop agenda HERE.

Click HERE to reserve your spot in this annual improvement and idea sharing event and I hope to see you in June!

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any guidance (oester35@msu.edu).

Thanks,
Jill
For several months, NARHC has been engaging with various CMS staff in an attempt to resolve the CPT Category II code issue for RHCs.

For context, RHCs are currently unable to report CPT Cat II codes on claims without most Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) rejecting the entire claim. However, CPT Cat II codes would allow RHCs to easily report and have certain quality measures appropriately tracked.

NARHC recently sent a letter to the CMS Administrator and various other CMS officials regarding this significant barrier.

Click Here to Read the Letter to the CMS Administrator

Michigan Families Urged to Get Children Caught Up on Vaccines For National Infant Immunization Week

During National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) April 22-29, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) urges Michigan parents to ensure their children are fully vaccinated on time for the best possible protection from serious diseases.

Each year, NIIW focuses on the positive impact of vaccination on the lives of infants and children — and this year it’s a priority to ensure families stay on track for their children’s well-child visits and routinely recommended vaccinations.

According to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) as of Dec. 2023, only 66.4% of Michigan children 19 through 35 months of age were up to date on recommended vaccines.

“Now more than ever, it is important to make sure Michiganders, especially children, are up to date on all recommended immunizations,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. “Vaccine preventable diseases still exist, and they’re here in Michigan. Now is the time to get our little Michiganders caught up on vaccines and protect them from all preventable diseases.”

Click Here to Learn More About NIIW
The National Training and Technical Assistance Partnership (NTTAP) on Clinical Workforce Development, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) and its Weitzman Institute under Moses/Weitzman Health System, Inc. provides a model of free technical and training assistance to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) across the United States.

This FREE training and technical assistance is data driven, cutting edge and focused on quality and operational improvement to support health centers and look-alikes. Here are two upcoming training and technical assistance opportunities:

**Developing Quality Improvement Strategies in Team-Based Care Activity Session**
Thursday, April 25, 2024 1:00pm-2:00pm ET - [REGISTER](#)

**Advancing Quality Improvement in Team-Based Care Activity Session**
Thursday, May 2, 2024 2:00pm-3:00pm ET - [REGISTER](#)

[Click Here to Learn More About NTTAP](#)

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**MDHHS "We Treat Hep C" Initiative**

More than 100,000 Michiganders are known to be infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV). National estimates indicate that only 50% of persons impacted by the virus are aware of their infection, suggesting the prevalence of HCV in Michigan could be upwards of 200,000. All-oral HCV treatment regimens, called direct-acting antivirals (DAAs), can cure HCV infection in 8-12 weeks; however, few persons diagnosed with HCV have had access to these life-saving medications.

The MDHHS [We Treat Hep C](#) initiative aims to eliminate HCV among Michigan Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Plan beneficiaries by removing barriers to curing HCV:

- When prescribing Mavyret®, prior authorization, a specialist prescriber, submission of a liver fibrosis score, and sobriety are **no longer required**.
- When prescribing non-preferred HCV DAAs, a specialist prescriber, submission of a liver fibrosis score, and sobriety use are **no longer required**. Complete the [standard Medicaid prior authorization form](#).
Effective January 1, 2024, MFTs and MHCs can bill Medicare independently for their services furnished for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. Medicare Part B pays MFTs and MHCs for these services at 75% of what a clinical psychologist is paid under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.

In March, the CMS Center for Program Integrity compiled a list of FAQs to address these services.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking comments on Medicare Advantage (MA) data.

This is an opportunity for Rural Health Clinics to weigh in on issues surrounding MA, including shortcomings in existing data and areas where new data collection and publication would be helpful. CMS designed this Request for Information in response to feedback that the MA program should be more transparent.
The Rural Healthcare Provider Transition Project (RHPTP) application cycle for the 2024-2025 project year is now open. Applications are due by August 15, 2024.

Five small rural hospitals and certified rural health clinics are selected each year to receive one year of focused, virtual technical assistance designed to strengthen their organization’s understanding of the key elements of value-based care. Project focus areas include quality, efficiency, patient experience, and safety.

Organizations selected to participate in the upcoming project year will be notified by phone and email in September, and project activities begin in October.

Upcoming MCRH Educational Events

Grand Rounds:
May 1, 2024, 12-1 PM EST
Geriatrics Grand Rounds: Social Isolation & Loneliness in Rural Areas: Impact on Older Adults
Speakers: Barbra Link, LMSW, CRS-A/D & Jane Lozen, MSN, RN, PMHCNS-BC, CPHQ
Register Here
CE Provided for Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers, Pharmacists/Pharmacy Technicians, and Community Health Workers

May 2, 2024, 12-1 PM EST
Special Topics Grand Rounds: CKD: Lifestyle Interventions and Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs
Speaker: Jodi Burke, MSW & Caitlin Buechley, MPH
Register Here
CE Provided for Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Community Health Workers
Workers
May 7, 2024, 12-1 PM EST
Pharmacy Grand Rounds: Mission Impossible: Treating Pain in Patients with Substance Use Disorder
Speaker: Jill Covyeou, PharmD
Register Here
CE credits are available for Physicians, Nurses, and Pharmacists/Pharmacy Technicians

Project ECHO:
May 15, 2024, 12-1 PM EST
Infectious Disease ECHO: Update on Clostridium Difficile for Medical Providers
Speaker: Dr. Peter Gulick
Register Here
CME Provided

Additional Resources
Here are some topics impacting the RHC Community in Michigan this month.
- 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 ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS

More than a million adults in Michigan have chronic kidney disease. . . and most of them don’t even know it. 64% of kidney failure in the US is caused by diabetes or hypertension. With early detection, we can prevent or slow its progression. The NKFM offers information, support, resources, and referrals for those with kidney disease, those at risk, and their loved ones. Find ways to empower your community to create healthier, happier lives at