



## **eNewsletter - February, 2010**

February, 2010

Dear RoundTable members:

Three key events to mark on your calendar:

Thursday, May 6, 2010

6th Annual New England Small Rural Hospital Improvement Summit.

Where: New England Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

When: 8:30 a.m.- 3 p.m.

More: Visit our web site for registration and sponsorship forms.

Friday, Sept. 24, 2010

5th Annual Rural Oral Health Conference.

Place: Westford Regency Inn & Convention Center, Westford, MA.

More: Visit the facility website.

Thursday, Oct. 28 and Friday, Oct. 29

13th Annual RoundTable Symposium.

Place: The Inns & Spa at Mills Falls, Meredith, NH on Lake Winnepesaukee.

More information to follow!



### **RoundTable Visits Washington; Meets with Legislators**

Martha McLeod (far right) and Sen. Shaheen's legislative aides look over rural data for New England. RoundTable members and supporters were in Washington on January 25-27 to take part in the National Rural Health Association's annual Policy Institute. Marion Pawlek, RoundTable Executive Director, attended as did Martha McLeod, Executive Director of the North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) and Nancy Frank, NCHC staff member. Also joining our group in the Hill visits was Paul Dupre, Executive Director, Washington County (VT) Mental Health Services.

Martha reported that "although we had hoped the trip would be a celebration of health reform" the mood was reasonably upbeat nonetheless. Martha, Marion and Nancy visited with the NH delegation and met with legislative aides in the offices of Congressman Paul Hodes and Senators Carol Shea-Porter and Jeanne Shaheen. Martha said the staffers are very knowledgeable on rural issues and understand our needs. The RoundTable group also heard Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chair of the Senate Rural Health Caucus, and Senators Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Mike Johanns (R-NE) speak on the current status of healthcare reform. Sen. Harkin was optimistic that we would get a health reform bill.

### **Gov. Lynch Tours Mid-State Health Center**

NH Gov. John Lynch recently visited Mid-State Health Center, to learn more about the "medical home" model, as practiced at the Center. CEO Sharon Beaty gave the governor a tour of the new facility in Plymouth, NH, and Medical Director Dr. Frederick Kelsey explained how the Center's coordination of care contributes to patient satisfaction and cost savings. Mid-State is one of only four medical practices in NH to achieve the highest level of recognition as a patient-centered medical home from the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

Read the full article.

### **Hope for Rural in Obama Budget**

The term "rural" appears 42 times in the Obama budget. And there is encouraging funding for healthcare, in the Health and Human Services section of the Budget. As David Reynolds, Senior Policy Advisor for Health to VT Sen. Bernie Sanders, commented, "the Administration seems to understand the problem of access to healthcare." Reynolds pointed to the \$2.5 Billion in the budget for health centers, with support for 25 new centers. This is a 13% increase, he said, and also noted that there is a \$26 million increase for the National Health Service Corps line (a 15% increase). There's also funding for rural in the Dept. of Agriculture budget, for expansion of broadband services, and strong support for child nutrition and WIC reauthorization.

[Learn More](#)

### **"Something to Smile About" - NH Dental Society's Plan for Better Oral Health 2010**

The NH Dental Society wants all citizens to have access to better oral health care. The 2010 Plan has these goals: Educate and demonstrate the importance of prevention

- Educate all about the link between oral and overall health
- Initiate new and support current public/private partnerships to improve access and utilization of oral health care
- Remove barriers to oral health care
- Enhance the oral health workforce

[Read more about the Plan.](#)

### **New Report on Access to Dental Services, Workforce in NH**

The NH Center for Public Policy issued a report in January on access to dental services and availability of dental providers across the state. One finding: a measure of access to dental care is the degree to which different populations access emergency department (ED) services for dental emergencies and there is wide variation across the state. Example: Franklin and Claremont have more than twice the state average for the rate per 10,000 children or adults accessing an ED for a dental issue. "This suggests that, for various reasons, many people cannot access dental care until their disease becomes an emergency or possibly life-threatening." [Read more of the report's findings.](#)

### **UMass Medical Seeks Diversity**

UMass Medical School says it will partner with its four UMass undergraduate campuses to create a joint baccalaureate-MD program to ensure admission to underrepresented ethnic and socioeconomic groups. The Medical Scholars Program will begin enrolling students in the fall of 2011. The medical school will set aside 12 slots in its 125-student first year class for qualified students underrepresented among the state's doctors, including African-Americans, Hispanics, Brazilians, and Cape Verdeans and certain Southeast Asians. Each campus could choose three incoming students to participate in the pathway program. If the students graduate and maintain high academic standing, they would be enrolled in the medical school.

[Read More](#)

### **Southern VT AHEC Plans MedQuest 2010 for High School Students**

Southern Vermont AHEC (SVAHEC) offers Vermont students in grades 9,10, and 11 a chance to explore careers in healthcare through its "MedQuest" program.

Two sessions are planned:

July 11-16 at Southern Vermont College in Bennington

August 1-6 at The School for International Training in Brattleboro

MedQuest is described as the "ultimate job shadow" experience for youth. Activities include job shadows with health care professionals, hospital tours, CPR, health careers workshops and opportunities to make new friends in the company of UVM College of Medical students. Application deadline is March First.

Download the MedQuest materials.

### **Berkshire AHEC to Provide Support for SEARCH Project**

Berkshire AHEC (Pittsfield, MA) has been selected by the MA League of Community Health Centers to provide support for a Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) project. The program, funded by HRSA as part of ARRA, gives health professions students and residents the opportunity to serve on multidisciplinary healthcare teams in underserved communities. SEARCH participants will be assigned to community health center clinical training sites in various regions of the state. The western MA/Berkshire experience will consist of a 6-week, full-time summer program for 5-6 multi-disciplinary students who will live and work in the rural and small towns of western MA. SEARCH is an important tool in HRSA's efforts to recruit and retain health care professionals for primary healthcare service.

For more information, call Lisa Fletcher-Udell at 413-447-2417 or Visit the website.

### **Tele-psychiatry Pilot Plant for VT Health Clinic**

Psychiatrists at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, VT, are using "web cams" - telecommunications technology - to counsel patients at the Northern Tier Center for Health clinic in Richmond, VT. The service is available to veterans, members of the VT National Guard and their families. The VA Medical Center in White River Junction serves veterans from all of VT and from the northern and western counties of NH. But for many, the distance to travel for psychiatric counseling is too great. Tele-counseling provides another valuable service to clinics in rural areas. The VA plans to extend the project to five more locations by the end of the year - two in VT and three in NH. Read

[Read More](#)

### **NE States Making Progress on Health Reform**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has just released its latest State of the States report, "The State We're In," with favorable reviews of health reform legislation in the NE states. Of note: Special focus on the VT Blueprint Integrated Pilot (the medical home model); RI's "HealthHub RI"; CT's "SustiNet" proposal; Maine's Dirigo insurance exchange, and of course there are updates on the changes in MA since 2006.

[Read More](#)

Please send your news to Dot Bergin – <mailto:dobergin@gmail.com> or 781-275-7071.

Thanks,

Marion Pawlek, Executive Director  
New England Rural Health RoundTable  
[mjpawlek@joimail.com](mailto:mjpawlek@joimail.com)  
603-643-2800

To subscribe to the e-mail version of our online newsletter, please send e-mail to [lwillis@tss-cpa.com](mailto:lwillis@tss-cpa.com) and request that your name be added to the New England Rural Health RoundTable mailing list.

The RoundTable's online newsletter is published approximately once a month. Current issues are available in HTML format, with links to additional information. Previous issues are available in printer-friendly Adobe Acrobat format.