

Director's Notes

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The Maryland Primary Care Office (PCO) and the Maryland State Office of Rural Health (SORH) are now directed by Elizabeth Vaidya. Both offices will remain separate federal programs and maintain their individual missions under the Office of Health Policy and Planning (OHPP). However, due to their overlapping goals to improve healthcare access within Maryland, both will now have the same Director.

The PCO finalized a Data Compendium which includes listings of health statistics, provider capacity, shortage designations, and demographic data compiled to provide a basis for quantitative assessment of need for additional resources in Maryland. This resource was developed in response to Federally Qualified Health Center's (FQHC's) request for an assessment tool for use in the anticipation of new start up funds. The tool can be found on our website at <http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/compendium.cfm>.

Per the request of the PCO Advisory Council, the PCO submitted comments to the federal Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on November 18, 2010. To view the comments, please visit <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/Meetings/20101117/index.html>.

The PCO will be holding a conference in May 2011. Look for "save the date" soon.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Vaidya

Maryland Department of
Health and Mental
Hygiene

Martin O'Malley

Governor

Anthony G. Brown

Lt. Governor

John M. Colmers

Secretary, DHMH

Family
Health Administration

Russell W. Moy, M.D.,
M.P.H.

Director, FHA

New Criteria for Shortage Designation Updates

As the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 requires the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to establish a new methodology and criteria for designation of MUA/Ps and HPSAs, the first meeting was held on September 22, 2010. The meeting provided an overview of the negotiated rulemaking process, current designation processes, programs that use HPSA and MUA/P designations, and other key topics that the Committee will explore and seek consensus. To view agenda and materials for the first meeting, go to <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/Meetings/20100922/index.html>.

The second meeting was held on October 13-14, 2010. Meeting discussion included possible components of the new methodology for identifying shortage areas by focusing on population calculation methodology, review of public comments on the notice of proposed rulemaking, programs use of HPSA and MUA/P designation, and potential data resources, and an agenda for the next meeting. For more information, go to <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/Meetings/index.html>.

The third meeting was held on November 17-18, 2010. The meeting included a discussion of the various components of a possible methodology for identifying areas of shortage and underserved based on the recommendations from the previous meeting. For more information, go to <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/Meetings/20101117/index.html>.



Shortage Designations

MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREAS/ POPULATIONS (MUA/Ps)

The PCO is currently working on analyses for the whole State in evaluating MUA/Ps eligibility to support the new access point funding. Those areas found eligible will allow health care providers and entities within the designation the opportunity to apply for grants that can help to improve access to primary care services for residents.

For more information about the new access point funding opportunity, go to <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/NAP/overview.pdf>.

To view the current MUA/P designations, go to <http://muafind.hrsa.gov/>.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAS)

The PCO also continues working on HPSA designations to expand coverage for more people. From August to November of this year, the PCO received approval of 8 HPSA designations.



- Medicaid Eligible Primary Care South Baltimore City. This designation covers 46,633 individuals in Baltimore City.
- Medicaid Eligible Primary Care Glen Falstaff. This designation covers 14,932 individuals in Baltimore City.
- Medicaid Eligible Primary Care Greenbelt/ Langley Park/ College Park. This is the first primary care HPSA in Prince George's County. This designation covers 157,387 individuals in Prince George's County.
- Landover/Suitland/Capitol Heights is another new HPSA designation in Prince George's County. This designation covers 187,486 individuals in Prince George's County.
- Charles County Mental Health HSPA is a whole county designation for Charles County. This designation covers 133,678 individuals in Charles County.
- Medicaid Eligible Mental Health East Baltimore City. This designation covers 61,252 individual in Baltimore City.
- Medicaid Eligible Mental Health West Central Baltimore City. This designation covers 182,339 individuals in Baltimore City.
- Medicaid Eligible West Baltimore City. This designation covers 76,900 individuals in Baltimore City.

To view current shortage designations for Maryland, visit HRSA's website at <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/>.

Workforce Programs Updates

The PCO continues to improve access to primary care services by assisting in recruiting health care providers to the federally designated shortage areas.

- In federal FY 2010, the PCO:
Recommended 18 J-1 Visa Waiver applicants; 12 primary care physicians and 6 specialists.

- In CY 2010, the PCO:
Approved 29 site applications for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and expected to receive more; and

Received 10 applications for the Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP); the LARP Review Panel met on Thursday, October 23 to make the recommendations.



NHSC Alerts

Due to the high volume of applicants applying for the NHSC program this year, the applications are more than the available fund.

However, the HRSA is exploring ways to make additional awards by the end of this calendar year. The applicants will be notified as soon as the final decision has been made.

For more information contact Judy Gerahty, jgerahty@dhhm.state.md.us, 410-767-5046.

Maryland Telehealth and Telemedicine (THTM) Survey

The following report is provided by the Rural Maryland Council:

The Maryland THTM Survey targeted 95 facilities. These facilities include all Maryland hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, individual departments within the University of Maryland Medical System, the Johns Hopkins Health System and MedStar Health, as well as local health departments, state correctional institutions, and projects within Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). Of this group, 26 facilities representing 48 different THTM sites have responded to date. In addition, 12 of the 95 facilities reported having no involvement in THTM of any kind.

Four major conclusions can be drawn from the information and comments received so far:

- Reimbursement and Funding is Needed for Expansion,
- There is a Lack of State Leadership Surrounding Telehealth Coordination,
- Poor access to high-speed broadband services in rural areas deprives some rural residents access to state-of-the-art medical care, and
- Issues related to licensing and credentialing providers across state lines were also listed as barriers.

DRAFT Recommendations, based on survey results to date:

- Encourage regulatory or legislative change that will enable providers to receive reimbursement for THTM services through Medicaid and eventually private third party payers. We will also monitor the effects of the new regulations that allow telemental services to be reimbursed.
- Work with statewide THTM stakeholders to identify a state leader who will work to ensure that THTM projects are well coordinated, employing compatible infrastructure, and obtaining the resources necessary to start-up, become sustainable and expand into underserved rural areas. This includes an effort to secure federal funding that has, so far, bypassed Maryland.
- Encourage State leaders to provide funding to complete construction of the rural broadband network and secure last mile providers to remote rural clinical sites as soon as possible.
- Continue to collaborate with and support the University of Maryland School of Law's efforts to educate stakeholders and lawmakers on the importance of addressing legal impediments to telehealth.

The survey will be available through November 30, 2010 in RMC's website at www.rural.state.md.us. All facilities delivering or receiving telehealth or telemedicine services are strongly encouraged to take the survey. Those who want to update information they have already provided should contact RMC at rnc@mda.state.md.us.

Sources: the Rural Maryland Council, for more information visit http://www.rural.state.md.us/Publications/Interim_Telehealth_Report.pdf.

Funding Alerts

Health Center New Access Points Funded Under the Affordable Care Act

Agency: Health Resources and Services Administration

Deadline: November 17, 2010

The purpose of the New Access Points opportunity is to establish health service delivery sites to improve the health of the Nation's underserved communities and vulnerable populations by assuring access to comprehensive, culturally competent, quality primary health care services. To access the full announcement and application information visit <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webExternal/fundingOpp.asp>.



Affordable Care Act (ACA) Grants for School-Based Health Centers Capital (SBHCC) Program

Agency: Health Resources & Services Administration

Deadline: December 1, 2010

It is expected that the proposed projects will support the SBHC (School-Based Health Centers) in providing more effective, efficient, and quality health care. In order to be eligible for the funding preference, applicants must certify that the SBHC site(s) serves a large population of children eligible for medical assistance under the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (the Act) or under a waiver of such plan or children eligible for child health assistance under the State child health plan. To access the full announcement and application information visit <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webExternal/fundingOpp.asp>.

Research on Rural Mental Health and Drug Abuse Disorders (R01)

Agency: National Institute of Health

Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis

The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to invite grant applications to stimulate research on mental health, HIV/AIDS and/or drug abuse problems in rural and frontier communities that will 1) enhance understanding of structural (including community risk and resilience factors), cultural, and individual factors that may enhance the provision and utilization of prevention and treatment services in these communities; and 2) generate knowledge to improve the organization, financing, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and outcomes of mental health and drug abuse services for diverse populations in rural and frontier populations. To access the full announcement and application information visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-103.html>.

Behavioral and Social Science Research on Understanding and Reducing Health Disparities

Agency: National Institute of Health

Deadline: There are several submission due dates listed. The last date listed is May 11, 2013.

The purpose of this grant is to encourage behavioral and social science research on the causes and solutions to health and disabilities disparities in the U.S. population. Health disparities between, on the one hand, racial/ethnic populations, lower socioeconomic classes, and rural residents and, on the other hand, the overall U.S. population are major public health concerns. Emphasis is placed on research in and among three broad areas of action: 1) public policy, 2) health care, and 3) disease/disability prevention. To access the full announcement and application information visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-10-136.html>.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing (Round 4)

Agency: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Deadline: Dec 15, 2010

A scholarship program to help alleviate the nursing shortage and increase the diversity of nursing professionals. To access the full announcement and application information visit <http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=21241>.

Publications and Resources

National Health Service Corps and State Loan Repayment Programs' Alert

The HRSA announced organizational changes to the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service (BCRS). The two major programs, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), will be transferred to the BCRS. The change is expected to reduce fragmentation and overlap and establish an increased emphasis on policy and program development, external communication and outreach, customer service and system and analytical support. For more information, go to <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-23892.pdf>.

The House Passed the FTCA for Volunteers

On September 23, the House of Representatives passed the H.R. 1745—the Family Health Care Accessibility Act (known as the FTCA for Volunteers bill). The bill would extend the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) coverage to volunteer healthcare providers who work in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). The bill would reduce financial load for healthcare professionals providing health care at health centers. For more information, go to http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1745rfs.txt.pdf.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010: Impacts on Rural People, Places, and Providers

The article summarizes six issue areas of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and discusses implications for access to services and improving the health status of rural residents. These issue areas are health insurance coverage, Medicare and Medicaid payment, quality, financing, and delivery system reform, public health, healthcare workforce, and long-term care. To read the full article, go to http://www.rupri.org/Forms/Health_PPACAImpacts_Sept2010.pdf.

Rural America at a Glance, 2010 Edition

The report highlights the most recent indicators of social and economic conditions in rural areas for use in developing policies and programs to assist rural areas. The 2010 edition focuses on the U.S. rural economy, including employment trends, poverty, and demographics. To read the full article, go to <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB68/EIB68.pdf>.

Physician Shortages to Worsen Without Increases in Residency Training

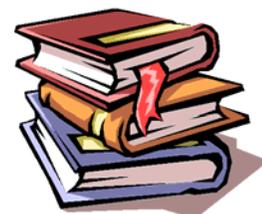
The report shows that the U.S. faces a growing shortage of physicians in all specialties and the shortfall in the number of physicians will affect everyone, but the impact will be most severe on vulnerable and underserved populations. For more information, go to <http://www.aamc.org/newsroom/presskits/mdShortage1.pdf>.

Compendium of Rural Best Practices

In September, the National Rural Task Force developed a document, "Compendium of Best Practices/Models That Work in Rural Technology, Training and Workforce Development," to be used in a prospective manner by federal agencies, state and local health-related agencies for setting priorities for rural technology, training and workforce development. To view the document, go to <http://nrha.informz.net/NRHA/data/images/enewsoc10-compendiumdocument.pdf>.

HHS Awarded \$727 Million to 143 Community Health Centers Nationwide

HHS awarded \$727 million from the Affordable Care Act to upgrade and expand 143 community health centers across the country. This funding will provide access to primary care services for an additional 745,000 patients in underserved areas. Maryland received \$20 million for 17 community health centers. For more information, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2010pres/10/20101008d.html>.



Calendar of Events

December 1

**NOSORH Grant Writing Institute:
Rural Health Grant Writing: Setting
It Up for Success**

National Organization of State Offices
of Rural Health

For more information, please visit

[http://www.vrha.org/weekly/
articles/5-3-10nosorh.pdf](http://www.vrha.org/weekly/articles/5-3-10nosorh.pdf) or contact Stephanie Hansen,
steph@nosorh.org.



December 6

Telehealth Roundtable- Rural Maryland Council

Place: Maryland Department of Agriculture

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway

Annapolis, MD 21401

Registration Fee: \$25 (covers the cost of lunch and materials)

For more information, please visit

[http://www.rural.state.md.us/Roundtables/
RRT10_Telehealth.htm](http://www.rural.state.md.us/Roundtables/RRT10_Telehealth.htm).

December 14

**Statewide Health Care Reform Forum: Provisions
for Decisions That Matter to Rural Maryland Families
and Communities Rural Maryland Council**

Place: Live at College Park in Maryland Or Attend by live
and facilitated webcast at Eastern Shore Higher Education
Center at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, Garrett County
Health Department, in Oakland Wor-Wic Community
College in Salisbury (tentative location)

Registration opens November 8 on the Rural Maryland
Council website. For the most current information, visit the
Rural Maryland Council website frequently at

<http://www.rural.state.md.us>.

December 15

**NOSORH Grant Writing Institute: Rural Health Grant
Writing: Make Your Application Stand Out From
the Others**

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health
For more information, please visit

<http://www.vrha.org/weekly/articles/5-3-10nosorh.pdf> or
contact Stephanie Hansen, steph@nosorh.org.

January 18-20

Negotiated Rulemaking Committee Meeting

Place: Crystal City, VA

For more information, please visit

[http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/
index.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/shortage/index.html)

January 24-26

Rural Health Policy Institute

National Rural Health Association

Place: Washington, DC

Early registration (before Dec. 27): \$539

Advance registration: \$639

On-site registration: \$689

For more information, please visit

<http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/pi>.

Maryland Primary Care and Rural Health

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<http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/>

The Maryland PCO's mission is to improve access to health care services for all Marylanders in underserved communities by developing strong partnerships; building local resources; supporting and retaining health care providers; promoting relevant state and national health policies, and reducing health disparities.

The Maryland SORH's mission is to improve the health of rural Marylanders through collaboration, networking, outreach, education, research, advocacy, and the development of special programs.

Maryland Primary Care & Rural Health Staff

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