



March 2, 2009

Message from the Executive Director

Dear RoundTable Members:

This is the second issue of our online newsletter which we plan to publish on a monthly schedule. To help us keep the material current and relevant, we need input from you. Please send information about events in your organization directly to Dot Bergin's e-mail at: dobergin@gmail.org or call her at 781-275-7071. And let us know if you like the new format.

President Names Dr. Mary Wakefield to HRSA Post

On Feb. 20, the White House announced the appointment of Dr. Mary Wakefield as Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Dr. Wakefield, known as one of the country's top rural health care professionals, will take up her new duties in March.

Read the release... <http://www.whitehouse.gov> (click on press releases)

Three NE Governors on New Health Care Reform Task Force

On Feb 23 the National Governors Association (NGA) announced the formation of a Health Care Reform Task Force, designed to identify and define gubernatorial priorities and to inform and advise the work of the Congress and the Administration. Members include Gov. Jim Douglas (VT) co-chair; Governor M. Jodi Rell (CT), and Governor Deval Patrick (MA).

Read the press release... <http://www.nga.org>

BU Oral Health & HIV Symposium Set for March 13 – Still Time to Register

Dr. Ana Karina Mascarenhas, Director, Division of Dental Public Health, Boston University School of Dental Medicine, announces the School's Oral Health and HIV Symposium will take place at the Boston Marriott Newton Hotel, Newton, MA on March 13 – which also is the 25th anniversary of the Division of Dental Public Health. Dr. Mascarenhas, who brought a number of her graduate students to the RoundTable's Rural Oral Health conference in 2008, says the target audience is oral health providers in Community Health Centers.

You can find the brochure and registration information

at...<http://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=e893cfc8a4&view=att&th=11f903103c42b1f2&attid=0.1&disp=inline&zw>

You may also contact Dr. Mascarenhas at: 617-638-4456 or by e-mail: karinam@bu.edu

NOSORH Honors Sen. Kennedy

In 2008, the National Organization of State offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) presented Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) with the organization's Legislative Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes Kennedy's unparalleled commitment to, and advocacy for, implementing a healthcare delivery system that serves all of America - especially rural America.

Story and photo at...<http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/sections/ma.htm#news>

Albany College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences to Open Branch in Burlington

With no state dental school for Vermonters, applications are pouring in to Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, which plans to open a satellite campus in Colchester this fall.

Read more...<http://www.wcax.com/global/story.asp?s=9439297>

Vermont Public Radio also covered this story on Feb.

11...http://www.vpr.net/news_detail/83991/

VT Officials Discuss Health Care Reform on VPR

With the focus at the Vermont Statehouse on strengthening Vermont's economy, what are the prospects for health care during the current session? On Feb. 13, Senate Health and Welfare chairman Doug Racine and House Health Care chairman Steve Maier discussed their priorities and what they think can be passed this year. What is the future for VPharm and Catamount Health? Will Vermont serve as a pilot health reform plan for the Federal government?

Hear the broadcast at...<http://www.vpr.net/episode/45433/>

New Position for Hunt Blair

Hunt Blair is now Assistant Director of Health Care Reform, Office of Vermont Health Access. For seven years, Hunt was Vermont Director of Public Policy for Bi-State Primary Care Association. Hunt is widely recognized for his legislative “savvy” and was the recipient of the RoundTable’s Leadership Award in 2008. We’ll be speaking with Hunt in more detail, as he settles in to his new job.

Northern Counties Health Care Centers Win “Medical Home” status

Five primary care offices in Caledonia and southern Essex County are the first in Vermont to win recognition as Patient-Centered Medical Homes by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). The five are part of Northern Counties Health Care, Inc., whose Executive Director is Kevin Cooney, a RoundTable Board member. Caledonia Internal Medicine, Concord Health Center, Danville Health Center, and St. Johnsbury Family Health Center and Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital Corner Medical achieved medical home status by passing a rigorous review of nine standards outlined by NCQA.

Read more... <http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/sections/vt.htm#news>

MA Receives RWJF Funding to Support Enrollment in CHIP

Massachusetts has been selected as one of eight states to participate in a \$15 million initiative to increase coverage for uninsured children. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will award up to \$1 million, plus technical assistance, to each state to maximize enrollment in CHIP. The Massachusetts organization chosen as a Maximizing Enrollment grantee is the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Office of Medicaid.

Read more... <http://www.rwjf.org/coverage/product.jsp?id=38948>

Goodall Hospital’s Partners for Healthier Communities Receives Grant

Partners for Healthier Communities (PHC), a program of Goodall Hospital, Sanford, ME, is one of 28 Healthy Maine Partnerships in the state funded by tobacco settlement money from the Fund for a Healthy Maine, through Partnership For a Tobacco Free Maine, Department of Health and Human Services. PHC recently received a federal grant for \$36,933, released by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Substance Abuse (OSA), to continue their efforts to prevent underage alcohol use and reduce high risk drinking.

Read more... <http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/sections/vt.htm#news>

Rural Health Wins Big in Stimulus Bill

The massive stimulus package passed by Congress on Feb. 13 and signed into law by the President on Feb. 17 includes “historic” levels of spending for rural America, reported the NRHA in a jubilant press release. Included: \$500 million for workforce training, \$1 billion for prevention and wellness training, support for community health centers, and investment in health information technology.

Read more... <http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/>

Dr. Bowman says Patients are Where Doctors Aren’t

The biggest problem with our health care system today is the distribution of family physicians, says Robert C. Bowman, M.D., founder of the Rural Medical Educators Group

of the National Rural Health Association. Writing in *The Daily Yonder*, Dr. Bowman shows that the percentage of physicians choosing Family Medicine as a specialty, which rose from 1970 to 1995, has steeply declined since, with changes in federal health policy. The number of rural-born physicians choosing family medicine careers has dropped off steadily since 1965. Dr. Bowman, professor in Family Medicine at A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona, is a long time health education policy advocate.

Read more... <http://www.dailyyonder.com/doctors-are-where-patients-arent/2009/02/12/1924>

Spotlight on Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center

The Feb. 2 issue of *AHA News* features a Q&A with Richard Slusky, CEO of Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center in Windsor, VT, showing the many ways in which hospitals serve their communities. Mt. Ascutney is both a health care and economic anchor in a town of fewer than 4,000 residents and has built strong community connections during its 75-year history.

Read more... http://www.ahanews.com/ahanews_app/jsp/display.jsp?dcrpath=AHANEWS/AHANewsArticle/data/AHA_News_090202_Rural_Vermont&domain=AHANEWS

Allied Health Professions – Urban/Rural Wage Discrepancies

A new report from the Sheps Center, University of North Carolina, uses data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to describe the extent to which rural-urban differentials exist in wages for eleven allied health professions (physical therapists, occupational therapists, lab technicians, etc.) Focus is on professions that are both likely to be found in rural communities and have adequate data to support hourly wage estimates. Nationwide, demand for allied health services is projected to grow significantly in the next several decades, given a rapidly growing and aging population. One finding: on average, the rural hourly wage is 12% less than the urban wage, with the Middle Atlantic and New England census divisions having the highest wage discrepancies.

Read more... http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/research_programs/rural_program/pubs/report/FR96.pdf

The Trend Toward the Clinical Doctorate in Allied Health: Implications for Rural Communities

This report looks at how the transition to the clinical doctorate in one allied health profession--physical therapy--is affecting the supply and quality of rural physical therapy care. The researchers interviewed educators, physical therapy and rehabilitation departments in rural hospitals, and presidents of state physical therapy associations from five states: one state from each of the Midwest, South, and West census regions and two contiguous states from the Northeast census region (not named). Overall, the report found little evidence that

the move to the clinical doctorate has had a significant impact on the supply of physical therapists in rural areas.

http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/research_programs/rural_program/pubs/report/FR94.pdf

Two Bills to Watch: H.R. 468 and H.R. 676

Senators Herb Kohl (D-WI), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), and Bob Casey (D-PA), along with lead sponsor Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), introduced the first bill named for an IOM report on January 14, 2009. The "Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act" (**H.R. 468**) incorporates recommendations from the IOM report [Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce](#), which recommends bolstering the skills and preparedness of health care professionals who care for older Americans. The bill is intended to increase opportunities for education and training in geriatrics and long-term care for licensed health professionals, direct care workers, and family caregivers.

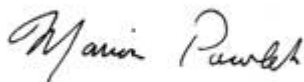
HR 676, sponsored by Cong. John Conyers (D-MI), is titled "To provide for comprehensive health insurance coverage for all United States residents." As of Jan.26, the bill has been referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Natural Resources.

For current status of both H.R. 468 and H.R. 676, go to...<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Send YOUR News!

Has your organization received a grant or award? Have you been interviewed by your professional association or by the local radio station? Has your CEO won kudos from a community group? Please send your news to Dot Bergin, dobergin@gmail.com, or call if you have a suggestion for an article. Dot's phone is: 781-275-7071.

Thanks,



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