The Future of Rural Health: A Convergence of Community and Policy Frames
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Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

Presentation Themes

- Environmental factors influence rural health (demographics, economics, workforce, finance, quality of care, and health technology)

- The concept of community is pivotal in discussing the future of rural health

- Policy is more than a reimbursement target or a set of grants – it is our ability to frame our issues and communicate them effectively in a policy arena

- There is a need for a national rural voice not simply one representing individual rural sectors
Issues and Conditions that Impact the Future of Rural Health

- Demographics
- Economics
- Workforce
- Finance
- Technology
- Quality of care and service

Demographic Impact

- Smaller population base to support health providers and organizations
- Skewed patient base typically to an older population
- Increased focus on chronic disease and care
- Changing service base (less OB and more geriatric care)
- Greater reliance on Medicare
Demographics

• Number of Counties lost population from 1990-2000

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MN</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>ND</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 of 87</td>
<td>23 of 56</td>
<td>47 of 53</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>(89%)</td>
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• Population 65 and older

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MN</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>ND</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
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<td>2030</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
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Economic Impact

• Rural hospital is typically the second or third largest employer

• Primary and secondary economic impact on total dollars and employment

• Rural physician (and clinic staff of seven) has an impact of $320,000

• In ND, 32 CAHs have a primary impact of about $69 million and a secondary impact of about $35 million, total $104 million on the rural economy

• Rural physicians in ND have an impact of about $28 million

• Rural health serves as an economic anchor for rural communities
Health Workforce Impact

• State employment impact is significant in MN, MT, and ND

• Health workforce supply and demand – lack of alignment

• Technology

• Strategies

Financial Impact

• Medicare as a challenge and an opportunity
  o From inequity to performance
  o The cost-prospective-cost shuffle

• Managed Care or Managed Cost
Quality of Care Impact

• Institute of Medicine “Quality Through Collaboration The Future of Rural Health

• Linkage of performance to quality of care

• Rural hospital opportunity for impact and reward

• Federal policy opportunity

• Future of rural health: champions for quality

Health Technology Impact

• Opportunity of Technology
  o Quality of care
  o Workforce
  o Distance and time

• Challenge of Technology
  o Finance and cost
  o Role of federal and state policy
  o Prospect of grants

• Future of rural health: leading HIT application
Rural Community and Rural Health Linkages

- Rural health is community health

- Community provides to health organizations: ideas, inspiration, vitality, wants and needs, workforce, material/social resources, funding, volunteers, and patients

- Health organizations provide to their communities: health and health care, economic impact, educated and committed workforce, leaders

Rural Community Sectors

- Communities are comprised of key sectors
  - Health sector
  - Education sector
  - Business and private sector
  - Church and faith sector
  - Public sector
  - Cultural sector

- Sectors influence each other to build and influence the nature of the community

- Sectors in a rural community can be even more dynamic in their potential importance than found in urban centers
Future of Rural Health Linked to Future of Rural Community

- Rural communities have strengths and weaknesses
- Future of rural health related to tapping into and maintaining community sectors
- State Rural Health Associations can and do reflect community values and input
- Future of rural health connected to forging multi-organizational alliances
- Future of rural health linked to sharing regional perspectives and forging a new regional identity
- Future of rural health is associated with our ability to face hard facts like community survivability and viability

The Importance of Framing Policy Issues

- Rural People, Rural Policy initiative (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)
- Framing defined
- Why is it important to frame our policy communication?
- What does the research say about positive rural frames?
- Framing example
- Future of rural health: creating and controlling our policy message
Creating a National Rural Voice

- The National Rural Assembly (Kellogg and Ford Foundations)
- A united rural voice?
  - Health
  - Economic Development
  - Education
  - Housing
  - New Americans
  - Faith
  - Business
  - Legal Services
  - Public and Private Sector
  - Other Voices

Creating a National Rural Voice

- The need to “frame” rural policy
- View rural policy in a broader context
- Foster new rural action
- Create alliances between rural and urban America
- Future of rural health: Being part of a larger voice for rural America
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