



# Nebraska

## 2025 RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

YOUNES CONFERENCE CENTER NORTH | KEARNEY, NE

JUNE 9 - 11



NEBRASKA RURAL  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION



NEBRASKA  
HOSPITALS

NEBRASKA  
Good Life. Great Mission.  
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## A MESSAGE FROM NHA & NeRHA

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To our NHA and NeRHA members, rural health advocates, community partners and service providers,

We're excited to welcome you to the Nebraska Rural Health Conference, our state's premier rural health care conference. The NHA and NeRHA are again joining forces to bring you this exciting event.

From June 9-11 at the Younes Conference Center North in Kearney, this annual gathering is an excellent opportunity to connect, collaborate, and help advance health care in our rural communities.

Over the past year, we've made strong strides in advocating for rural hospitals and care providers. This conference will build upon that momentum with timely discussions, expert insights, and innovative strategies tailored to the needs of rural Nebraska.

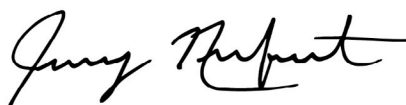
You can expect in-depth discussions on emergency medical transportation, rural housing, hospital operations and sustainability, community partnerships, research, and policy advocacy. This conference isn't just about ideas, it's about making connections and finding solutions. We're here to learn from each other, elevate local success stories, and forge partnerships that make a difference back home.

We'll also take time to recognize outstanding contributions in rural health during our Rural Health Awards Ceremony—a celebration of the compassion and commitment that define our work.

Nebraska Rural Health Conference 2025. LET'S GO!



Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C  
Executive Director, NeRHA



Jeremy Nordquist, MPA  
President, NHA



Contributions or gifts to the AHA/NHAPAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. All contributions are voluntary and have no impact on your job status, performance review, compensation or employment. Any giving guideline is merely a suggestion. Any amount given or the decision not to give will not advantage or disadvantage you. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year (January - December).

Visit [pac.nebraskahospitals.org](https://pac.nebraskahospitals.org)

**Username:** nhapac **Password:** nhapac1

Cash donation are accepted but may not exceed \$50 per calendar year.



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## EVENT INFORMATION

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June 9-11, 2025

Younes Conference Center North

707 W Talmadge Street, Kearney, NE 68845

### Target Audience

Hospital and Clinic Leaders, including C-Suite, Nursing, HR, Finance, Quality, IT, and Operations.

### Overview

The NHA & NeRHA Rural Health Conference is an annual event for rural health care providers to gain current and relevant education in health care operations, workforce, IT and cyber security, finance, billing & coding, and community topics.

This educational activity is jointly provided by AXIS Medical Education, the Nebraska Hospital Association, and the Nebraska Rural Health Association.

### Accreditation Statement

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by AXIS Medical Education and Coral Health Advisors. AXIS Medical Education is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.



### Credit Designation for Nursing

AXIS Medical Education designates this continuing nursing education activity for 9.5 contact hours.

Learners are advised that accredited status does not imply endorsement by the provider or ANCC of any commercial products displayed in conjunction with an activity.

### Quality Professionals

This activity is pending approval by the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) to provide CPHQ CE credit.

### Healthcare Executives/ACHE-Qualified

ACHE Qualified Education credit must be related to healthcare management (i.e., it cannot be clinical, inspirational, or specific to the sponsoring organization). It can be earned through educational programs conducted or sponsored by any organization qualified to provide education programming in healthcare management. Programs may be sponsored by ACHE, chapters, or other qualified sources, whether the programming is face-to-face or distance offerings (webinars, online seminars, self-study courses, etc.). You will receive a certificate of completion for 3.0 hours.

### Nursing home administrators

These educational activities are designated for a total of 4.0 contact hours and 2.0 participant hours from the Nebraska Office of Behavioral Health and Consumer Services/ Nursing Home Administration.

### Human Resource Professionals

This program has been submitted to the HR Certification Institute for review.

### AXIS Contact Information

For information about the accreditation of this program please contact AXIS [info@axismeded.org](mailto:info@axismeded.org).



### Disclaimer

Participants have an implied responsibility to use the newly acquired information to enhance patient outcomes and their own professional development. The information presented in this activity is not meant to serve as a guideline for patient management. Any procedures, medications, or other courses of diagnosis or treatment discussed in this activity should not be used by clinicians without evaluation of patient conditions and possible contraindications or dangers in use, review of any applicable manufacturer's product information, and comparison with recommendations of other authorities.

### Requirements for credit:

- Participate in the enduring educational activity and review all activity materials.
- Complete the post-test with a score of 80 percent or higher.
- Complete the CE Attestation form online by **July 11, 2025** Instructions will be provided. If you do not enter the online portal by the above date, you will not be able to retrieve your statement of participation.
- Upon successful completion of the portal process your statement of completion will be presented to you for printing.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## YOUR FACULTY

---

**Angie Carman, CRCR, LSSGB**

Manager, Consulting  
Forvis Mazars

**Brian D. Shelmadine, DO, PhD**

Chief Medical Officer  
Box Butte General Hospital

**Caleb Poore, MHA**

Chief Executive Officer  
Boone County Health Center

**Carol Geary, PhD, MBA, RN**

Assistant Professor  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

**Chad Korte, EMS**

Director, Paramedic  
Cass County

**Charles F. Craft, DDS**

State Dental Health Director  
Nebraska DHHS

**Cheryl Kreikemeier**

P2T Internship Director  
ESU2

**Chris Nichols, MHA, MPT**

Chief Executive Officer  
Fillmore County Hospital

**Christopher Banks Jr.**

Chief, VA Care in the Community  
Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

**Dara Schlecht, BSN, RN-BC**

Chief Nursing Officer  
Franciscan Healthcare

**Don Naiberk**

Chief Executive Officer  
Butler County Health

**Eric Ernest, MD, EMT-P, FACEP, FAEMS**

Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and  
Chief, Division of Prehospital and Emergency  
Medical Services  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

**Fred Hoiberg**

Head Coach — Nebraska Men's Basketball  
University of Nebraska

**Gary Person**

President & CEO  
North Platte Area Chamber and Development  
Corporation

**Gene Bradley, EMT**

Director of Emergency Services  
Community Medical Center

**Jason Petik**

Chief Executive Officer  
Sidney Regional Medical Center

**Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C**

Executive Director  
Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

**Jeff Ordway**

Retired

**Jenna Thomsen, MA**

Director of Strategy & Development  
Health Center Association of Nebraska

**Jeremy Nordquist, MPA**

President  
Nebraska Hospital Association

**Jill A. Wallen, BDS, MS**

Dean, School of Dentistry  
Creighton University

**Kate Hill, RN**

Vice President Rural Health  
The Compliance Team

**Kevin Stansbury, MS, JD, FACHE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center

**Laura Gamble, RN, BSN**

Chief Executive Officer  
Pender Community Hospital District

**Lori Minert, EMT**

Director of Rural Health Clinics  
Pender Community Hospital District

**Marty Fattig**

Chief Executive Officer  
Nemaha County Hospital

**Meghan Smith, CPCO**

Senior Consultant, Consulting  
Forvis Mazars

**Michelle Rathman**

Chief Executive Officer  
Impact! Communications, Inc.

**Mike Feagler, MBA**

Vice President of Medicaid Administration  
Nebraska Hospital Association

**Mike Hansen, FACHE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Columbus Community Hospital

**Nadhal Eadeh**

Vice President  
WellHive

**Neil Hilton**

Chief Executive Officer  
Perkins County Health Services

**Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C**

Senior Consultant  
Wintergreen

**Rob Bloom, CPA**

Principal  
Wintergreen

**Ryan Larsen, Ed.D, MHA, FACHE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Community Medical Center

**Sarah Smarsh**

Author, Journalist  
Self-Employed

**Savannah Henn, BSN, RN, CPHQ**

Compliance Manager, Quality Director,  
Utilization Review Nurse, Privacy Officer  
Antelope Memorial Hospital

**Sean Miller**

Senior Director of State Account Management  
Bamboo Health

**Shannon Seidler**

Child Care Center Director  
Box Butte General Hospital

**Tim Johnson, MBA**

Chief Financial Officer  
Nebraska Hospital Association

**Tim Wilson, MBA, NRP, EMSI**

Program Director / State EMS Director  
DHHS, Division of Public Health, Office of  
Emergency Health Systems

**Travis Gentry**

Chief Executive Officer  
Hyve Health

**Troy Bruntz, CPA, MBA, FHFMA**

President & Chief Executive Officer  
Community Hospital

**Tyler Toline, MHA, EdD, FACHE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Franciscan Healthcare

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## DISCLOSURES

### Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

AXIS Medical Education requires faculty, instructors, authors, planners, directors, managers, peer reviewers, and other individuals who are in a position to control the content of this activity to disclose all personal financial relationships they may have in the past 24 months with ineligible companies. An ineligible entity is any organization whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. All relevant financial relationships are identified and mitigated prior to initiation of the planning phase for an activity.

AXIS has mitigated and disclosed to learners all relevant financial relationships disclosed by staff, planners, faculty/authors, peer reviewers, or others in control of content for this activity. Disclosure of a relationship is not intended to suggest or condone bias in any presentation but is made to provide participants with information that might be of potential importance to their evaluation of a presentation or activity. Disclosure information for faculty, authors, course directors, planners, peer reviewers, and/or relevant staff is provided with this activity.

The faculty reported the following relevant financial relationships or relationships they have with ineligible companies of any amount during the past 24 months.

Angie Carman, CRCR, LSSGB	Nothing to Disclose	Laura Gamble, RN, BSN	Nothing to Disclose
Brian D. Shelmadine, DO, PhD	Nothing to Disclose	Lori Minert, EMT	Nothing to Disclose
Caleb Poore, MHA	Nothing to Disclose	Marty Fattig	Nothing to Disclose
Carol Geary, PhD, MBA, RN	Nothing to Disclose	Meghan Smith, CPCO	Nothing to Disclose
Chad Korte, EMS	Nothing to Disclose	Michelle Rathman	Nothing to Disclose
Charles F. Craft, DDS	Nothing to Disclose	Mike Feagler, MBA	Nothing to Disclose
Cheryl Kreikemeier	Nothing to Disclose	Mike Hansen, FACHE	Nothing to Disclose
Chris Nichols, MHA, MPT	Nothing to Disclose	Nadhal Eadeh	Nothing to Disclose
Christopher Banks Jr.	Nothing to Disclose	Neil Hilton	Nothing to Disclose
Dara Schlecht, BSN, RN-BC	Nothing to Disclose	Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C	Nothing to Disclose
Don Naiberk	Nothing to Disclose	Rob Bloom, CPA	Nothing to Disclose
Eric Ernest, MD, EMT-P, FACEP, FAEMS	Nothing to Disclose	Ryan Larsen, Ed.D, MHA, FACHE	Nothing to Disclose
Gary Person	Nothing to Disclose	Sarah Smarsh	Nothing to Disclose
Gene Bradley, EMT	Nothing to Disclose	Savannah Henn, BSN, RN, CPHQ	Nothing to Disclose
Jason Petik	Nothing to Disclose	Sean Miller	Nothing to Disclose
Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C	Nothing to Disclose	Shannon Seidler	Nothing to Disclose
Jeff Ordway	Nothing to Disclose	Tim Johnson, MBA	Nothing to Disclose
Jenna Thomsen, MA	Nothing to Disclose	Tim Wilson, MBA, NRP, EMSI	Nothing to Disclose
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA	Nothing to Disclose	Travis Gentry	Nothing to Disclose
Jill A. Wallen, BDS, MS	Nothing to Disclose	Troy Bruntz, CPA, MBA, FHFMA	Nothing to Disclose
Kate Hill, RN	Nothing to Disclose	Tyler Toline, MHA. EdD, FACHE	Nothing to Disclose
Kevin Stansbury, MS, JD, FACHE	Nothing to Disclose		

The directors, planners, managers, reviewers, and relevant staff reported the following financial relationships they have with any ineligible company of any amount during the past 24 months:

Stacey Ocander, EdD	Nothing to Disclose
Heather Bullock	Nothing to Disclose
Laura Leach	Nothing to Disclose
Chloe Ekberg	Nothing to Disclose
Amanda Hodge	Nothing to Disclose

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## EVENT SPONSORS

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Closing Keynote Sponsor



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# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

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### NeRHA Platinum Sponsors



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### Bronze Sponsors



### NeRHA Bronze Sponsors





# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

### Monday, June 9

1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	<b>PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION   STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BYPASS AND SHIFT PERCEPTIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUTMIGRATION</b> Michelle Rathman   CEO, Impact! Communications, Inc.	<b>Gold 11</b>
4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.	<b>WELCOME RECEPTION</b>	<b>Ballroom Pre-Function</b>

### Tuesday, June 10

8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.	<b>OPENING REMARKS</b> Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C   Executive Director, NeRHA Jeremy Nordquist, MPA   President, NHA	<b>Silver 4-6 &amp; 10-12</b>								
8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	<b>WORKING HARD AND BEING BROKE IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD</b> Sarah Smarsh   Author	<b>Silver 4-6 &amp; 10-12</b>								
9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.	<b>SPONSOR BREAK &amp; NETWORKING</b>	<b>Gold 1-3 &amp; 7-9</b>								
10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	<b>BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b> <table><tr><th>COMMUNITY</th><th>EMS</th><th>OPERATIONS</th><th>WORKFORCE</th></tr><tr><td>Innovative Approaches to Behavioral Health Capacity Management <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 4-6 &amp; 10-12</b></td><td>Current Issues with EMS Transfers <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 1</b></td><td>A Detailed Look at Maximizing Overall Revenue Cycle Performance <b>Silver 2-3</b></td><td>Retaining Our Rural Youth Population <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 8-9</b></td></tr></table>	COMMUNITY	EMS	OPERATIONS	WORKFORCE	Innovative Approaches to Behavioral Health Capacity Management <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 4-6 &amp; 10-12</b>	Current Issues with EMS Transfers <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 1</b>	A Detailed Look at Maximizing Overall Revenue Cycle Performance <b>Silver 2-3</b>	Retaining Our Rural Youth Population <i>(Panel)</i> <b>Silver 8-9</b>	
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12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M.	<b>LUNCH &amp; AWARDS</b>	<b>Gold 4-6 &amp; 10-12</b>								
1:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.	<b>SPONSOR BREAK</b>	<b>Gold 1-3 &amp; 7-9</b>								
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4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.	<b>SPONSOR RECEPTION</b>	<b>Gold 1-3 &amp; 7-9</b>								
5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.	<b>NHAPAC RECEPTION</b>	<b>Fyre Modern Grill</b>								

### Wednesday, June 11

8:30 A.M. - 9:15 A.M.	<div>RURAL ROADMAP &amp; RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES</div> <div>Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C   Executive Director, NeRHA</div> <div>Jeremy Nordquist, MPA   President, NHA</div>			Silver 4-6 & 10-12								
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11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.	<div>BUILDING TEAMS IN A TIME OF CHANGE: LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE LOCKER ROOM</div> <div>Fred Hoiberg, Head Coach (Men's Basketball), University of Nebraska</div>			Silver 4-6 & 10-12								



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

### RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK

#### Monday, June 9

1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION   STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BYPASS AND SHIFT PERCEPTIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUTMIGRATION Michelle Rathman   CEO, Impact! Communications, Inc.	Gold 11
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8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	WORKING HARD AND BEING BROKE IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD Sarah Smarsh, Author	Silver 4-6 & 10-12
9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.	SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING	Gold 1-3 & 7-9
10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (PART 1) Rob Bloom, CPA   Principal, Wintergreen	Silver 7
11:00 A.M. - 11:15 P.M.	BREAK	Gold 1-3 & 7-9
11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.	SAY IT AIN'T SO . . . WHAT A SMALL CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL IN COLORADO DISCOVERED WHEN IT DUG THROUGH THE DATA Kevin Stansbury, MS, JD, FACHE   Chief Executive Officer, Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center	Silver 4-6 & 10-12
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1:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.	SPONSOR BREAK	Gold 1-3 & 7-9
1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.	RURAL HEALTH CLINIC COMPLIANCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS UPDATE Kate Hill, RN   VP Rural Health, The Compliance Team	Silver 7
3:00 P.M. - 3:45 P.M.	RURAL HEALTH CLINIC CARE COORDINATION AS A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C   Senior Consultant, Wintergreen	Silver 7
3:45 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.	BREAK	Gold 1-3 & 7-9
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9:15 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	BREAK	Ballroom Pre-Function				
9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.	<div><div>RURAL HEALTH CLINIC BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST – OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE (PART 2)</div><div>Rob Bloom, CPA   Principal, Wintergreen Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C   Senior Consultant, Wintergreen</div></div>	Silver 7				
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# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## PRE-CONFERENCE & WELCOME RECEPTION

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### MONDAY, JUNE 9

1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

#### STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BYPASS AND SHIFT PERCEPTIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUTMIGRATION

**Michelle Rathman** | Chief Executive Officer, Impact! Communications, Inc.

Rural hospitals' financial stability directly impacts access to essential health care services for rural populations. With rural hospital closures continuing to leave communities without options for local health care services, it is necessary for rural health leaders and those working on behalf of Flex to understand and work to address factors contributing to financial losses that can lead to rural hospital vulnerability and the potential for eventual closure.

During this intensive and interactive learning session, Michelle Rathman, CEO of Impact! Communications, with over 30 years of rural health strategy experience, will explore the contents of the recently published "[Strategies for Critical Access Hospitals to Address Outmigration](#)," which she developed for the National Rural Health Resource Center as a companion guide for the Small Rural Hospital and Clinic Finance 101 Guide.

This guide equips rural hospital and clinic leaders with tools and strategies to help increase Primary Service Area market share, curb outmigration, and potentially reverse it in cases where health care services are available locally but underutilized.

The session will also provide strategies to help rural hospitals gain community support for their levies and major capital projects and understand how internal communications and culture contribute to ill perceptions that drive negative public opinions.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the conditions that contribute to avoidable bypass.
- Discover communication and community member engagement strategies to maintain market share.
- Learn how to shift from traditional outbound to innovative inbound marketing strategies and why this approach effectively addresses population health, promotes quality, and closes health disparity gaps.

4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

#### WELCOME RECEPTION

Kick off the 2025 Nebraska Rural Health Conference at our Monday evening welcome reception, open to all conference attendees. Connect with colleagues, make new connections, and enjoy great live music from The Vibe as well as refreshments and appetizers. A great way to start off the week!

#### Welcome Reception Sponsors:



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA

### TUESDAY, JUNE 10

8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.

#### OPENING REMARKS

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. - OPENING KEYNOTE

#### WORKING HARD AND BEING BROKE IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

Sarah Smarsh | Author, Journalist

Sarah's work reveals one woman's experience of working-class poverty with a startlingly observed, eye-opening, and topical personal story. In this presentation, Sarah will share that during her turbulent childhood in Kansas in the 1980s and 1990s, she enjoyed the freedom of a country childhood, but observed the painful challenges of the poverty around her; untreated medical conditions for lack of insurance or consistent care, unsafe job conditions, abusive relationships, and limited resources and information that would provide for the upward mobility that is the American Dream.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Obtain a working knowledge of life in rural America and barriers to achieving the American Dream.
- Uncover the underpinnings of resiliency, stability, and grit as a means to success.
- Be challenged to look more closely at the class divide in our country.

9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.

#### SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: EMS

#### CURRENT ISSUES WITH EMS TRANSFERS (PANEL)

Laura Gamble, RN, BSN | CEO, Pender Community Hospital District  
Lori Minert, EMT | Director of Rural Health Clinics, Pender Community Hospital District

Savannah Henn, BSN, RN, CPHQ | Compliance Manager, Quality Director, Utilization Review Nurse, Privacy Officer, Antelope Memorial Hospital

Rural hospitals are facing a crisis in the continuity of care for their patients due to issues with EMS transfers. The extent of these issues are paralyzing and spread across the state. This presentation will highlight the current issues, magnitude of the issues, and strategies for tackling this interruption in care.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Be exposed to the current EMS transfer issues impacting two rural hospitals in Nebraska.
- Share their experiences with EMS transfers and solutions they have uncovered.
- Propose possible solutions and collaborations to address the issues.

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: COMMUNITY

#### INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAPACITY MANAGEMENT (PANEL)

Chris Nichols, MHA, MPT | CEO, Fillmore County Hospital

Mike Hansen, FACHE | CEO, Columbus Community Hospital

Sean Miller | Senior Director of State Account Management, Bamboo Health

Successful placement of our most at-risk populations stems from closing the loop on referrals and capacity management. When left to navigate these rough waters, patient success rates drop. Through programs like Open Beds, Fillmore County and Columbus Community Hospital's approach to evidence-based behavioral health therapy, our rural communities are gaining access to critical services.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Recognize the dangers of failing to address behavioral health needs in our rural communities.
- Differentiate between in and outpatient services and their impact on the overall care of our patients.
- Examine how the strategies presented could expand services at their organization and within the community through collaboration.

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: WORKFORCE

#### RETAINING OUR RURAL YOUTH POPULATION (PANEL)

Cheryl Kreikemeier | P2T Internship Director, ESU2

Dara Schlecht, BSN, RN-BC | Chief Nursing Officer, Franciscan Healthcare

Jenna Thomsen, MA | Director of Strategy & Development, Health Center Association of Nebraska

In Nebraska, 20% of all graduating high school seniors leave the state to attend college elsewhere. This loss of brainpower and innovation is directly felt in our workforce. Through programs like the HCAN Medical Assisting Apprenticeship, P2T, and the NHA/InternNE high school internship, we have begun addressing this exodus and partnering to retain Nebraska's best.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Describe the impact of the departure of youth has on their community.
- Discover new and innovative approaches to retaining our rural youth population.
- Join in exploring ways to incorporate these stackable credentials and experiences into their organization and community.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA

### TUESDAY, JUNE 10

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPERATIONS

#### A DETAILED LOOK AT MAXIMIZING OVERALL REVENUE CYCLE PERFORMANCE

Angie Carman, CRCR, LSSGB | Manager, Consulting, Forvis Mazars  
Meghan Smith, CPCO | Senior Consultant, Consulting, Forvis Mazars

Today's healthcare landscape in rural Nebraska offers revenue cycle operational challenges like never before. Join Angie and Meghan for a thoughtful discussion as they tackle a full range of issues including payer enrollment & contracting, upfront collections, patient access, charge capture, claim submissions, accounts receivable and denials management.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Analyze current issues impacting the revenue cycle operations of organizations.
- Explore effective strategies for solving challenges related to accounts receivable and denial management.
- Synthesize trends in healthcare leading to successful standards of operation around maximizing revenue cycle management.

11:00 A.M. - 11:15 A.M.

#### BREAK

11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. — GENERAL SESSION

#### SAY IT AIN'T SO . . . WHAT A SMALL CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL IN COLORADO DISCOVERED WHEN IT DUG THROUGH THE DATA

Kevin Stansbury, MS, JD, FACHE | Chief Executive Officer, Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center

This presentation will examine how Lincoln Health, a small Critical Access Hospital in Hugo, Colorado, used both internal and publicly available transparency data to assess the value of its commercial payer contracts. It will highlight the imbalance of power between independent rural hospitals and large commercial payers, and how this dynamic can threaten the financial viability of small hospitals. The session will detail the process Lincoln Health followed in using this data during negotiations with a major commercial payer, and share key lessons learned along the way. Topics will include internal organizational challenges, legal considerations, antitrust concerns, Medicare Advantage implications, and the importance of managing community relationships. Strategic decision-making—such as knowing when to push forward and when to walk away—will also be discussed.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the impact of commercial payer contracts on the ongoing viability of independent rural hospitals.
- Understand the tools available to try to balance the market power imbalance.
- Discuss possible pitfalls to success.

12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. .

#### LUNCH & AWARDS

1:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

#### SPONSOR BREAK

1:30 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.— BREAKOUT SESSION: EMS

#### INNOVATIVE MODELS IN EMS SUSTAINABILITY (PANEL)

Chad Korte, EMS | Director, Paramedic, Cass County  
Eric Ernest, MD, EMT-P, FACEP, FAEMS | Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and Chief, Division of Prehospital and Emergency Medical Services, UNMC  
Marty Fattig | CEO, Nemaha County Hospital

As EMS services across Nebraska are faced with challenges of how to serve communities best, thought leaders and practitioners from around the state have come together to design and implement innovative strategies to solve these issues.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the state of EMS in Nebraska and explore current innovative models to sustainability.
- Determine the viability of these strategies in their communities.
- Predict the success of integration of these models in solving the EMS challenges in Nebraska.

1:30 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: COMMUNITY

#### RURAL RESEARCH FOR IMPACTFUL PROGRAMMING (PANEL)

Brian D. Sheldadine, DO, PhD | Chief Medical Officer, Box Butte General Hospital  
Carol Geary, PhD, MBA, RN | Assistant Professor, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Jeff Ordway | Retired  
Ryan Larsen, EdD, FACHE | CEO, Community Medical Center

In this session, members of the NeRHA Research Network Steering Committee will share updates on current funding and research activities, insights into benefits of rural research, and opportunities for involvement.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Define "rural research network" and identify benefits for rural practices.
- Describe development activities and the value for NeRHA membership.
- Identify opportunities for involvement in research.

1:30 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: WORKFORCE

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CHILDCARE AS A WORKFORCE STRATEGY (PANEL)

Caleb Poore, MHA | CEO, Boone County Health Center  
Neil Hilton | CEO, Perkins County Health Services  
Shannon Seidler | Child Care Center Director, Box Butte General Hospital

Workplace childcare is no longer a luxury but rather a necessity in recruiting and retaining a healthcare workforce. Our panel will share their process for integrating childcare into their system and the outcomes experienced through this forward-thinking integration in the workforce.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Learn from leaders at three different organizations who have incorporated childcare into their facility.
- Acquire relevant information to assist in decision-making about the integration of childcare as a workforce strategy.
- Assess which model of childcare would potentially fit within their organization and community.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA

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### TUESDAY, JUNE 10

1:30 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. — BREAKOUT OPERATIONS: OPERATIONS

#### RURAL VETERAN ACCESS PROGRAMS

Nadhal Eadeh | Vice President, WellHive

Christopher Banks Jr. | Chief, VA Care in the Community, Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

The Veteran population in Nebraska is growing and becoming more mobile as time goes on. There is an urgency to provide programs to address the multiple health needs of this population. This presentation will highlight the rural veteran access programs currently in place and the need for future programming.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Gain practical knowledge on current programs addressing the needs of rural veteran access to healthcare.
- Explore ways in which their healthcare systems can intersect with rural veteran access programs to elevate care.
- Analyze current gaps in healthcare for the rural veteran population.

2:30 P.M. - 2:45 P.M.

#### BREAK

2:45 P.M. - 3:45 P.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

#### PAYER SCORECARD: PROVIDERS HOLDING PAYERS ACCOUNTABLE

Travis Gentry | CEO, Hyve Health

There has never been a more pressing time in healthcare for a provider-based, payer scorecard. Recent payer behavior around denials, decreased reimbursement, and delayed payments demand accountability. Commercial payers and their Medicare Advantage plans have proved disadvantageous to providers. Payers have leveraged providers' data against themselves, while providers have nothing to hold payers accountable.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Create a national ecosystem where providers can leverage their collective payer experience.
- Safely aggregate de-identified 837/claims and 835/remit data.
- Leverage aggregated data into meaningful and actionable insights to hold payers accountable.
- Analyze payer trends around prompt pay, reimbursement, and denials.
- Empower advocacy efforts at the national and state level, while giving providers data to help with payer-provider contract negotiations.

2:45 P.M. - 3:45 P.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: BOARD & FOUNDATION

#### RURAL HOSPITAL CEO CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Tyler Toline, MHA, EdD, FACHE | CEO, Franciscan Healthcare

Tyler provides insights into the lives of rural Nebraska hospital executives. Many researchers have looked at leadership and the struggles that they have in leadership. Few look specifically at rural healthcare leaders and the struggles of running a small-town hospital.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Explore the experiences of rural hospital CEOs regarding the factors that challenge and facilitate their success.
- Assess the impact that attrition of hospitals administrators has on organizational success and culture.
- Evaluate the importance of an engaged and knowledgeable hospital board and the intersection with successful CEO hiring.

3:45 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

#### BREAK

4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

#### SPONSOR RECEPTION

5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

#### NHAPAC RECEPTION

FYRE Modern Grill | 707 W Talmadge St, Kearney, NE 68845

\*This event is for NHAPAC donors only





# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

8:30 A.M. - 9:15 A.M.

#### RURAL ROADMAP & RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

**Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C** | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

**Jeremy Nordquist, MPA** | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

The Rural Roadmap provides a combination of state and federal issues—the actions needed to strengthen and support rural health care in our state. This session shares the significant progress made towards addressing the challenges uncovered in our first roadmap.

9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: EMS

#### STATE OF NEBRASKA EMS: STATEWIDE EMS TASKFORCE (PANEL)

**Gene Bradley, EMT** | Director of Emergency Services, Community Medical Center

**Jason Petik** | CEO, Sidney Regional Medical Center

**Tim Wilson, MBA, NRP, EMSI** | Program Director / State EMS Director, DHHS, Division of Public Health, Office of Emergency Health Systems

In December 2024, the NHA was tasked with convening a multi-disciplined group of leaders with a commitment to solving the EMS issues in Nebraska. The taskforce broke into working groups to tackle the volume of work to determine what is needed for next steps. Join this group of leaders as they share the work completed to date.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Review the work of the Statewide EMS Taskforce and the delineated subgroups.
- Attain information on the direction of the recommendations of the Statewide EMS Taskforce and next steps.
- Determine the implications if these issues are not resolved and a sustainable model can not be found.

9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: COMMUNITY

#### RURAL DENTAL SERVICES: PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND TRENDS IN ORAL CARE (PANEL)

**Charles F. Craft, DDS** | State Dental Health Director, DHHS Nebraska

**Jill A. Wallen, BDS, MS** | Dean, School of Dentistry, Creighton University

The need for rural dental services continues to grow in Nebraska. This interactive session will provide attendees with leading experts on the subject of rural oral health. Learn about several programs that are aimed at increasing rural residents' access to dental disease preventative services...especially for children, and how data supports the effect of those services.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Interact with subject matter experts on the dental crisis in rural Nebraska.
- Analyze data and its support of rural residents' access to dental disease preventative services success.
- Learn about several sustainable programs currently in place in Nebraska and how they may impact more communities.

9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: WORKFORCE

#### RURAL HOUSING INITIATIVES (PANEL)

**Don Naiberk** | CEO, Butler County Health

**Gary Person** | President & CEO, North Platte Area Chamber and Development Corporation

**Troy Bruntz, CPA, MBA, FHFMA** | President & CEO, Community Hospital

Finding housing in rural areas can be the deciding factor in whether or not a health care professional accepts a position. The ability to tackle this issue is dependent on collaboration across several industries and associations. Learn from two of our member CEO's and an industry partner who have addressed this issue head-on, then designed innovative and sustainable models for rural housing.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Uncover strategies to address the housing crisis facing rural America.
- Explore how these innovative and sustainable models can be implemented in their community.
- Discuss partnerships and programs available to rural communities

9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPERATIONS

#### CHARGEMASTER REVIEW – OPERATIONS: CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS - OPTIMIZING CHARGEMASTER OUTCOMES

**Mike Feagler, MBA** | Vice President of Medicaid Administration, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

**Tim Johnson, MBA** | Chief Financial Officer, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

For all Critical Access Hospitals, optimal ChargeMaster performance is critical to ensuring financial stability. In this session, attendees will explore the day-to-day ChargeMaster challenges facing facilities and how a community-based focus may significantly enhance overall outcomes.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Leverage current knowledge on ChargeMaster performance challenges towards financial stability.
- Establish a sense of empowerment to adopt a community-based focus to enhance outcomes.
- Identify ongoing ChargeMaster challenges facing the overall success of facilities.

10:30 A.M. - 10:45 A.M.

#### BREAK



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## AGENDA

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### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

10:45 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPTION 1

#### MEDICAID POLICY UPDATE

**Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C** | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

**Jeremy Nordquist, MPA** | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

The Medicaid Update will provide insight on current advocacy efforts for both state and federal Medicaid funding inclusive of the Nebraska Medicaid Provider Tax legislation, federal budgets, and the Directed Payment program.

10:45 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPTION 2

#### SHIP UPDATE

**Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C** | Senior Consultant, Wintergreen

**Rob Bloom, CPA** | Principal, Wintergreen

NeRHA and Wintergreen invite all small rural hospitals to join us for a brief kickoff meeting for the revamped 2025-2026 Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) grant project that starts June 1, 2025. 61 Nebraska rural hospitals (with fewer than 50 beds) are eligible to participate in the annual HRSA-funded program. The presentation outlines the changes to available hospital activities, staff training sessions and leadership/educational opportunities.

11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. - CLOSING KEYNOTE

#### BUILDING TEAMS IN A TIME OF CHANGE: LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE LOCKER ROOM

**Fred Hoiberg** | Head Coach, Nebraska Men's Basketball

Nebraska Men's Basketball Head Coach, Fred Hoiberg, closes the 2025 Rural Health Conference with an inside look at the fast-moving world of Division I athletics where team rosters shift yearly, the transfer portal reshapes recruiting, and leadership is tested daily. He will share how he builds culture, adapts to change, manages expectations, and leads through uncertainty all while developing young athletes on and off the court. His insights offer valuable parallels for anyone navigating change, building teams, or leading in evolving environments like rural health.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Understand strategies for leading teams through rapid change and uncertainty.
- Gain insights into building culture and trust with new team members each year.
- Learn how to manage expectations while staying grounded in core values.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## RURAL HEALTH CLINICS AGENDA

### TUESDAY, JUNE 10

8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.

#### OPENING REMARKS

**Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C** | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

**Jeremy Nordquist, MPA** | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

8:45 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. - OPENING KEYNOTE

#### WORKING HARD AND BEING BROKE IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

**Sarah Smarsh** | Author, Journalist

Sarah's work reveals one woman's experience of working-class poverty with a startlingly observed, eye-opening, and topical personal story. In this presentation, Sarah will share that during her turbulent childhood in Kansas in the 1980s and 1990s, she enjoyed the freedom of a country childhood, but observed the painful challenges of the poverty around her; untreated medical conditions for lack of insurance or consistent care, unsafe job conditions, abusive relationships, and limited resources and information that would provide for the upward mobility that is the American Dream.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Obtain a working knowledge of life in rural America and barriers to achieving the American Dream.
- Uncover the underpinnings of resiliency, stability, and grit as a means to success.
- Be challenged to look more closely at the class divide in our country.

9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.

#### SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

#### BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (PART 1)

**Rob Bloom, CPA** | Principal, Wintergreen

Part one of this presentation offers a comprehensive checklist of best practices aimed at enhancing financial performance in rural health clinics. It covers key areas such as cost management, revenue optimization, cost reporting, and compliance with fiscal regulations.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Apply practical strategies to streamline financial processes and drive sustainable growth.
- Analyze the impact of practical strategies on the bottom line for rural health clinics.
- Synthesize how best practices directly affect the financial performance of rural health clinics.

11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. — GENERAL SESSION

#### SAY IT AIN'T SO . . . WHAT A SMALL CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL IN COLORADO DISCOVERED WHEN IT DUG THROUGH THE DATA

**Kevin Stansbury, MS, JD, FACHE** | Chief Executive Officer, Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center

This presentation will examine how Lincoln Health, a small Critical Access Hospital in Hugo, Colorado, used both internal and publicly available transparency data to assess the value of its commercial payer contracts. It will highlight the imbalance of power between independent rural hospitals and large commercial payers, and how this dynamic can threaten the financial viability of small hospitals. The session will detail the process Lincoln Health followed in using this data during negotiations with a major commercial payer, and share key lessons learned along the way. Topics will include internal organizational challenges, legal considerations, antitrust concerns, Medicare Advantage implications, and the importance of managing community relationships. Strategic decision-making—such as knowing when to push forward and when to walk away—will also be discussed.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the impact of commercial payer contracts on the ongoing viability of independent rural hospitals.
- Understand the tools available to try to balance the market power imbalance.
- Discuss possible pitfalls to success.

12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. .

#### LUNCH & AWARDS

1:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

#### SPONSOR BREAK

1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

#### RURAL HEALTH CLINIC COMPLIANCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

**Kate Hill, RN** | VP Rural Health, The Compliance Team

This presentation provides an update on the latest regulatory changes impacting rural health clinic compliance and emergency preparedness. It highlights new guidelines and best practices to help clinics effectively manage both routine operations and unexpected emergencies.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Gain practical insights into enhancing safety measures and consider implementation processes.
- Consider streamlining compliance processes while building resilience in the healthcare settings.
- Explore current emergency preparedness practices and integrate best practices into their standards of operations.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## RURAL HEALTH CLINICS AGENDA

### TUESDAY, JUNE 10

3:00 P.M. - 3:45 P.M.

#### RURAL HEALTH CLINIC CARE COORDINATION AS A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C | Senior Consultant, Wintergreen

This presentation explores how effective care coordination serves as a strategic initiative for rural health clinics, driving improved patient outcomes and more efficient operations. It will discuss integrating multidisciplinary teams, innovative communication strategies, and data-driven approaches to optimize care delivery, streamline processes and elevate overall quality of care.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Gain actionable insights into implementing best practices to enhance collaboration.
- Consider streamlining processes to improve efficiency.
- Elevate overall quality of care through coordination and strategic approaches.

4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

#### SPONSOR RECEPTION

5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

#### NHAPAC RECEPTION

FYRE Modern Grill | 707 W Talmadge St, Kearney, NE 68845

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### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

8:30 A.M. - 9:15 A.M.

#### RURAL ROADMAP & RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

The Rural Roadmap provides a combination of state and federal issues—the actions needed to strengthen and support rural health care in our state. This session shares the significant progress made towards addressing the challenges uncovered in our first roadmap.

9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

#### RURAL HEALTH CLINIC BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST – OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE (PART 2)

Rob Bloom, CPA | Principal, Wintergreen

Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C | Senior Consultant, Wintergreen

This second part of the presentation offers the best practice checklist designed to boost operational performance in rural health clinics. It focuses on streamlining workflows, optimizing resource utilization, and enhancing patient care processes.

##### Learning Objectives:

- Construct actionable strategies to drive efficiency and elevate overall clinic operations.
- Investigate streamlining workflows and optimizing resource utilization while enhancing patient care processes.
- Disseminate current practices used in their facilities and ways to improve them.

10:45 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPTION 1

#### MEDICAID POLICY UPDATE

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President, Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

The Medicaid Update will provide insight on current advocacy efforts for both state and federal Medicaid funding inclusive of the Nebraska Medicaid Provider Tax legislation, federal budgets, and the Directed Payment program.

10:45 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. — BREAKOUT SESSION: OPTION 2

#### SHIP UPDATE

Nicole Thorell, RN, MSN, FNP-C | Senior Consultant, Wintergreen

Rob Bloom, CPA | Principal, Wintergreen

NeRHA and Wintergreen invite all small rural hospitals to join us for a brief kickoff meeting for the revamped 2025-2026 Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) grant project that starts June 1, 2025. 61 Nebraska rural hospitals (with fewer than 50 beds) are eligible to participate in the annual HRSA-funded program. The presentation outlines the changes to available hospital activities, staff training sessions and leadership/educational opportunities.

11:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. - CLOSING KEYNOTE

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Fred Hoiberg | Head Coach, Nebraska Men's Basketball

Nebraska Men's Basketball Head Coach, Fred Hoiberg, closes the 2025 Rural Health Conference with an inside look at the fast-moving world of Division I athletics where team rosters shift yearly, the transfer portal reshapes recruiting, and leadership is tested daily. He will share how he builds culture, adapts to change, manages expectations, and leads through uncertainty all while developing young athletes on and off the court. His insights offer valuable parallels for anyone navigating change, building teams, or leading in evolving environments like rural health.

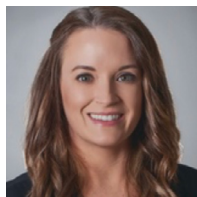
##### Learning Objectives:

- Understand strategies for leading teams through rapid change and uncertainty.
- Gain insights into building culture and trust with new team members each year.
- Learn how to manage expectations while staying grounded in core values.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### **ANGIE CARMAN, CRCR, LSSGB** Manager, Consulting | Forvis Mazars

Angie serves as a manager consultant with the Healthcare Performance Improvement team, bringing over 10 years of expertise in front-end revenue cycle processes, including patient access and eligibility services. Her career is

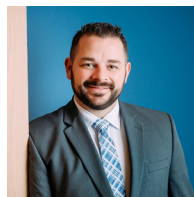
distinguished by a proven track record in training and leading high-performing teams through the implementation of best practices. As a results-focused consultant, Angie is dedicated to delivering Unmatched Client Experiences™ and contributing positively to the healthcare industry. Before transitioning to consulting, Angie held the position of senior manager for patient eligibility services. In this role, she managed specialists across multiple hospital systems nationwide and assisted qualifying patients with the Medicaid and disability application and approval process. Earlier in her career, she transformed a multi-facility hospital scheduling and pre-registration team into point-of-service collections experts by providing comprehensive training and procedures designed for long-term success. Angie actively participates in professional organizations, including the FORVIS Equality Council, the National Association of Healthcare Access Management, and both the national and Illinois chapters of the Healthcare Financial Management Association. She holds a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification and earned her Bachelor of Science degree in health information science from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas.



### **BRIAN D. SHELMADINE, DO, PHD** Chief Medical Officer | Box Butte General Hospital

Brian's career is a blend of clinical care, academic research, administration, and a deep commitment to rural healthcare. With dual doctorates in Osteopathic Medicine and

Exercise, Nutrition, and Preventive Health, he brings expertise in family medicine, sports medicine, and lifestyle-based prevention. His professional background spans clinical care, athletic sport coverage, and research in both urban and rural settings. Currently, Brian serves as the Chief Medical Officer at a Critical Access Hospital. These experiences position him to understand and address the unique needs of rural communities, enhancing access to care and long-term health outcomes through the development of the NeRHA Research Network.



### **CALEB POORE, MHA**

Chief Executive Officer | Boone County Health Center

Caleb Poore, MHA, is a healthcare executive with over a decade of leadership experience, currently serving as President and Chief Executive Officer of Boone County

Health Center in Albion, NE, a facility that has maintained an organizational daycare to support employee retention and well-being since before he arrived in 2023. He has earned a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from Bellevue University, as well as an Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant from Clarkson College. His career includes roles such as a Multi-site Director of Rural Health Clinics at Burgess Health Center, Chief Financial Officer at Callaway District Hospital, and his current position at Boone County Health Center, where he has overseen a \$13 million growth from 2023 to present, while earning team awards such as the National Rural Health Association's Top 20 Critical Access Hospital award in 2024. Outside his professional roles, he has served on boards such as the Nebraska Hospital Association and the Boone County Development Agency, furthering his involvement in community-based issues. His background in rural healthcare operations, community involvement, and experience with Boone County's daycare program provides valuable insights into organizational childcare as a workforce strategy.



### **CAROL GEARY, PHD, MBA, RN**

Assistant Professor | University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Geary has a long career in health care delivery, product development, and research. During the past decade, she has focused on developing research networks and the

infrastructure necessary to support research. She is currently working with NeRHA to enhance research capacity in rural Nebraska.



### **CHAD KORTE, EMS**

Director, Paramedic | Cass County

Chad started the CCEMS county-based EMS service from the beginning of his career, and now he is a thriving EMS service director and paramedic.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **CHARLES F. CRAFT, DDS**

**State Dental Health Director | Nebraska DHHS**

Dr. Charles Craft is a distinguished dental professional with a decades-long career dedicated to public service, global health, and humanitarian outreach. After graduating from the University of Nebraska Medical Center

College of Dentistry in 1980, he served for 20 years in Alaska with the U.S. Public Health Service, reaching the rank of Captain. His international work spans Southeast Asia, where he served as Chief Dental Officer for International SOS and Dental Consultant to the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia. As a Reserve Officer, Dr. Craft supported over 30 humanitarian missions across more than 15 countries, including deployments with U.S. Special Operations in the Philippines and Afghanistan. He founded the East Meets West Dental Program in Vietnam, delivering free dental care to over 175,000 underserved children. Recognized with numerous prestigious awards—including the ADA Humanitarian Award—Dr. Craft has served as Nebraska's State Dental Health Director since 2014.



### **CHERYL KREIKEMEIER**

**P2T Internship Director | ESU2**

Working on Internships at P2T flowed very easily into Cheryl's previous work as a school counselor. Her unit strives to give students a real hands-on learning experience while still enhancing their professional skills.



### **CHRIS NICHOLS, MHA, MPT**

**Chief Executive Officer | Fillmore County Hospital**

Chris has served as CEO of Fillmore County Hospital (FCH) in Geneva, NE, since 2017. FCH has been a leader in providing behavioral health services as a rural critical

access hospital over the years and currently offers a myriad of outpatient BH services as well as unique partnerships with seven school districts in our area. Those services have grown and evolved to meet the needs of their communities over time and are unusual in that they are broader and more comprehensive than seen in many larger organizations. Prior to being CEO of FCH, Chris was CEO of Horn Memorial Hospital in Ida Grove, Iowa, for five years. Prior to becoming a rural hospital CEO, Chris has held various management roles within the field of physical therapy and rehabilitation.



### **DARA SCHLECHT, BSN, RN-BC**

**Chief Nursing Officer | Franciscan Healthcare**

Dara has served as the CNO at Franciscan Healthcare, where they welcome a variety of students from high school into their clinical areas of study.



### **DON NAIBERK**

**Chief Executive Officer | Butler County Health**

Don has spent over 30 years living in rural Nebraska and serving as a health care executive in nursing homes and hospitals in those communities. He has served as Treasurer of the David City Economic Development

Corporation for the past two and a half years. The David City Development Corporation received a \$1 million Workforce Housing Grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in 2023. The group has worked with the City of David City, local and regional contractors, and real estate agents to build new homes in the community.



### **ERIC ERNEST, MD, EMT-P, FACEP, FAEMS**

**Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and Chief, Division of Prehospital and Emergency Medical Services | University of Nebraska Medical Center**

Eric is currently dual board-certified in

Emergency Medicine and Emergency Medical Services. He serves as the Division Chief of Prehospital and Emergency Medical Services at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. He also provides medical direction for a wide range of EMS services, including large urban and suburban agencies as well as smaller rural volunteer organizations. In addition, he oversees specialty non-transport paramedic teams operating in rural environments and serves as the State EMS Medical Director for Nebraska. Eric is the immediate past chair of the Rural EMS Committee at the National Association of EMS Physicians and has a specific interest in research and advocacy focused on improving the delivery of prehospital emergency care in rural areas.



### **CHRISTOPHER BANKS JR.**

**Chief, Community Care | VA Nebraska Western Iowa Healthcare System**

Christopher Banks Jr. joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in May 2016 and has served as the Chief of Community Care since September 2016. Prior to his work

with the VA, he completed a distinguished 21-year career in the United States Air Force as a medic. His diverse medical experience spans Labor and Delivery, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Operating Room, Emergency Department, Medical Readiness, Public Health, the Air Advisor Program, a Family Residency Program, and the Outpatient Procedure Department. Throughout his military service, Mr. Banks deployed multiple times, with his final deployment being a yearlong assignment in Afghanistan as an Air Advisor to the Afghan Air Force. For his service and valor during that deployment, he was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor.



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### FRED HOIBERG

**Head Coach | Nebraska Men's Basketball**

Fred Hoiberg's career has revolved around the sport of basketball. The grandson of a professional basketball player and collegiate coach, Hoiberg has followed a similar path, spending more than three decades

as a player, coach, or executive in Division I basketball and the National Basketball Association. His career came full circle when the Lincoln native was named head coach of the Nebraska basketball program in 2019, a program that his grandfather Jerry Bush coached for nine seasons.

Hoiberg starred at Iowa State, earning All-America honors as a senior in 1995. He then spent 10 seasons playing in the NBA, playing for the Indiana Pacers, Chicago Bulls, and Minnesota Timberwolves. In his final season, Hoiberg led the league in 3-point shooting before a heart condition prematurely ended his playing career in 2005.

After four years as an NBA executive, Hoiberg returned to his alma mater and guided Iowa State to four NCAA Tournament appearances and a pair of Big 12 postseason titles in his five seasons. Hoiberg then took over the Chicago Bulls, guiding the franchise to a winning record in his first season and an NBA playoff appearance the following year.

In 2019, he returned to the college ranks, taking over the Nebraska program. Under his guidance, the Huskers have made back-to-back postseason appearances in each of the last two seasons, including the school's first NCAA Tournament appearance in a decade in 2024.

A two-time conference coach of the year, he was selected as the Jim Phalen National Coach of the Year in 2024 after guiding the Huskers to their best conference finish in more than three decades. Nebraska has won 44 games over the past two seasons, the second-highest two-year total in program history. In all, 12 of his former players have played in the NBA, including Dalano Banton and Bryce McGowens during his tenure at Nebraska.

Hoiberg and his wife, Carol, have four children, Paige, Jack, Sam, and Charlie. Both Jack and Sam have continued the family's basketball legacy by playing Division I basketball.



### GARY PERSON

**President & Chief Executive Officer | North Platte Area Chamber and Development Corporation**

Gary Person has over 40 years of experience in the economic development field. He has been the President / CEO of the North

Platte Area Chamber and Development Corporation since 2015. Today's North Platte economy has \$2.3 billion of new or emerging industrial, commercial, and housing development projects, setting all-time records in retail sales, lodging revenues, building permits, construction activity, and economic growth. North Platte was named the "Nebraska Economic Development Community of the Year" in 2021 and 2023.

Previously, he was the City Manager in Sidney, NE, for 16 years and the Economic Development director for 23 years. During his time in Sidney, the economy more than tripled.

He is a lifelong Nebraskan, having grown up on a farm-ranch near the Wyoming border. His past professional experiences include being the editor of three newspapers, managing two Chambers of Commerce and three economic development organizations, owning a public relations company, and serving as the Director of the Western Office of the Governor for four years under Gov. Kay Orr.

Gary has served as state president of the Nebraska Economic Developers Association, the Nebraska Junior Chamber of Commerce when it was ranked number one in America, and two years in the immediate past president's role of the Nebraska City Manager's Association. In 1989, he was named the Outstanding Young Nebraskan of the Year. He has served on 30 different local, regional, and statewide boards of directors.

He holds degrees in mass communications from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Nebraska Western College. In 2014, he was asked by U.S. Senator Mike Johanns to testify in Washington, D.C. before a congressional subcommittee on rural job creation and regional economic growth strategies. In 2014, he was honored as the Nebraska Economic Development "Professional of the Year".

He served on Gov. Pete Ricketts' "Blue Print Nebraska" steering committee; the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority Housing Coalition, and was honored as NIFA's 2023 Nebraska Housing Champion. In 2024, he was appointed as regional co-chair of the "One Nebraska, Mid-Plains Region" development effort spearheaded by Gov. Jim Pillen, the Nebraska State Chamber, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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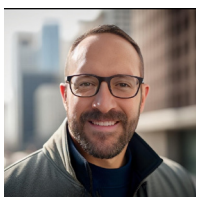
**GENE BRADLEY, EMT**  
**Director of Emergency Services | Community Medical Center**

Gene Bradley is the Director of Emergency Services for Community Medical Center in Falls City, NE, and the recently retired EMS Chief of the Atchison-Holt Ambulance District, an ALS Super Rural Provider in Northwest Missouri. Gene has been involved in EMS for 43 years. He has held a variety of positions over those 43 years. Gene has served as President of the Missouri Ambulance Association and Co-Chair of the American Ambulance Association's Education Committee. He is also a supervisor at the Kansas Speedway, responsible for all Fire/Rescue Track Services Units on Track for NASCAR race events.



**JASON PETIK**  
**Chief Executive Officer | Sidney Regional Medical Center**

Jason Petik serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Sidney Regional Medical Center (SRMC) in Sidney, NE. Under his leadership, SRMC has undertaken significant initiatives, including the construction of a new hospital facility in 2015 and the construction of a new long-term care facility in 2024. In recognition of his dedication to healthcare advocacy, Petik was honored with the 2024 American Hospital Association Grassroots Champion Award by the Nebraska Hospital Association. Committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care, Petik continues to guide SRMC in enhancing healthcare services for the community.



**JED HANSEN, PHD, APRN, FNP-C**  
**Executive Director | Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA)**

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, is the Nebraska Rural Health Association's Executive Director and serves as the Nebraska Hospital Association's senior rural consultant. He is a native Nebraskan, growing up in the community of Minden. His academic background is focused on healthcare utilization facilitators and barriers in ambulatory care settings, and he actively practices in Urgent Care and Emergency Departments in Nebraska. Dr. Hansen leads projects focused on the rural emergency hospital model, improving veteran access to care, rural dental and mental health initiatives, and rural access to care. He also works diligently to improve interoperability and data flow in rural healthcare settings and increase workforce pipelining. Dr. Hansen is a Fellow of the National Rural Health Association and the 2023 NRHA Advocate of the Year. He has been recognized as an influential healthcare leader and academic in Nebraska through the Nebraska Action Coalition and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, respectively, and nationally by multiple organizations and associations.



**JEFF ORDWAY**  
**Retired**

Jeff Ordway lives just outside of Ashland, MO. He grew up in Mid-Missouri, where he lived until graduating from college. Following graduation, he moved to Los Angeles, CA, where he lived for 26 years, the last half of which he spent teaching high school. After taking an early retirement due to medical issues, he returned to mid-Missouri, where he became interested in providing a patient voice for research. He has worked with The University of Missouri's Department of Family and Community Medicine since January of 2016, as both a member of the local Patient Advisory Board, the Patient Advisory board for the Greater Plains Collaborative, a regional Clinical Research Network within the National Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Network (PCORnet®), and as a Patient Co-Investigator on research projects. He has, additionally, worked with PCORnet, adding a patient voice at the national level for the last three years. He co-wrote a chapter, on Patient Engagement in Research with Dr. Carol Geary, which was published in the anthology Ethics and Integrity in Research with Older People and Service Users (Advances in Research Ethics and Integrity, Vol. 9) (2023).



**JENNA THOMSEN, MA**  
**Director of Strategy & Development | Health Center Association of Nebraska**

Jenna Thomsen, Director of Strategy and Development, joined HCAN in September 2016. Jenna is committed to expanding and enhancing access to quality, comprehensive healthcare for all Nebraskans through innovative trainings, practical educational opportunities, partnership development, and individualized health center support. Jenna engages Nebraska Community Health Centers (CHCs) in the identification of new business opportunities and secures grants to expand the Nebraska CHC footprint throughout the state. She is the 2020 recipient of the National Association of Community Health Center's (NACHC's) Henry Fiumelli Patient Advocate Award and holds a Master of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### **JEREMY NORDQUIST, MPA** **President | Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)**

Jeremy Nordquist became the fifth president of the Nebraska Hospital Association in December 2021. Jeremy has served as an elected official, congressional staff, state

legislative staff, and a nonprofit leader.

Jeremy previously served as the Government Affairs Director for Nebraska Medicine in Omaha. At Nebraska Medicine, he led successful efforts to expand telehealth coverage and establish a state crisis standards of care framework.

In Washington, Jeremy was the chief of staff to Reps. Brad Ashford (NE) and Tom O'Halleran (AZ). His teams achieved policy success in rural health care, veterans' health care, and health services for Native Americans. Overseeing work on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Jeremy was actively engaged in policy development related to expanding access to Graduate Medical Education and telehealth in rural America. In partnership with Rep. Ashford, Jeremy managed efforts to write and pass innovative legislation creating a public-private partnership pilot program for Department of Veterans Affairs construction, paving the way for the new VA ambulatory care clinic in Omaha.

Prior to his service on Capitol Hill, Jeremy represented downtown and south Omaha in the Nebraska Legislature from 2009-2015. Former Sen. Nordquist was the chairman of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee and a member of the Appropriations, Tax Modernization, State-Tribal Relations, Rules, and Children's Behavioral Health Oversight Committees.

In the Unicameral, he built coalitions to pass legislation improving access to health care for pregnant women, increasing Medicaid provider rates, expanding telehealth services, establishing school-based health centers, implementing the Affordable Care Act, increasing the state's minimum wage, allowing DREAMers to get driver's licenses, increasing funds for early childhood education and higher education, and reforming state defined-benefit pensions. He was selected to serve as the chairman of the Health Committee for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in 2010 and as a member of the NCSL Executive Committee.

He has appeared on MSNBC, BBC, and Univision and has been quoted in the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Guardian, Huffington Post, Governing Magazine, Politico, and many local and regional media outlets.

Jeremy grew up in rural South Dakota. He graduated with honors from Creighton University and holds a Master of Public Administration, with a concentration in health administration, from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Jeremy and his wife Shannon have one daughter and one son.



### **JILL A. WALLEN, BDS, MS** **Dean, School of Dentistry | Creighton University**

Jill A. Wallen, BDS, MS, professor of pediatric dentistry, was appointed dean of the Creighton University School of Dentistry in August 2021.

Dr. Wallen graduated with distinction from the University of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School in Scotland with her Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree in 2000. She completed her specialty training in pediatric dentistry and received a master's degree from Ohio State University in 2002. Dr. Wallen has held teaching appointments at the University of Colorado, University of Maryland and, University of Nebraska Medical Center prior to joining Creighton.

She was the principal investigator on a \$2.2 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant examining tele-dentistry and rural health to improve and expand oral health services in schools, particularly for underserved children. Her research interests include improving access to oral health care for vulnerable populations, and she is proud to partner in many Creighton faculty and staff efforts to support population health initiatives on and off campus.

Dr. Wallen is a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and is active with its Post-Doctoral Inservice Examination Committee.

She is a diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, and a fellow of the American College of Dentists, International College of Dentists, and a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP).

Dr. Wallen is a graduate of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Leadership Institute. Locally, she is a member of the Nebraska Dental Association and the Nebraska Society of Pediatric Dentistry and holds active staff membership at Children's Hospital and Medical Center. Dr. Wallen is an alumna of Leadership Omaha, Class 40.



### **KEVIN STANSBURY, MS, JD, FACHE** **Chief Executive Officer | Lincoln Community Hospital and Care Center**

Kevin Stansbury serves as the CEO at Lincoln Health in Hugo, CO. Kevin has over 40 years in health care, primarily in community

hospitals. His work has taken him not only across the United States but all over the globe. He has served in roles in hospital administration, strategic planning, healthcare project planning and service in emerging economies. He has served on the Colorado Hospital Association Board of Trustees including service as its Board Chair. He has also served on a variety of State and National task forces supporting the cause of rural health, including the National Rural Health Association Rural Health Policy Congress. In 2025, he was named an outstanding advocate for rural health by the National Rural Health Association.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### **KATE HILL, RN**

**Vice President of Rural Health | The Compliance Team**

Kate Hill joined Rural Health in 2012 and quickly developed a deep passion for the field. Since then, she has worked on compliance with over 2,000 clinics, gaining

invaluable insights from the dedicated individuals who live and work in rural communities to care for Rural Americans. Kate considers these professionals a truly special group and hopes she has been able to support them on their journey to becoming certified Rural Health Clinics.

She has served on the Board of the National Association of Rural Health Clinics for seven years and currently serves on the Board of the National Rural Health Association, where she also chairs the Clinic Constituency Group. Kate regularly teaches RHC compliance across the country and is looking forward to her upcoming session in Nebraska.



### **LAURA GAMBLE, RN, BSN**

**Chief Executive Officer | Pender Community Hospital District**

Laura Gamble has over 35 years of experience in healthcare, having served in a variety of roles including floor nurse, Chief Nursing Officer, Quality and Case

Management professional, and currently as CEO. She spent 29 years as an EMT-RN with a hospital-owned ambulance service, where nurses and EMTs worked together to staff ambulances for both local emergency calls and patient transfers. During this time, she was also directly involved in the oversight of ambulance operations.

Today, Laura is actively collaborating with local EMS providers to address the growing challenge of declining volunteer numbers and to help develop sustainable solutions for delivering emergency services to surrounding communities.



### **LORI MINERT, EMT**

**Director of Rural Health Clinics | Pender Community Hospital District**

Lori Minert has been with Pender Medical Clinic for 32 years, beginning her career at the front desk and advancing to her current role as Director of four Rural Health Clinics.

She also serves as a member of the Pender Community Hospital District Administrative Team.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Lori has dedicated 30 years as a volunteer EMT and firefighter in Pender. Her firsthand experience gives her a deep understanding of the challenges rural communities face in recruiting and retaining emergency service volunteers, as well as the significant time commitment it requires—often at the expense of work and family. Professionally, she also recognizes the strain this places on rural medical facilities like PCHD, which often rely on local volunteer EMS units to transfer patients to higher levels of care in urgent situations.

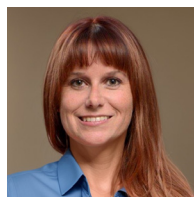


### **MARTY FATTIG**

**Chief Executive Officer | Nemaha County Hospital**

Marty Fattig has spent many years working to address the challenges of providing Emergency Services in rural communities across the state. He recognizes that while

solutions often need to be tailored to the specific needs of each location, there is great value in sharing both successes and setbacks to learn from one another and improve outcomes statewide.



### **MEGHAN SMITH, CPCO**

**Senior Consultant, Consulting | Forvis Mazars**

Meghan Smith is a senior consultant on the Healthcare Performance Improvement team. She started her career in patient access and brings 18 years of knowledge around revenue cycle, including patient access and workflow

development. She has served as a patient access supervisor for a community hospital and a practice administrator for a physician-owned practice. Meghan is a committed thought leader who provokes new approaches to maximize efficiency and drive change.

Meghan previously served as a senior implementation consultant at an electronic health record vendor and led over 10 successful implementations for patient access. She is a knowledgeable professional in system design and identifying workflow adjustments. She joined the software upgrade migration team and created new processes and documentation to support successful implementations of a new patient accounting application. She has robust knowledge of project management in relation to implementations and strives to assist clients with risk identification and mitigation.

She is a member of the American Academy of Professional Coders and maintains the Certified Professional Compliance Officer certification. She is also a member of the Healthcare Financial Management Association and the American Health Law Association.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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**MICHELLE RATHMAN**  
Chief Executive Officer | Impact!  
Communications, Inc.

Michelle Rathman founded Impact! Communications, Inc., in 1989. For over 30 years, Impact! has provided a broad range of strategic advisory, decision support,

communications, and creative solutions to healthcare organizations, including urban and rural hospitals, health clinics, and community health centers.

Michelle and her team bring experience and expertise that have helped several rural hospitals gain public support to invest millions into much-needed facility improvements while designing and implementing patient and staff recruitment and retention programs. Beyond bricks and mortar, Impact! is focused on helping rural hospitals and health organizations reverse their outmigration, increase utilization of local care, and position rural hospitals and health systems to thrive through effective community engagement and partnerships.

Michelle is a long-standing member of the National Rural Health Association, including serving on its Policy Congress, and has worked with the National Rural Health Resource Center, National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network, and for eight years, worked with the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health to help transform National Rural Health Day from a moment to a movement.

Michelle is also a passionate podcaster, launching The Rural Impact in 2023, where she works to connect the dots between policy and rural everything.



**MIKE FEAGLER, MBA**  
Vice President of Medicaid Administration |  
Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)

Mike Feagler joined the NHA in April 2017 after 30+ years working in hospital finance. Since joining the NHA, Mike has been responsible for financial policy advocacy, and

as well as the financial operations of the association. Beginning in August 2024, Mike has taken on the role of Vice President of Medicaid Administration, which includes oversight of the Medicaid Directed Payment Program.

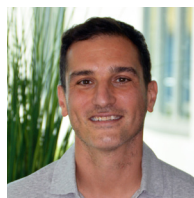
Mike received a Masters of Business Administration in 2013 from the University of Wyoming.



**MIKE HANSEN, FACHE**  
Chief Executive Officer | Columbus Community  
Hospital

Mike Hansen has over 40 years of experience in healthcare, with a background that spans multiple acute care facilities. He spent eight years working with the Texas Department of

Mental Health in San Antonio, where he served individuals with severe mental health and developmental conditions. Currently, the facility he leads includes both an outpatient psychiatric clinic and an inpatient senior behavioral health unit, reflecting his continued commitment to comprehensive mental health care.



**NADHAL EADEH**  
Vice President | WellHive

Nadhal Eadeh joined WellHive in April 2019 and currently leads the company's marketing, strategy, congressional outreach, and government services portfolio. A key driver of WellHive's mission, he plays a pivotal role

in the VA External Provider Scheduling (EPS) program, working closely with state and rural health associations, critical access hospitals, and VA academic affiliates to improve care coordination for Veterans through the EPS platform.

With over a decade of experience in federal service, Nadhal previously held multiple roles at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), serving under several Under Secretaries for Benefits (USB). In his final position, he was a Special Assistant and the Intergovernmental and Veteran Service Organization Liaison, where he built strategic partnerships to advance Veteran benefits and services.

Nadhal holds a Master's degree from Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree from John Carroll University.



**NEIL HILTON**  
Chief Executive Officer | Perkins County Health  
Services

Under the leadership of CEO Neil Hilton, Perkins County Health Services (PCHS) has long recognized the importance of supporting working families through on-site childcare

services. This initiative began in 1997, when plans were underway for a new addition to the hospital. At that time, both leadership and staff identified a growing and persistent shortage of dependable childcare in the area. In response, PCHS made a firm commitment to establish and operate its own childcare service as part of its broader mission.

Today, the PCHS childcare program is licensed for up to 45 children, giving priority to the children of hospital staff while also offering availability to the wider community. The facility consistently maintains an active roster of 32 to 40 children, cared for by a dedicated team of six full-time and two to four part-time staff members. Like many healthcare endeavors in recent years, retaining dependable and committed staff remains critical to maintaining the high quality of care the center provides.

PCHS is proud of its well-established and highly regarded childcare services. The program is deeply valued by employees, playing a key role in supporting work/life balance and enhancing staff well-being across the organization.



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### **NICOLE THORELL, RN, MSN, FNP-C**

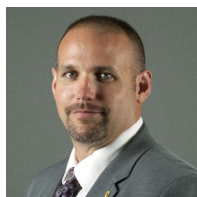
#### **Senior Consultant | Wintergreen**

Nicole Thorell is a dedicated healthcare leader with a passion for rural health, where she's spent over a decade making a difference. With a Post-Master's Certificate

as a Family Nurse Practitioner and a Master's in Nursing with a focus on Administration, Nicole has served in key leadership roles, including Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Risk and Quality at a Critical Access Hospital and Rural Health Clinic in Nebraska. Her hands-on experience spans multiple departments, where she's led efforts to improve patient care, ensure regulatory compliance, and manage resources effectively.

What truly sets Nicole apart is her ability to bring real, meaningful change to the organizations she works with. She's known for reducing hospital readmissions, advancing patient safety, and fostering a strong, positive workplace culture. Certified as a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, she approaches each challenge with a mindset of continuous improvement and innovation.

Today, through her consulting work, Nicole continues to help healthcare systems thrive, focusing on optimizing clinic operations, boosting provider efficiency, and improving outcomes for rural communities.



### **ROB BLOOM, CPA**

#### **Principal | Wintergreen**

A Nebraska native, Rob was born and raised on a ranch in southwest Nebraska. Prior to joining Wintergreen as a Principal, Rob served as CFO for Carthage Area Hospital for well over a decade. He had previously

held positions with the Hospital as Administrator of Primary Care Services and Interim Chief Financial Officer. In addition to his role as CFO at Carthage, Rob also served concurrently (2021-2022) as Chief Financial Officer at Claxton Hepburn Medical Center and Orleans Community Hospital, in addition to providing consultative services to several other hospitals in rural New York. Rob brings to Wintergreen over 20 years of leadership and financial experience with expertise in operational improvement, revenue optimization, turnaround management, and strategic planning.



### **RYAN LARSEN, ED.D, MHA, FACHE**

#### **Chief Executive Officer | Community Medical Center**

Ryan has been involved in rural health care for more than 25 years in Kansas, Illinois, and Nebraska, including nearly 20 years as CEO

of Community Medical Center in Falls City, NE. In addition to his work toward degrees, he completed a multidisciplinary training fellowship through the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health and is a Fellow in the American College of Health Executives. He participates actively with the Policy Development Committee of the Nebraska Hospital Association and is a past chair of the NHA board and former delegate to the Regional Policy Board of the American Hospital Association. His interests include rural health policy, adapting research to practice settings, and sustainability models.



### **SARAH SMARSH**

#### **Author, Journalist | Self-Employed**

Sarah Smarsh is a journalist who has reported for the New York Times, Harper's, the Guardian, and many other publications. Her first book, [Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country](#)

[on Earth](#), was an instant New York Times bestseller, a finalist for the National Book Award and the Kirkus Prize, the winner of the Chicago Tribune Literary Prize, and a best-books-of-the-year selection by President Barack Obama. Her 2020 book [She Come By It Natural: Dolly Parton and the Women Who Lived Her Songs](#) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Smarsh is a frequent political commentator and speaker on socioeconomic class. A former writing professor, Smarsh has served as a Shorenstein Fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a Pritzker Fellow at the University of Chicago Institute of Politics. She lives in rural Kansas.



### **SAVANNAH HENN, BSN, RN, CPHQ**

#### **Compliance Manager, Quality Director, Utilization Review Nurse, Privacy Officer | Antelope Memorial Hospital**

Savannah Henn is responsible for reviewing all patient transfers out of Antelope Memorial

Hospital. Through this work, she has observed significant delays in care due to the lack of available transportation for patients requiring a higher level of care. Her review of documentation consistently reveals that emergency room patients often face extended wait times, not because of a lack of medical need, but because of the ongoing challenge of securing appropriate transportation to facilities across the state.

# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### SEAN MILLER

**Senior Director of State Account Management | Bamboo Health**

Sean Miller is a senior leader specializing in behavioral health technology, informatics, and public health system integration. With expertise in provider systems, Medicaid,

and value-based care, he has successfully led large-scale technology implementations to improve healthcare accessibility and coordination.

Currently, as Senior Director of State Account Management at Bamboo Health, Sean oversees retention strategies for a national behavioral health partner, ensuring successful adoption of technology solutions and alignment with industry standards. He acts as a subject matter expert, working across stakeholders to enhance system functionality and efficiency.

Previously, Sean served as Chief of Health Informatics at the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, where he launched the state's first electronic crisis system, implemented a statewide behavioral health eReferral network, and modernized health IT infrastructure to drive interoperability and improve care coordination. He has managed multi-million-dollar budgets, led informatics teams, and provided data-driven insights to support public health initiatives.

Sean's expertise includes program management, healthcare informatics, data analytics, process improvement, and strategic leadership, making him a key contributor to advancing behavioral health technology solutions.



### SHANNON SEIDLER

**Child Care Center Director | Box Butte General Hospital**

Shannon Seidler has been involved in childcare since 2000. She began her career as a Family Home Childcare provider in Colorado before relocating with her family to

Alliance, NE in 2006. After working as an RN at Box Butte General Hospital until 2009, she returned to childcare by opening a Family Home program in Alliance, which she operated successfully until May 2023.

In 2023, Shannon was appointed Director of Building Blocks Playschool, a new childcare initiative owned by Box Butte General Hospital. She was brought on to launch the program from the ground up in response to a growing need—hospital leadership had noted that many employees were unable to return to work after having a child due to the severe shortage of childcare options in the community. Building Blocks Playschool officially opened its doors in November 2023 and has experienced rapid growth over the past 16 months under Shannon's leadership.



### TIM JOHNSON, MBA

**Chief Financial Officer | Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA)**

With over 35 years of dedicated healthcare management and advisory experience, Tim serves as the Chief Financial Officer for the Nebraska Hospital Association. His

professional background includes wide-ranging audit & advisory roles for industry-leading organizations such as KPMG, Deloitte Consulting, and Cerner Information Systems. He has also held senior management positions within multiple health systems and physician practices, including SCL Health and LifeLinc Anesthesia.

Over the course of his career, Tim's primary focus areas have included health system operational transformation, revenue cycle enhancement, healthcare IT application development, and CMS billing compliance. Tim has also led the functional design for 3 separate revenue cycle software applications and authored Cerner's first ever Clinically Driven Revenue Cycle patent application. He has previously worked with over 300 hospitals across the U.S. and internationally, including Critical Access Hospitals and rural health systems across western Nebraska.



### TIM WILSON, MBA, NRP, EMSI

**Program Director / State EMS Director | Nebraska DHHS, Division of Public Health, Office of Emergency Health Systems**

Tim Wilson joined the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in April of 2016 and is the Program Director/State EMS

Director for the Office of Emergency Health Systems (OEHS). In this position, he oversees Emergency Medical Services, Trauma System of Care, Stroke System of Care, Critical Incident Stress Management, and Emergency Medical Services for Children. He received his Master of Business Administration from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Tim has been involved in EMS for the past 17 years as a Paramedic, EMS Instructor, and Critical Care Paramedic. His EMS experience includes working for a hospital-based EMS service, fire, and EMS based service, long-distance ground transport, emergency room, and volunteer EMS service. Currently, Tim is the chief of a volunteer rural EMS service. Experience also includes database administration and training, and consulting for a software company specializing in case management and service tracking for Health and Human Service Agencies targeting low-income and homeless populations.



# NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

## SPEAKER BIOS

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### TRAVIS GENTRY

**Chief Executive Officer | Hyve Health**

Travis Gentry is a trailblazer in healthcare technology, having pioneered patient estimation in 2004. He successfully sold his company to TransUnion Healthcare (now FinThrive) in 2011. Today, Travis continues to

drive innovation in the industry as the CEO of Hyve Health, where he leads the development of three groundbreaking platforms. These include the Vitality Payer Scorecard, a patent-pending solution that uses aggregated, de-identified claims and remit data to help hospitals hold payers accountable; The Hyve – GFE Exchange, another patent-pending platform that enables providers to efficiently collaborate and create Good Faith Estimates in compliance with No Surprise Billing regulations; and INSIGHT CMS Price Transparency, which supports hospitals in meeting CMS mandates through a user-friendly website of 300 shoppable services and machine-readable file generation.

Travis is deeply passionate about transforming healthcare and making it more transparent and accountable. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and an MBA, and he published his master's thesis on Neural Networks—pioneering research that laid the groundwork for today's advancements in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Originally born in Nebraska and raised in Wyoming, Travis now resides in Denver, Colorado. He has been married for over 30 years and is the proud father of three children. In his free time, he enjoys the outdoors, especially the mountains, camping, and fly fishing.



### TROY BRUNTZ, CPA, MBA, FHFMA

**President & Chief Executive Officer | Community Hospital**

Troy Bruntz has dedicated over 22 years to Community Hospital, beginning in 2003 as Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial

Officer before advancing to President and CEO in 2017. Prior to joining Community Hospital, he worked for five years as a public accountant and auditor with KPMG LLP, an international public accounting firm.

Beyond his leadership at Community Hospital, Mr. Bruntz serves as the Board President of the McCook Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and has contributed to numerous local and state-wide organizations. He is a past president of the Nebraska Chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association and actively participates in various committees of the Nebraska Hospital Association. In his role with MEDC, he has overseen numerous projects related to housing, including a new market rate housing development with five homes built in the first year of the development, as well as a townhome development with six units completed in 2024.

As CEO of Community Hospital, a 25-bed critical access, not-for-profit facility, Mr. Bruntz leads the administration team, which includes five vice presidents overseeing approximately 32 department directors. Reporting directly to a nine-member board of directors, he is responsible for setting the hospital's strategic direction and overseeing all hospital operations. Additionally, he serves on the Community Hospital Health Foundation Board of Directors, ensuring financial sustainability and continued growth. Regarding housing, in 2024, the hospital began construction on an 11 unit downtown apartment complex designed for clinical and medical students to use during their clinical rotations in rural Nebraska. The objective is to provide more housing to accommodate the growth in programs by UNMC at their UNK campus while also providing the students with the opportunity to experience the benefits of rural living and the community of McCook, NE.



### TYLER TOLINE, MHA, EDD, FACHE

**Chief Executive Officer | Franciscan Healthcare**

During his doctoral research, Tyler Toline identified the critical importance of having educated and well-informed boards to support the success of healthcare CEOs. His findings highlighted notable differences in the

dynamics between boards and CEOs, particularly when comparing those with prior executive experience to those new to the role. The research underscored how the quality of board relationships can significantly impact a CEO's effectiveness and overall organizational leadership.



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