



May 1, 2009

Message from the Executive Director

Dear RoundTable Members:

Two Key RoundTable Conferences Coming Up! Mark Your Calendars Now

It's not a moment too soon to pencil in three important dates:

Friday, September 11 - The 4th Rural Oral Health Conference will take place at the Portsmouth Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, NH. Invited guest Dr. Edwin Smith, featured in a recent documentary on Appalachia, will be on hand to tell of his experiences in traveling with his mobile dental van through the countryside to provide dental treatment to residents who lack access to care.

Friday, October 30 - The RoundTable's 12th Annual Symposium will convene at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks, Portland, ME. This year's theme is Workforce.

Thursday, October 29 - One day prior to the Annual Symposium, the Boston HRSA field office is partnering with the RoundTable to hold a NE Rural Strategic Partnership session at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks, to which all HRSA grantees (and other interested groups) will be invited.

Watch your e-mail and the RoundTable web site for agendas and registration information for the upcoming conferences.

Performance Improvement Summit Draws Hospital CEOs, Quality Gurus

The RoundTable's annual *NE Small Rural Hospital Performance Improvement Summit*, which took place on April 22 in Portland, ME, was jam-packed with "take-aways" for hospital CEOs and quality improvement staff. Attendees heard success stories about quality gains from hospital chiefs and board members. John Supplitt, American Hospital Association, sketched out potential changes for rural hospitals coming from the new administration. To read more, go to the RoundTable web site at <http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/cahrh/activities.htm>

News Briefs:

MA CHCs Win HRSA Increased Demand for Services (IDS) Awards

Dr. Ed Sayer, CEO, Hilltown Community Health Center, Worthington, MA says his organization will use its IDS award (\$167,990) in these ways: to hire a nurse practitioner, hire another RN, and retain an RN whose hours were due to be cut back. These clinical positions will be located at the Huntington site. At the Worthington headquarters, some of the funds will be used to hire a half-time billing person. <http://www.hchcweb.org/>

Bridgette Madden, Executive Director, Community Health Center of Franklin County, Turner's Falls, MA, said the IDS grant funds of \$169,793 will be used to support a new dentist and support staff, which will enable the centers to offer evening and Saturday hours to provide more access to dental services. <http://www.chcfc.org/>

Dr. John Matthew: "US Needs Network of Primary Care Doctors"

Dr. John Matthew, Director of The Health Center in Plainfield, VT testified in Washington on April 30, telling a Senate committee that building a new network of primary care doctors should be the first step toward health care reform. Dr. Matthew appeared in support of Sen. Bernie Sander's proposal to increase the number of FQHCs. Read the full story in the Times-Argus: <http://www.timesargus.com/article/20090501/NEWS02/905010367/1003/NEWS02>

Bi-State PCA Wins Award to Assess Farmworker Health Needs

Bi-State Primary Care Association has received funding from HRSA's Office of Rural Health Policy for the "Vermont Farm Health Connection," a three-year project to conduct a statewide farmworker health needs assessment and to implement pilot farm health clinics with partners The Open Door Clinic (Addison County) and the Northern Tier Center for Health (Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.) A third clinical partner will be selected for expansion of the pilot project in year two. The grant award is \$149,983 (year 1), with recommended funding of \$124,987 (Year 2) and \$99,994 (Year 3.)

Huggins Hospital to Close Maternity Unit

In a surprise announcement on April 28, Huggins Hospital in Wolfeboro, NH said it would close its maternity unit in the fall. The economic downturn and an aging population were given as the reasons. Other small NH rural hospitals (Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster and Franklin Regional Hospital in Franklin) have closed their units in recent years. Read more... <http://www.wmur.com/health/19274171/detail.html?taf=man>
http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090428/GJNEWS_01/704289889

Pam Smith Named to NOSORH Leadership Institute

Pamela Smith, Assistant Director, MA Department of Public Health, has been accepted to the first class of the new National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health Leadership Institute developed especially for SORH leaders. Pam is the only New Englander chosen for this program.

Massachusetts Public Schools to Perform BMI Screenings

The Massachusetts Public Health Council has voted to approve new statewide regulations that will require public schools to regularly perform Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings on all students, and to provide this important health information to parents. The newly-enacted regulations are part of the **Mass In Motion** anti-obesity initiative announced earlier this year by the Patrick Administration. The new regulations require nurses in public schools to perform BMI screening for all children during the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th grades, with the results provided to parents. http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2pressrelease&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eeohhs2&b=pressrelease&f=090408_bmi_measurements&csid=Eeohhs2

Four ME Hospitals Chosen to Participate in RWJF's New Nurse-Led Quality Improvement Collaborative

On March 11, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) announced the selection of 16 hospitals – four in Maine - to participate in the first two cohorts of the *Aligning Forces for Quality: Transforming Care at the Bedside Collaborative* (TCAB Collaborative). The collaborative engages nurses and other frontline staff to improve the quality and safety of patient care on medical and surgical units in hospitals. The hospitals are: Eastern Maine Medical Center (*Cohort II*), Redington-Fairview General Hospital (*Cohort I*), St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (*Cohort I*) and Webber Hospital Association (Southern Maine Medical Center) (*Cohort I*). Learn more about the TCAB Collaborative at: <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=39909>

Rhode Island Increases Cigarette Tax - Highest in Nation

The state tax on cigarettes in Rhode Island has now increased to \$3.46 per pack, highest in the nation. Matthew L. Myers, president, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, says increased tobacco taxes are a win-win-win solution for the state: a health win that will reduce tobacco use and save lives, a financial win that will raise revenue to help alleviate budget shortfalls, and a political win that polls show is popular with the voters. <http://www.rwjf.org/publichealth/product.jsp?id=41491>

Latest Data on Pharmacy Losses in Rural Areas

This brief presents the latest data from a continuous monitoring of the status of rural pharmacies by the RUPRI Center. Local rural pharmacies continue to serve many of the nation's communities as the sole provider of pharmacy services. However, between May 2006 and December 2008, the number of retail pharmacies in 213 rural places dropped from one to zero, and the number of retail pharmacies in 118 rural places dropped from more than one to only one. The brief includes a table showing the data by state. <http://www.unmc.edu/ruprihealth/Pubs/b2009-%20Loss%20of%20Comm%20Pharms.pdf>

First U.S. Community Paramedic Course Underway

Ten paramedics in Minnesota will become the first U.S. "Community Paramedics" this spring when they complete a course that prepares them to provide expanded health services in areas short on other health-care practitioners. The course is based on a new CP curriculum developed by the Community Healthcare and Emergency Cooperative, a consortium founded in July 2007 to develop a new community health provider model to address critical health care shortages in rural and remote areas. Read about the program: http://www.jems.com/news_and_articles/articles/paramedics_for_the_people.html

Roadmap for HEMS Risk Management Released by Foundation

Recent crashes of medical helicopters have raised public concern about the risks facing the helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) industry. On April 20, 2009, Flight Safety Foundation, Inc. released a groundbreaking assessment that provides a comprehensive look at these risks. The Industry Risk Profile (IRP), developed by Aerosafe Risk Management, also provides a roadmap outlining proactive steps that the industry and regulators can follow in order to mitigate these risks. Read the entire report: http://www.flightsafety.org/pdf/HEMS_Industry_Risk_Profile.pdf

Upcoming Events Around New England

May 13, 2009, 2009 Primary Care Conference, presented by the Bi-State Primary Care Association, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT. Theme of the one-day conference is State & Federal Health Care Reform: Opportunities & Challenges. For registration and program information, go to: <http://bistatepca.org/Programs/Program%20and%20Registration%202009.pdf>

May 14, 2009, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Together Rx Access, a free Webinar hosted by the RoundTable. Learn about this prescription savings program for eligible uninsured New Englanders. Register and read more about the program:
http://www.togetherrxaccessonline.com/together_rx_access.html

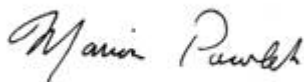
June 5, 2009. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. New Hampshire & Vermont Recruitment Center Clinician Recruitment & Retention Symposium, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT. The symposium will feature discussions with experts on topics including: creating a tailored retention plan; planning an effective site visit; successful onboarding of providers; succession planning; and immigration overview - recruiting non-US citizens. For more information please contact Susan Carll for NH (603-229-1852 x 16) or Tammy McKenzie for VT (802-229-0002 x 221). To see the agenda, go to: http://www.newenglandruralhealth.org/workforce/resources/nhvt_recruit_06-09.pdf

October 2, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., NE Regional Conference on ADHD/ADD, Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort, Hancock, MA. For more information, visit: <http://www.berkshireahec.org>

October 14-16, 2009, The 6th New England Regional Minority Health Conference: From Disparities to Equity: The Power to Make Change, Westin Hotel, Providence RI. The conference will provide an opportunity to share proven regional and national strategies to effectively eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. Racism, oppression and discrimination are acknowledged to play a role in the health and well-being of citizens. To register, go to: <http://www.nermhc.com>

Please send news of your organization to Dot Bergin at dobergin@gmail.com, or give her a call at 781-275-7071.

Thanks,



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