

# NC Office of Rural Health Operations Team Q4 Quarterly Newsletter

This newsletter serves a repository of information relevant to North Carolina State-Designated Rural Health Centers (SDRHCs) and CMS Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). Please share any content suggestions or feedback with Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)



Greetings from the NC Office of Rural Health Operations Team! Our team is happy to share news this quarter highlighting folks from across the state who are going the extra mile to care for our rural communities.

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## Grantee Highlights

Two New Centers and One Capacity Building Site Join the SDRHC Program



In April of 2023, the Rural Health Operations team announced funding decisions for the SDRHC program. The team is excited to share that two new centers will be participating in the program, along with a new capacity building site.

The two new Centers are Surry Medical Ministries and Cabarrus Rowan Community Health Centers (CRCHC). Surry Medical Ministries of Surry County will be joining the cohort in its second year participating in the SDRHC program having previously been a capacity building site. Located in Cabarrus and Rowan counties, CRCHC will be joining the cohort as a new participant with no prior history with the SDRHC program. We congratulate the two new SDRHCs on this milestone!

Additionally, we are excited to announce our newest capacity building site, Vecinos, Inc. Vecinos is in Jackson County, NC. This is Vecinos' first year with the SDRHC program. Please join us in welcoming them to the SDRHC team!

## Stories from the Forefront Series

Surry Medical Ministries: The Team Approach to Healthcare

According to Nancy Dixon, Executive Director of Surry Medical Ministries (SMM), "The impact of specialized chronic disease care as part of the clinical team - along with medical, behavioral health... (is



key to addressing the holistic needs of the patient)”. Here, Nancy shares the story of a patient by the name of JR and goes on to say that the story is one of many highlights of the team approach.

A clinical pharmacist practitioner at Surry Medical Ministries shared that they have the privilege of seeing patients regularly to optimize care for their chronic conditions. JR was referred to the pharmacist as a patient by the medical provider to evaluate and help the team in treating diabetes. JR is a young female with a young family and desires to have a great quality of life. She came to the pharmacist in a time of desperation when her A1C had climbed to 10.8%.

She was taking the same medications as usual, eating the same foods, and maintaining her usual activity level. At the time of our initial visit, JR was under a tremendous amount of stress. Her father-in-law had passed away, her husband was very depressed, and they had to travel to California for the funeral. At this time, the pharmacist was able to provide a listening ear, make some medication adjustments, and most importantly refer her to SMM’s counselor.

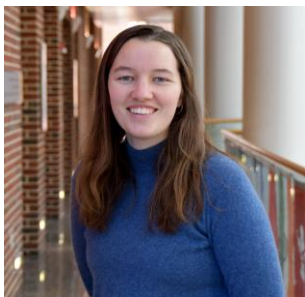
After traveling to California for the funeral, JR has come for frequent visits for medication adjustments and diabetes education classes. She has also been to scheduled counseling sessions with the same SMM counselor. JR came by the clinic one day and told the pharmacist she almost called in tears of joy because her blood sugar was now frequently at goal.

At our last visit, JR brought her blood glucose log for review and all numbers were within range without any hypoglycemia or side effects from her medications. JR could not stop smiling and thanking SMM for taking the time to care for her and being willing to listen to her. The care of JR exemplifies our teamwork in taking care of every individual who comes to the clinic for care.

*Note:* We invite all SDRHCs to share impactful stories of the work they are doing to improve health and well-being across North Carolina. If you would like to share a story to be featured in a future issue of the NC Office of Rural Health Ops Team Newsletter, please send your story to Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

## Recent Events

### New Team Member: Rachel Morrow



This summer, the Operations Team has a summer intern, Rachel Morrow! Rachel is a second-year Master of Public Health student at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, concentrating in Maternal, Child, and Family Health. Originally from Western North Carolina, Rachel is excited to work with ORH to support rural health. Over the course of the summer, she will be conducting a Rural Maternal Health Scan, a project aimed to understand the landscape of maternal healthcare in rural areas in North Carolina.

## SDRHC End-of-Year Meeting

The SDRHC End-of-Year Meeting happened on Wednesday June 7<sup>th</sup> at the JB Duke Hotel in Durham, North Carolina. The event was held in tandem with the North Carolina Community Health Center Association's (NCCHCA) Primary Care Conference.

The session began with words from the NC Office of Rural Health Director, Maggie Sauer, who spoke to the storied history, inspiring present, and hopeful future of the Office and the SDRHC program.

This was followed by a mindful breathing exercise, a teamwork icebreaker, and a year-in-review conversation.



After a short break, Deputy Director, Allison Owen presented the SDRHC Centers of Excellence Awards across four categories.

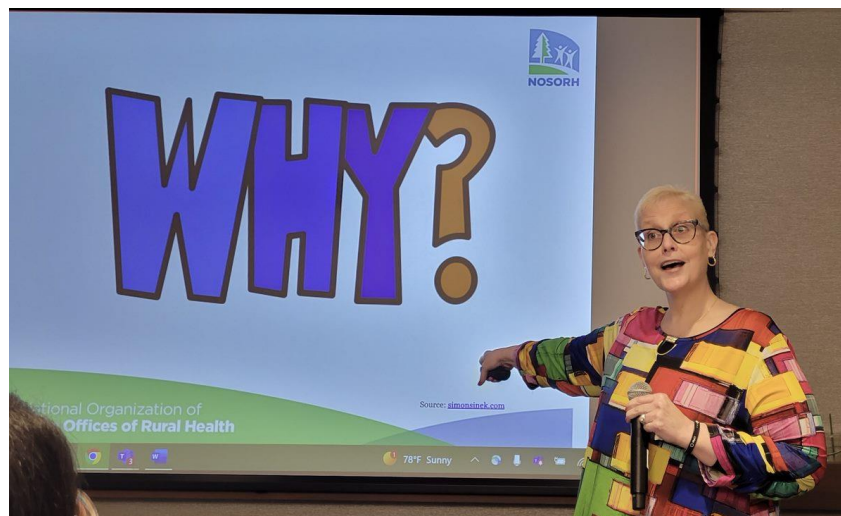
The categories and awardees are as follows:

- Medical Access Plan: **Richmond County Healthy Carolinians Partnership**
- Behavioral Health: **Mountain Community Health Partnership**
- Clinical Quality: **Scotland Health Care System**
- SDRHC of the Year: **Benson Health**



After the awards ceremony, the grantees participated in a panel session where they answered questions from the Operations team and from their cohort. Topics discussed included community engagement and partnership, best practices, and advocacy.

The meeting was wrapped up by none other than Tammy Norville, CEO of the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health. As a former NC Office of Rural Health and Operations team member, Tammy was able to offer a unique perspective on “The Road Less Traveled” for SDHRC grantees who are “The backbone of the health care system.”



The Operations team would like to extend sincere gratitude to the SDRHCs, NCHCA, AHEC, NOSORH, and our fellow NCORH colleagues for your partnership in pulling off a successful meeting. Your partnership enables us to fulfill our mission of increasing access to care.

National Rural Health Association Annual Meeting

The National Rural Health Association's (NRHA) Annual Conference took place May 16-19 in San Diego, CA. The sessions were informative, and the Operations team attended several presentations related to CMS Rural Health Clinics, Behavioral Health, and Rural Health Policy. During the event, NCORH also took time to network with partners across North Carolina and the nation.



### NOSORH Region B Conference

In the first week of May, the Operations team attended the NOSORH Region B conference in Montgomery, Alabama. The meeting was a gathering of representatives from all states located within the region including, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. The states participated in active discussion around best practices and programs that they employ to improve the health of rural.

If you have any questions about our events or interested in participating, please reach out to Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

## Upcoming Events

### Regional In-Person Meetings in August and September

The Operations Team is excited to share that NCORH is hitting the road later this summer! The Office will be hosting an In-Person Meeting in each of the six Medicaid Regions across the state. The meetings are designed to deliver relevant and timely content, promote regional collaboration and partnership, and connect with communities across the state.

If you are an NCORH grantee, please be on the look-out for an invitation delivered to you inbox in the near future.

### **Meeting Calendar**

#### Region 1 Meeting

- Location: Haywood County Soil and Water Conservation District, 589 Raccoon Road Waynesville, NC 28786
- Date: Friday August 11, 2023
- Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

#### Region 2 Meeting

- Location: Children’s Home of Surry, 2000 Prison Camp Road Dobson, NC 27017
- Date: Thursday September 14, 2023
- Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

#### Region 3 Meeting

- Location: Duke Endowment Center, Critical Access Hospital Conference, 800 E Morehead Street Charlotte, NC 28202
- Date: Tuesday August 15, 2023
- Time: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

#### Region 4 Meeting

- Location: Steve Troxler Agricultural Sciences Building, 4400 Reedy Creek Road Raleigh, NC 27607
- Date: Monday August 21, 2023
- Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

#### Region 5 Meeting

- Location: First Health of the Carolinas, 155 Memorial Drive Pinehurst, NC 28374
- Date: Thursday September 7, 2023
- Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

#### Region 6 Meeting **(TBD)**

- Location:
- Date:
- Time:

## 3rd Annual Virtual Statewide Quality Forum



**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

### **3rd Annual Virtual Statewide Quality Forum**

**August 9, 2023 | noon-1 p.m.**

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Health Benefits and North Carolina AHEC, in conjunction with the five Medicaid managed care standard plans, will host the **3rd Annual Virtual Statewide Quality Forum** on **Wednesday, August 9 from noon-1 p.m.** The forum is designed to help providers, practice managers, and quality managers succeed with Medicaid Managed Care quality initiatives. Agenda topics include:

- Performance Improvement Projects
- HIE Update
- CAHPS
- Provider Survey Results
- Administrative Simplification

**We hope you can join us!**

[Register for the 3rd Annual Virtual Statewide Quality Forum](#)

In the News

NCVHS Requests Responses on ICD-11



The National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) advisory committee, part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), published a [Notice of Meeting and Request for Information](#) (RFI).

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the global standard for health data, clinical documentation, and statistical aggregation. It provides a common language for recording, reporting, and monitoring diseases. It facilitates the collection and storage of data for analysis and comparison of mortality and morbidity data. [ICD-11](#) is the 11<sup>th</sup> revision, fully electronic, includes more diagnostic codes, and can be used online or offline.

Please consider responding to, and widely disseminating, this notice and RFI. It is important that HHS hear the concerns of rural health care facilities. Their input will help will provide advice to HHS to inform ICD–11 policy.

The meeting will be held Thursday, August 3, 2023, 10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. EDT and is open to the public. The public is invited and welcome to obtain the link to attend this meeting by following the instructions posted on the Committee website: <https://ncvhs.hhs.gov/meetings-meeting/>.

To submit comments in response to the RFI, please send by close of business June 30, 2023, to [NCVHSmail@cdc.gov](mailto:NCVHSmail@cdc.gov), and include on the subject line: Response from [your organization or name] regarding ICD–11 RFI.

## Contact Information

### [Rural Health Operations Website](#)

For technical assistance or general inquiries, please contact your regional contract monitor.

Program Manager – Dorothea Brock

Email: [Dorothea.brock@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Dorothea.brock@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 1 & 2 – Justin Kearley

Email: [Justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 3 & 5 – Beth Blaise

Email: [Beth.blaise@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Beth.blaise@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 4 & 6 – Kimberly R. McNeil

Email: [Kimberly.r.mnceil@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kimberly.r.mnceil@dhhs.nc.gov)