

MARYLAND RURAL HEALTH

August 2007

News and Notes from the Maryland State Office of Rural Health, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

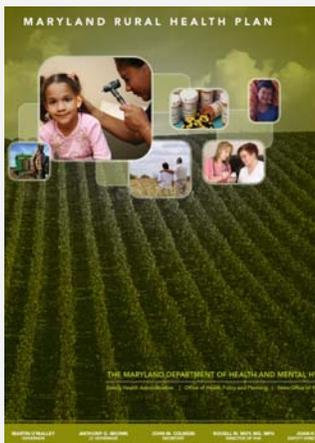
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Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Family Health Administration
Office
of Health Policy and Planning

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

John M. Colmers
Secretary, DHMH



Maryland Rural Health Plan

We are pleased to present the *Maryland Rural Health Plan*, a five-year strategic plan to improve rural health. The plan was developed by the Maryland State Office of Rural Health (SORH), with guidance from a Statewide Steering Committee that was formed to address pressing rural health issues.

The plan provides a guide to assist the SORH and other rural health stakeholders in Maryland to identify and develop

strategies and allocate resources to support improvements in rural health. The plan serves as a call to action to encourage any organization involved in rural health to address the identified priorities.

The goals of the plan are: to assess rural health status; identify impediments to maintaining or improving health for rural residents; and propose strategies to develop and maintain a sustainable system for rural health care delivery.

The plan's priority

recommendations are aimed at improving access to care, reducing chronic disease, and empowering individuals to take responsibility for their health.

Copies of this report can be downloaded at <http://fha.state.md.us/ohpp/html/publications.cfm>. Your comments and any questions are welcomed; please contact the State Office of Rural Health, Office of Health Policy and Planning at ohpp@dhmh.state.md.us or call 410-767-5301.

Funding Alerts

National Rural Health Association Rural Health Fellows Program

The Rural Health Fellows (RHF) program is a year-long, intensive program that will develop leaders who can articulate a clear and compelling vision for rural America.

Deadline: August 31

Web site: <http://www.nrharural.org/groups/sub/fellows.html>

Women Helping Others Foundation

Purpose: To address health, education, and wellness concerns specifically for women and children; nationally supports grass-roots charities serving the overlooked needs of women and children.

Eligibility: 501(c)(3) organizations

Deadline: September 11

Web site: <http://www.whofoundation.org/>

Calendar of Events

August 7, 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Dental Action Committee Mtg.
201 W. Preston St., Baltimore
Rm. L-3

Aug 13 - 15

Charting New Frontiers in Rural
Women's Health Conference
Washington, DC

Web site: <http://www.esi-bethesda.com/ruralfrontier2007/>

August 16, 9:00 a.m.-Noon

The Maryland Statewide
Commission on the Shortage in the
Health Care Workforce
201 W. Preston St., Baltimore
Rm. L3

August 21, 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Dental Action Committee Mtg.
201 W. Preston St., Baltimore
Rm. L3

August 22, 10 a.m.-Noon

Advisory Council on Workforce
Shortage Meeting
839 Bestgate Rd., Annapolis

October 17-19

Maryland Rural Summit
Solomons Island, MD
Website: <http://www.fha.state.md.us/ohpp/ruralhlth/html/summit.cfm>

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Funding Alerts (cont.)

Technology Grants for Rural Schools

Purpose: To help public schools in rural areas served by members of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunication Companies (OPASTCO) bring modern computers to every classroom and connect schools to the information superhighway.

Eligibility: The school or the school district must be in an OPASTCO member's service area. In Maryland, there are two phone companies that are members of OPASTCO: Springport Telephone Company and Armstrong Telephone Company of Maryland.

Deadline: September 14

Web site: <http://www.fred.org/teachtech.html>

Cable Positive Tony Cox Community Fund

Cable Positive's Tony Cox Community Fund is a national grant program that exists to encourage community-based AIDS Service Organizations and cable outlets to partner in joint community outreach efforts, or to produce and distribute new, locally focused HIV/AIDS-related programs and public service announcements.

Eligibility: Local community outreach projects

Deadline: September 14

Web site: <http://www.cablepositive.org/programs-tonycox.html>

NIH Screening and Brief Alcohol Interventions in Underage and Young Adult Populations (R21)

Purpose: To encourage research grant applications on screening and brief interventions to prevent and/or reduce alcohol use and its adverse consequences.

Next Deadline: October 16

Web site: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-407.html>

SAMHSA Knowledge Dissemination Conference Grants

Purpose: To disseminate knowledge about practices within the mental health services and substance abuse prevention and treatment fields and to integrate that knowledge into real-world practice as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Eligibility: Public and private nonprofits

Next Deadline: October 31

Web site: http://www.samhsa.gov/Grants/conference/PA_06_001_Conference.aspx

NIH Nutrition and Alcohol-Related Health Outcomes (R03)

Purpose: Encourages applications from institutions/organizations that propose to examine associations between nutrition and alcohol-related health outcomes in humans and animal models.

Next Deadline: November 16

Web site: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-404.html>

Rural Health Professional Shortage Areas Update

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are communities or counties designated by the federal government's Health Resources and Services Administration as having shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers. Areas designated as HPSAs are eligible for federal program benefits such as bonus payments under Medicare for physician services and eligibility for National Health Service Corps (dentists and physicians) and J-1 Visa Waiver (physicians) placement. The Maryland Primary Care Organization (PCO) in the Office of Health Policy and Planning, led by Elizabeth Vaidya, analyzes and recommends areas to HRSA for Health Professional Shortage Area Designation.

The following rural counties are designated as HPSAs (in part or entirely):

- Primary care: Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Washington and Worcester
- Dental: Allegany, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester
- Mental health: Calvert, Garrett, Kent, Somerset, St. Mary's, Wicomico and Worcester

The PCO is analyzing the following rural counties for possible designation:

- Primary care: Caroline, Frederick, Harford, St. Mary's and Talbot
- Dental: Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Kent and St. Mary's
- Mental health: Allegany, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Queen Anne's, Talbot and Washington

If you do not see your county listed and wish to be considered for designation, please contact Elizabeth Vaidya at ohpp@dhhm.state.md.us. The PCO will conduct an initial assessment of the area, and, if it appears possible that the area could be designated, the PCO will provide training to interested communities in how to assess health care provider capacity in their area. For more information, please visit http://www.fha.state.md.us/ohpp/pco/html/state_hpsas.cfm.

Addressing Maryland's Health Workforce Shortage

The Maryland Statewide Commission on the Shortage in the Health Care Workforce (the commission), is charged with determining the extent of the shortage of health care workers in Maryland, and evaluating mechanisms to enhance the education, recruitment and retention of health care workers affected by shortages. The commission, established by the Maryland legislature in the 2006 legislative session and begun on July 1, 2006, will identify methods to effectively recruit and retain minorities, high school students, and those committed to working in rural and underserved areas.

The commission consists of 21 members representing different occupations and interests in health, including health care professionals, educational institutions and health care delivery systems.

The commission anticipates releasing its Annual Report late this summer. It will include a summary of commission activities and an assessment of Maryland's health workforce shortages. Following release of the Annual Report, the commission will focus on examining strategies to increase healthcare workforce retention and enhance recruitment in

underserved areas.

The commission's next meeting is Aug. 16, 9:00 a.m.-Noon at 201 W. Preston St., Baltimore, Rm. L2. The focus will be determining changes needed to enhance institutional capacity.

For more information, contact Antoinette Coward, Office of Health Policy and Planning, staff person for the commission at acoward@dhhm.state.md.us or visit their Web site: <http://www.dhhm.state.md.us/mscshw/index.html>.

The Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage helps to identify fields where workforce shortages are

occurring, including health. The council recommends to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) priority fields that should be included in the *Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grants Program*. The council's next meeting is August 22 from 10 a.m.-Noon. The topic is "Looking at Methodology for the Allocation of Funds Across Occupations." The meeting will be held at MHEC, 839 Bestgate Rd. in Annapolis.

Antoinette Coward serves as DHMH liaison to the council. For more information, visit <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/26excom/html/36workforces.html>.

Dental Action Committee

The Dental Action Committee was convened by the secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene early this summer to address issues of access to oral health services for Medicaid children. The committee, led by the Office of Oral Health and Medicaid, is charged with developing a series of recommendations on the following areas:

1. Oral health education and outreach to parents and care-givers;
2. Public health strategies;
3. Medicaid reimbursement rates and alternative models; and
4. Provider participation, capacity, and scope of practice.

The committee will provide a final summary report with recommendations to the secretary by early September.

The final two meetings of the committee will be held in Room L3 at 201 W. Preston Street in Baltimore (the State Office Complex). The meeting dates are August 7 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. and August 21 from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

The meetings are open to the public and there is time reserved at each meeting for public comment. If you would like additional information about the Dental Action Committee, please contact Ms. Kelly Sage, Chief, Office of Oral Health at 410-767-7899 or via e-mail at ksage@dhmh.state.md.us.

Maryland Community Health Resources Commission

The Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (MCHRC) was established in the spring of 2005, under the *Community Health Care Access and Safety Net Act of 2005*. The commission's mission is to develop and implement strategies and accountability, which improve availability and accessibility of comprehensive primary and specialty care services, for low-income, underinsured Marylanders regardless of their ability to pay. The commission focuses on providing funding to community health resources. The commission made its first round of grant awards under the grants program "*Aligning Community Health Resources: Improving Access to Care for Marylanders*" in January.

On July 27, the MCHRC released a Request for Dental Proposals for the grants program *Aligning Community Health Resources: Improving Access to Dental Care for Marylanders*. To be considered, a Letter of Intent was due from applicants on August 3 by 5:00 p.m.; the full application deadline is August 21 at 5:00 p.m.

The commission also plans to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the grants program *Aligning Community Health Resources: Improving Access to Care for Marylanders through Information Technology*. A draft copy of this RFP is available by logging onto <http://dhmh.state.md.us/mchrc/>.