The Rural Health Challenge: Opportunities that Transcend Our Issues

Occupational Therapy 511
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Center for Rural Health
UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

Center for Rural Health

- Established in 1980, at The University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND
- One of the country’s most experienced state rural health offices
- UND Center of Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
- Focus on:
  - Education, Training, and Resource Awareness
  - Community Development and Technical Assistance
  - Native American Health
  - Rural Health Workforce
  - Rural Health Research
  - Rural Health Policy
  - Program Evaluation
- Web site: ruralhealth.und.edu

Primary Questions

- What is rural health?
- Why is community important to rural health?
- What are some of the important rural health issues?
- How do you see local health care?

A Guiding Principle for Rural Health

“Vision is the art of seeing things invisible”

Jonathan Swift
What is Rural Health?

- Philosophy: rural people have the same right to expect healthy lives and access to care as do urban people – fairness frame
  - Access essential services locally or regionally
  - Access to specialty services through network arrangements
  - Quality of care on par with urban
  - Availability of technology

- Rural health is very community oriented – interdependence frame
  - Integral part of what a community is and how people see themselves
  - Sectors: Economic/business, public/government, education, faith/church, and health/human services
  - Direct services provided to the public and secondary impact for other sectors
  - Major employer

Comparative Rural and Urban Strengths and Weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong informal support</td>
<td>More stable economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Availability of resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>Growing and diverse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established interdependence</td>
<td>Change is natural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weaknesses:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewed population</td>
<td>Lack of cohesiveness</td>
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<td>demographics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluctuating economy</td>
<td>Limited informal support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resistance to change</td>
<td>Competition among providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortage of professionals</td>
<td>Competition for fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>More contentious-fractions</td>
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So Why Is Community Important to Rural Health?

- Rural culture – more interdependence, connectedness, cohesiveness, collaborative, and people identify with institutions and each other

- Relationships – things get done because of people, and sometimes don’t get done because of people – are the right people at the table?

- Rural health contributes to the community – provision of health services (access), improvement of health, economic contributions, community development, health facilities are a sense of community identity

- Communities contribute to the rural health system – employees, purchase of health services, financing, fund raising, volunteers, ideas and vision

Implications of strengths and weaknesses on rural health systems
What are Some Important Rural Health Issues?

- Access to and availability of care
- Financial concerns facing rural hospitals and health systems
- Health workforce
- Quality of Care
- Health Information Technology
- Networks – rural hospitals, urban hospitals, clinics, others
- Emergency Medical Services – EMS, ambulance, quick response units
- Community and Economic Development
- Health System Reform

North Dakota Critical Access Hospitals & Referral Centers

North Dakota Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas

North Dakota Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas

Source: Brad Gibbens, Associate Director
UNL Center for Rural Health
Health Care and Economic Sectors Contribute to Community Development

**Health Care Sector**
- Health Status
- Services
- Employment
- Finance
- Resources
- Elements in the local economy

**Economic Development Sector**
- Wealth and prosperity
- Product – goods and services
- Employment
- Capital, investment, income
- Resources
- Grow and maintain local economy

**Health and Economic Convergence**
- Global or macro level goals
- Acquisition and management of resources
- Employment – primary and secondary jobs
- Finance – inflow and outflow
- Economic impact
- Overall community building

(Source: Brad Gibbens, Center for Rural Health, 2009)

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**Langdon Activity Center**

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**Health System Reform**

- Affordable Care Act
- Frontier Extended Stay Clinic
- Bundled Payments
- Medical Home Model
- Quality of Care
- Frontier Community Health Integration Model
- Accountable Care Organizations
- Evidence-based Medicine
- Prevention
- CAH Inclusions in Reform
- Value-based Purchasing
- Health Insurance
- Health Workforce

Assure Rural Access to Care

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**Contact us for more information!**

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