

Montana Rural Health Association

Make Health Happen Summit!

Promoting wellness and prevention in rural communities was the topic of discussion at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT on August 9th- 10th. The Summit was sponsored by many organizations including: Senator Max Baucus, the Montana Office of Rural Health/Area Health Education Center, Flying Horse Communication, the Montana Chamber Foundation, and others. This summit, *Make Health Happen: Promoting Wellness and Prevention in Rural Communities*, showcased innovative projects working to make our communities healthier. National and local Montana government officials, businessmen, health care providers, non-profit organizations, public health workers, educators and others came together to make connections and figure out how to propel the prevention and wellness efforts in rural communities.

Make Health Happen offered an impressive line-up of keynote speakers, which included: Larry Krystkowiak, former professional

basketball player, University of Montana and NBA head coach; Sally Jewel, President and CEO of REI; Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Stacey Bohlen, Executive Director of the National Indian Health Board; and Neil Nicoll, President and CEO of the YMCA of the USA.

The keynote presentations offered insight into a variety of topics. Larry Krystkowiak spoke of his experiences growing up in rural Shelby, Montana. He stressed the importance of encouraging our children have an active lifestyle. Sally Jewell pushed everyone to incorporate more outdoor activities into their life, and made it clear that the outdoors is a welcoming place for everyone. Collaboration and partnerships as a means of improving the health and wellness of a community was the focus of comments by Neil Nicoll. Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey addressed in detail the childhood obesity epidemic, and some approaches that can be

taken to battle this growing health concern. Stacey A. Bohlen gave an update on the health of "Indian Country". She spoke of the importance of Native Americans returning to the consumption of Native foods and engaging in an active lifestyle, as a way to combat diabetes and obesity.

Conference participants had the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops and one-on-one sessions with local and national experts. The focus was to build on current successes, create partnerships, and find innovative ways to confront the challenges facing rural communities.

Make Health Happen also served as a platform for the launching of Montana's Rural Health Initiative (RHI). The Rural Health Initiative (RHI) is a highly interactive website was developed as an avenue for connecting Montanans and linking health and wellness programs and experts. The website serves as an online community and network of information to promote



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healthy strategies that work in Montana. Educational webinars are also provided as a tool for RHI members. Webinars provide ideas and referrals to innovative programs around the state. The RHI also encourages networking and collaboration via communication in the form of a listserv and a quarterly e-newsletter. The RHI provides a place where communities can work together to create and improve initiatives aimed at increasing the health of all Montanans.

For those who attended the *Make Health Happen* Summit, people left invigorated and excited about developing and implementing health and wellness initiatives in their own rural and frontier communities across Montana.

For more information on the Summit or how to join the RHI please contact Shalina Mirza at 406-994-5310.

To access the RHI website: www.montanaruralhealthinitiative.org/

Institute of Translational Health Sciences Offers Resources to Support Translational Research in the WWAMI Region

What is translational research? Translational research involves moving knowledge and discovery gained from the basic sciences to its application in clinical and community settings. This concept is often summarized by the phrases "bench-to-bedside" and "bedside-to-community" research. Everyone from basic scientists to community-based researchers can be involved in translational research. The end-goal of translational research is to improve human health.

The *Institute of Translational Health Sciences* (ITHS), founded in 2007, is a unique organization that seeks to promote and support the conduct of translational research (www.iths.org). The ITHS is a partnership involving many institutions, organizations, and individuals, including a number across the WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho) region.

The goal of the ITHS is to make a positive impact on human health by enabling and sustaining innovative translational research and research collaborations across disciplines and professions. The ITHS promotes collaboration between academia, industry, non-profit

agencies, government, and the community. The ITHS works to foster innovative research and research partnerships, create and sustain research resources, and ensure a translational research pipeline through education and career development programs.

Any researcher or individual interested in translational research is invited to become an ITHS member. **There is no cost to join the ITHS!** Members are eligible for pilot grants and other ITHS resources, such as access to educational programs, consultations, facilitated access to translational technologies and resources, and mentorship to further their research career. **To get started, just go to www.iths.org/membership.**

The Institute of Translational Health Sciences is an interdisciplinary consortium funded through the NIH-NCRR Clinical Translational Science Award (CTSA) to the University of Washington and reaches throughout the WWAMI region via its Regional Collaborations Program. Please contact Josh Allen, Regional Liaison for the ITHS for further information.



“It has been very useful to have the infrastructure of the UW available through the ITHS, because some of those resources I need are not available locally.” - Erica Woodahl, PhD, University of Montana

CONTACT

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Office of Rural Health Mapping Project

In the Fall of 2008, the Montana Office of Rural Health (MORH) and the Montana Area Health Education Center (MT AHEC) initiated development of the *Map Project*. The initial purpose of the Map Project was to identify, by illustrations, the location of each of the major program activities of the MORH and MT AHEC.

Maps were prepared to highlight the four MT AHEC county areas of responsibility and the program activities conducted within those areas by the regional AHEC's -and- by the Montana AHEC Program Office and MORH.

For example, the maps show the location of each of following programmatic activities: (1) All programs, (2) Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant (SHIP) Program, (3) Grants Programs, (4) Rural and Underserved Opportunities Program (R/UOP), (5) Student/Resident Experiences in Com-

munity Health (NHSC SEARCH Program), (6) Targeting Rural and Underserved Track (TRUST Program), (7) Hospital Visits, (8) Community Health Services Development Program (CHSD), (9) Dental Screening Program, (10) Advisory Committee Members, (11) Grant Letters of Support, (12) Health & Wellness Program/Rural Health Initiative, (13) Healthshare Montana Advisory Board, (14) Health Care Workforce Advisory Committee, and (15) High School Summer Program Participants. The maps show that during 2008, there were programmatic activities in 80 Montana communities and most of the 56 counties.

In early 2009, the Map Project was expanded to illustrate the number and distribution of health care professionals in counties throughout the state. These maps include: (1) physicians, (2) dentists, (3) physician assistants, (4) nurse practitioners, and

(5) certified nurse midwives. Some of these maps are included in the publication of the Montana ORH entitled "Montana's Primary Care Workforce" which was prepared by a medical student (Saul Rivard), working for the Montana ORH in the summer of 2009. In addition, other maps illustrate the infrastructure of the Montana Health Care Delivery System and the location of health professions education training programs in Montana colleges and universities.

Data for the maps was prepared by the MORH and MT AHEC staff. The maps were produced by Peyton Consulting at the National Center for the Analysis of Health-care Data in Blacksburg, Virginia.

For more information on the mapping project please contact Frank Newman by email at fnewman@montana.edu or by phone (406)994-7510.

Montana Conference Calendar

Pathways Into Health Annual Conference

Mark your calendars for this exciting event October 7-9, 2009! The purpose of this conference is to bring together a diverse group of individuals to contribute to the development of appropriate and effective educational methodologies for primarily distance-based AI/AN health professions education. The conference will be held at the Big Sky Resort in beautiful Big Sky, Montana.



Please visit: <http://pathwaysintohealthconference.org/> for more information - or - Contact Lesley Craig, Lesley.Craig@hhs.gov



NRHA Conference Calendar

September 9-11

Medication Use in Rural America Conference
Kansas City, MO

December 9-11

Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference
Memphis, TN

October 6-7

Rural Health Clinic Conference
Portland, OR

January 25-27

Rural Health Policy Institute
Washington, DC

October 7-9

Critical Access Hospital Conference
Portland, OR

May 18-21

2010 Annual Rural Health Conference
Savannah, GA



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