

# Montana Rural Health Association



Montana Rural Health

Fall 2008

## Office of Rural Health Director Kristin Juliar, Chair of NRHA Frontier Constituency Group

January 2008 marked an exciting time for Montana Rural Health enthusiasts. Kristin Juliar, Director of the Montana Office of Rural Health based at Montana State University in Bozeman, was selected to Chair the National Rural Health Associations (NRHA) Frontier Constituency Group.

In October, the Frontier Constituency Group published a newsletter discussing the Frontier definition. Frontier, like rural, suburban, or urban is a term intended to categorize a portion of the population spectrum. Frontier refers to the most remote end of that continuum. For the purpose of defining Frontier for State and Federal programs, NRHA recommends that a variety of methodologies be available from which to choose. This will ensure that a program selects the most appropriate designation to suit its purpose, while reducing the likelihood that a program will be forced into a definition that does not fit.

Examples of different methodologies are as follows:



- ◆ Rural-Urban Commuting areas
- ◆ Frontier Education Center Composite Designation of Frontier Counties
- ◆ Frontier Areas for Community Health Center Purposes
- ◆ Frontier Extended Stay Clinics
- ◆ Telehealth Designation

To help make our voices heard, Ms. Juliar urges you to join the Frontier group. "Our membership continues to be among the smallest of the Constituency Groups." Please encourage your colleagues to join the Frontier Constituency Group. They can join while renewing membership or becoming a new member of NRHA. Existing

members can also send an email to NRHA at:

[http://  
www.ruralhealthweb.org/  
go/top/contact-us/  
contact-the-nrha](http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/go/top/contact-us/contact-the-nrha) asking to join the Frontier CG.

For additional information about the Frontier Constituency Group, please visit: [http://](http://www.ruralhealthweb.org)

[www.ruralhealthweb.org/  
go/top/about-the-  
nrha/constituency-  
groups](http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/go/top/about-the-nrha/constituency-groups)

For additional information please contact Kristin Juliar at [kjuliar@montana.edu](mailto:kjuliar@montana.edu) 406-994-6003.

## SPOTLIGHT on Montana's New AHEC System

The first Montana AHEC (Area Health Education Center) office was opened in 1985 and has had a long standing relationship with the WWAMI Medical School Program. In 2007, the Montana AHEC Program Office was able to expand its reach and develop an additional 4 regional centers. Two centers were opened in the Fall of 2007, one in 2008 and the last will open in the Fall of 2009.

Eastern MT AHEC is the largest of the regions and serves 27 counties in Eastern Montana—a vast 72,000 square miles! Eastern MT AHEC is housed at RiverStone Health in Billings, MT. Over the last year, Eastern MT AHEC has developed a brochure on finding health professions education programs in Montana, done outreach to high school and undergraduate students for shadowing opportunities with healthcare professionals and overseen placement of 198 healthcare professional students in rural and underserved settings. Programs are being developed for outreach to elementary aged children to learn about careers in healthcare as well. The Eastern MT AHEC also hosts the Billings WWAMI Track Office which provides 3rd and 4th year clerkship opportunities for WWAMI medical students in Billings.

South Central MT AHEC serves 11 counties, is affiliated with the Montana Hospital Association and is located in Dillon, MT. Over the past year, South Central

MT AHEC has been the lead for the Montana Recruitment Collaborative which is a collaborative between the Montana Primary Care Office, the Montana Primary Care Association, Indian Health Services, Montana Hospital Association, and AHECs. Through this collaborative, South Central MT AHEC has been working on a branded marketing effort to bring health professionals to rural Montana. Another major project has been the implementation of Practice Sights, a tracking software system. This software will allow the Recruitment Collaborative partners to more effectively and efficiently follow up with candidates interested in Montana healthcare positions.

In September 2008, the Western MT AHEC officially opened its doors, making it the third regional AHEC Center established in Montana. The Western MT AHEC is housed within the University of Montana in the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences. The Western MT AHEC Center was organized by an active regional committee over the course of the year.

September 2009 will mark the opening of the 4th Regional Center in North Central MT and will be located in the Great Falls area.

For more information or to contact any of your regional offices:

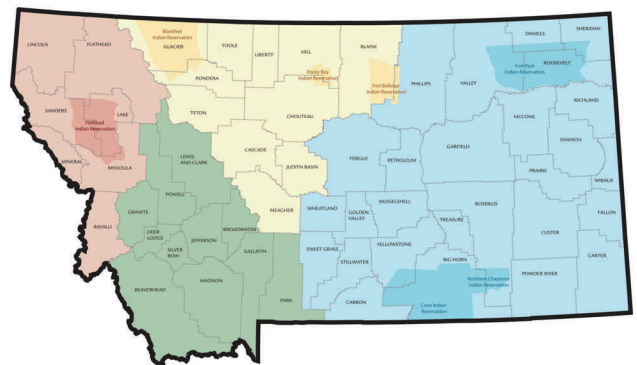
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 406-994-6003

Susan Barton, Center Director  
**Eastern Montana AHEC**  
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 susan.bar@riverstonehealth.org  
 406-247-3379

Lisa Benzel, Center Director  
**South Central Montana AHEC**  
<http://www.scmtahec.org/>  
 lisa@mtha.org  
 406-683-2790

Larry White, Interim Center Director  
**Western Montana AHEC**  
 larry.white@u.montana.edu  
 406-243-4746

**North Central Montana AHEC**  
 September 2009



Montana AHEC Regions

## Alliance for Health— Day on the Hill

On Tuesday, February 3, 2009, the Montana Alliance for Health will be holding a Health Education Day in the Rotunda of the Capitol. This large event will have display tables, lunch and opportunities to interact with our legislators on health issues.

Come visit the Montana Healthcare Workforce Advisory Committee, the Montana Recruitment Collaborative and the Montana Rural Health Association booths while you're there!

For more information contact Cliff Christian at 406-443-6515.



Montana Capitol Building, Helena, MT



National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) is releasing Policy Platform papers to be posted on the NOSORH webpage at year's end. These papers examine some key rural health issues.

The Policy Platform Papers will be focused on the following areas:

- ◆ Expanding the Rural Healthcare Workforce
- ◆ Emergency Medical Services in Rural Communities
- ◆ Reducing Oral Health Disparities in Rural Communities
- ◆ Reducing Behavioral Health Disparities in Rural Communities

Three more policy papers are in the works covering: HIT (Health Information Technology), critical access hospitals and underserved populations.

To view these policy papers visit:  
[www.nosorh.org](http://www.nosorh.org)

## NRHA Conference Calendar

### December 10-12

Minority and Multicultural Health Conference  
Albuquerque, NM

### January 26-28

Rural Health Policy Institute  
Washington, DC

### May 4

2009 Rural Medical Educators Conference  
Miami Beach, FL

### May 5-8

Annual Conference  
Miami Beach, FL

### July 21-24

2009 Quality and Clinical Conference  
Park City, UT

### September 9-11

Rural Pharmacy Conference  
Portland, OR



Improving the Health of 62 Million Rural Americans  
[www.RuralHealthWeb.org](http://www.RuralHealthWeb.org)

### October 6-7

2009 Rural Health Clinic Conference  
Portland, OR

### October 7-9

2009 Critical Access Hospital Conference  
Portland, OR

### December 9-11

2009 Minority and Multicultural Health Conference  
Memphis, TN



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