



April 1, 2009

***Message from the Executive Director***

**Dear RoundTable Members:**

***Save the Date! Performance Improvement Summit Set for April 22***

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual New England Small Rural Hospital Performance Improvement Summit will take place on Wednesday, April 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, NH.

***For registration and agenda, go to the RoundTable web site...<http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/cahrh/activities.htm>***

***Springfield Medical Care Systems Sets National Precedent***

With the award of \$1.3 million in grant funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the “stimulus package”), Springfield Medical Care Systems (SMCS), Springfield, VT, parent system of Springfield Hospital, will convert the Hospital’s network of primary medical care practices to a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). As Andrew Majka, chief financial officer, commented, “We are believed to be the first FQHC ever established by an entity that also operates a Critical Access Hospital under the same corporate umbrella, allowing us unique opportunities for efficiency and coordination of care.” Addition of the SMCS network means there are now eight FQHCs in VT – seven plus one FHHC look-alike.

***Read the story...<http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/cahrh/news.htm>***

***Generations Family Health Center, CT, Another Winner of Stimulus Funds***

Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Smith and colleagues at Generations Family Health Center, Inc., Willimantic, CT, are beaming over the receipt of a two-year, \$1.12 million grant to open a new access point in Putnam. The new funds will be used to provide direct medical, dental, behavioral and health promotion and access services to the residents of Putnam and surrounding towns. Generations applied for the grant in December 2007, with the award announced on March 2, 2009 as part of the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.) In addition to this funding, Generations was awarded \$1.4 million in State Bonding funds to construct a site in Putnam and an additional \$200,000 in other bond funds and donations to purchase new dental equipment for this project.

***Read Generations’ press release on Rep. Joseph Courtney’s tour of its mobile dental***

van

program...<http://courtney.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=113265>

### ***Dr. William Weeks Named Outstanding Researcher by NRHA***

Dr. William Weeks, associate professor, The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, is one of nine winners of the NRHA's 2009 Rural Health Awards and the only honoree from New England. RoundTable members will recall that Dr. Weeks was named an NRHA Rural Health Scholar in 2007. His focus is on health care for rural veterans and he is on the staff of the VA Hospital in White River Junction, VT. Dr. Weeks will receive his award in May at the NRHA's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rural Health Conference in Miami Beach, FL.

### ***Community Health Centers Seeing More Patients In Wake of MA Health Reform***

Community health centers in Massachusetts saw a significant increase - rather than the decline expected by some - in their patient-load from 2005 to 2007 as the state began implementing its health reform law. The 34 federally-qualified centers in MA, which provide comprehensive primary care for low-income and uninsured patients, served 482,503 patients in 2007, up more than 51,000 from two years before, as reported in a new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation's Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. At the same time, the number of center patients who lacked health insurance declined, a reflection of the state's successful effort to improve coverage by expanding public programs and making private insurance more affordable.

***Read the study...***<http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/7878.pdf>

### ***Mid-State Health Center To Participate in Medical Home Pilot Program***

Congratulations to Mid-State Health Center, Plymouth, NH and CEO Sharon Beaty for being selected to participate in the first NH Citizens Health Initiative – Multi-Stakeholder Patient-Centered Medical Home Pilot (PCMH). The program is a collaborative effort among the NH Citizens Health Initiative medical home workgroup, the Center for Medical Home Improvement, and the three private NH Health Plans: Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, CIGNA, and Anthem, as well as NH Medicaid. The goal of this PCMH is to design and implement a reimbursement model that values and rewards “patient-centric” medical care focusing on the highest level of clinical quality and efficiency. Mid-State is one of 11 participants selected based on a high quantitative score, essay responses, organization type, geography and patient panel size. The medical home approach values and encourages treatment of the whole patient; medical homes have been shown to improve health outcomes, reduce costs and improve patient, family, physician and staff satisfaction <http://www.midstatehealth.org/>

### ***Youth Aspirations and Sense of Place in a Changing Rural Economy: The Coos Youth Study***

As job opportunities dwindle, young adults are leaving Coos County, NH, a trend that is documented in a recent Issue Brief from Carsey Institute. Loss of young people poses a

challenge for many rural communities, as the aging population has greater health care, housing, and transportation needs and demands more institutional care and community service. The Carsey Institute is working with the NH Charitable Foundation on a research project to understand the ongoing changes in New Hampshire's North Country. One piece of this research includes a 10-year panel study tracking two cohorts of Coos County students who started 7<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade in 2007 to examine their attitudes and experiences as they approach adulthood and make critical choices about whether they will remain in the County or move out to metropolitan areas.

***Read about the young people in the***

***study...***<http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB-CoosYouth-1.pdf>

### ***Child Tax Credit Expansion Increases Number of Families Eligible for a Refund***

The recently-passed economic stimulus legislation includes expansion of the Child Tax Credit to enable more families to receive refunds from the government. According to a study done by the Carsey Institute, a larger proportion of rural than urban or suburban families are poised to benefit from this expansion.

***Read the details...***<http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB-CTC09.pdf>

### ***Rural Enrollment in Medicare Advantage: Growth Slows in 2008***

The rate of growth of enrollment in the Medicare Advantage program decreased significantly in 2008, compared to previous years, according to a new Policy Brief from the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis. In addition, the growth rate in preferred provider organization plans in rural areas now exceeds that in private fee-for-service plans. This policy brief updates earlier findings from analysis of the MA program reported by the RUPRI Center.

***Read more...***<http://www.unmc.edu/ruprihealth/Pubs/b2009-1%20MA%202008.pdf>

### ***State Makes Payment to Maine Hospitals***

On March 17, Governor John E. Baldacci signed a \$45 million financial order to pay a portion of the State's obligation to Maine hospitals under an October 2006 settlement agreement. The financial order enables the State to use \$45 million of General Fund money made available by the federal Recovery Act.

***Read***

***more...***<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=Portal+News&id=69604&v=article-2008>

### ***Maine Lawmakers Call for More Physical Education in Schools***

Mar 17, 2009 - Maine lawmakers are debating a measure that would require schools to offer physical education every day, NECN.com reports. Most Maine elementary schools currently offer physical education just once a week, which many health professionals say is not enough to curb the state's burgeoning childhood obesity epidemic. In response, state Sen. Peter Mills (R) introduced legislation that would extend the school year by 10 days to make time for daily physical education classes at every public school in the state. Under a pilot program at Pittston Consolidated School, students engage in 40 minutes of physical activity daily,

including 22 minutes of intense cardiovascular exercise. If approved, the changes to school schedules would cost roughly \$55 million in state funds and an additional \$45 million from individual school districts (Sinclair, [NECN.com](http://www.necn.com), 3/16/09).

<http://www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/digest.jsp?id=9949>

### **Shortage of Dentists? Train Doctors to do Basic Procedures**

As we reported in an earlier newsletter, dentists are in such short supply in Maine that primary care doctors at the Maine Dartmouth Family Practice Residency in Fairfield, ME are learning basic dental skills. Dr. William Alto directs a program that began in 2005 and is attracting nation-wide attention.

***Read the New York Times***

***story...***<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/03/us/03dentist.html>

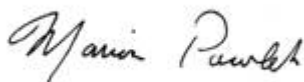
### ***Rural Children Don't Receive the Mental Health Care They Need***

A new study finds that 20 percent of all children have a mental illness; most do not receive care. A new study from the Maine Rural Health Research Center, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, looked at rural-urban differences in children's mental health service use, information that is important for policymakers as they decide what strategies to use to better meet the mental health needs of rural children. Having Medicaid or SCHIP increases the likelihood that a child will receive services and this is pronounced in rural areas.

***Read the policy brief...***<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/Publications/rural/pb39/Rural-Children-Mental-Health-Services.pdf>

***Please send your news to Dot Bergin – [dobergin@gmail.com](mailto:dobergin@gmail.com) or 781-275-7071.***

Thanks,



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