



Nebraska

2026 RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

YOUNES CONFERENCE CENTER NORTH | KEARNEY, NE

JUNE 8 - 10



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

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

We are pleased to welcome you to the Nebraska Rural Health Conference, Nebraska's premier gathering dedicated to advancing rural health care. Once again, the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) and the Nebraska Rural Health Association (NeRHA) are proud to partner in bringing you this important event.

From June 8–10, 2026, at the Younes Conference Center North in Kearney, this annual conference provides a valuable opportunity to connect, collaborate, and strengthen the future of health care across rural Nebraska.

Over the past year, we have continued to make meaningful progress in advocating for rural hospitals, providers, and the communities they serve. This year's conference will build on that momentum through timely discussions, expert perspectives, and innovative strategies designed to address the evolving needs of rural health care.

Attendees can expect engaging sessions focused on emergency medical transportation, rural housing, hospital operations and sustainability, community partnerships, research, workforce development, and policy advocacy. More than a conference, this gathering is an opportunity to share ideas, highlight successful initiatives, and foster partnerships that create lasting impact in communities throughout our state.

We will also take time to recognize outstanding leadership and service during the Rural Health Awards Ceremony, celebrating the dedication, compassion, and innovation that define rural health care in Nebraska.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Nebraska Rural Health Conference 2026 and to continuing our shared commitment to improving rural health across Nebraska.



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



Jeremy Nordquist, MPA
President & CEO, 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

Username: nhapac **Password:** nhapac1

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



NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

EVENT INFORMATION

June 8-10, 2026

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 health care team.



Credit Designation for Nursing

AXIS Medical Education designates this continuing nursing education activity for 8 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 has been approved by the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) for 8.0 CPHQ Continuing Education (CE) credits.

Healthcare Executives/ACHE-Qualified

ACHE Qualified Education credit must be related to healthcare management and may not be clinical, inspirational, or specific to the sponsoring organization. Qualified Education credit can be earned through educational programs conducted or sponsored by organizations qualified to provide healthcare management education. Programs may be sponsored by ACHE, ACHE chapters, or other qualified organizations and may be offered in person or through distance learning formats, including webinars, online seminars, and self-study courses. This program qualifies for 8.0 hours of ACHE Qualified Education credit. Participants who complete the program will receive a certificate of completion documenting 8.0 hours.

Nursing Home Administrators

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

Human Resource Professionals

This program has been approved for 8.0 HR (General) recertification credit hours through HR Certification Institute® (HRCI®). HRCI Course ID: 744497

Participants who complete the program will receive a certificate of completion documenting 8.0 credit hours.



AXIS Contact Information

For information about the accreditation of this program please contact AXIS 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 on dangers in use, review of any applicable manufacturer's product information, and comparison with recommendations of other authorities.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

Portal Instructions

Please complete the post-activity evaluation to receive your credit. The portal will remain open until: **July 9, 2026**.

How to Claim Your Credit:

Go To: <https://go2certificate.com>

If the link does not open, please copy and paste the URL into your browser.

1. Enter Access Code: **4703-NRHC**
2. Enter your email address and click **Confirm**.

First-Time Users: Complete the demographic form and create a password, then click Submit.

Returning Users: The system will recognize your email. After entering the Access Code, log in with your password.

To Claim Credit:

1. Select the session(s) you attended.
2. Click **Continue**.
3. Complete and Submit the evaluation.
4. Confirm how your name should appear on your certificate.
5. Choose the accreditation you wish to receive and click **Confirm**.
6. Confirm your participation hours (claim only what reflects your actual attendance).

To Access Your Certificate(s):

- Click **View** to open, print, or email your certificate(s).
- If you have selected multiple accreditations, you may select **Generate Bundled Certificate** for a single PDF.
- Certificates remain available anytime via the **Login** option on the main page.

Please email info@axismeded.com for assistance.

Thank you for attending!

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 health care 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.

A. Jerrod Anzalone, PhD	Nothing to Disclose	Cori Pierce, CRCR, CSBI	Nothing to Disclose
Brady Beecham, MD	Nothing to Disclose	Amy Pope, MSN, RN	Nothing to Disclose
Nicholas Brand	Nothing to Disclose	Sarosh Rana	Nothing to Disclose
Stephanie Brown	Nothing to Disclose	Sanam Roder-DeWan, MD, DrPH	Nothing to Disclose
Michael W. Chase, JD, MHA	Nothing to Disclose	Andy Ruback	Nothing to Disclose
Meghan Chaffee, JD	Nothing to Disclose	Amy Schroeder	Nothing to Disclose
Carly Clem	Nothing to Disclose	Tim Sheley	Nothing to Disclose
Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, MPA	Nothing to Disclose	Brett Shippee, LUTCF	Nothing to Disclose
John Cook	Nothing to Disclose	Amber Spitzer	Nothing to Disclose
Dan DeFreeze, MD, MBA	Nothing to Disclose	Nicole Thorell, MSN, RN, FNP-C	Nothing to Disclose
Deborah Doke	Nothing to Disclose	Jesse Vo	Nothing to Disclose
Susan Dorris, BSN, RN	Nothing to Disclose	Treg Vyzourek, BS, MDI, Rt(R), CT, MBA	Nothing to Disclose
Nadhah Eadeh	Nothing to Disclose	John Werner	Nothing to Disclose
Scott Ferguson	Nothing to Disclose	Christine Widman, MHA	Nothing to Disclose
Sara Gadeken	Nothing to Disclose		
Laura Gamble, BSN, RN	Nothing to Disclose	J.R. Greene, MBA, FACHE	Speaker Disclosure*
Jeff Grandia	Nothing to Disclose	<i>Advisor and Trustee roles include service on the boards of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine, the Nashville Health Care Council, Psychiatric Medical Care, and SuperFan Diaries. Former board member of the Nashville Zoo (service concluded in 2025). Chair of the annual patron event for Scouting America Middle Tennessee.</i>	
Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C	Nothing to Disclose	<i>Founder and former owner/operator of Psychiatric Medical Care and SuperFan Diaries. Ongoing speaker and media host for SuperFan Diaries. Author of My Magic Tux (publishing July 28 by University of Tennessee Press). Host of SuperFan Diaries, distributed by Pantheon Media.</i>	
Senator Bob Hallstrom	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:	
Attila J. Hertelendy, PhD	Nothing to Disclose	Nikkola Bales	Nothing to Disclose
Tim Johnson, MBA	Nothing to Disclose	Heather Bullock	Nothing to Disclose
Blaine Kahle	Nothing to Disclose	Natalie McMeen	Nothing to Disclose
Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH, MBA	Nothing to Disclose	Brian Noonan	Nothing to Disclose
Julianne Kipple	Nothing to Disclose	Willa Prescott	Nothing to Disclose
Harrison Kratochvil, JD	Nothing to Disclose		
Todd Linden, MA, FACHE	Nothing to Disclose		
Amber Lubben, BSN, RN, MBA-c	Nothing to Disclose		
David Miers, PhD, LIPC	Nothing to Disclose		
Jodie Meyer	Nothing to Disclose		
Jonathan Neufeld, PhD, HSPP	Nothing to Disclose		
Jeff Norman	Nothing to Disclose		
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA	Nothing to Disclose		
Stan Odenthal, JD, MA	Nothing to Disclose		
Daniel Oldenburg	Nothing to Disclose		
Jeff Ordway	Nothing to Disclose		

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YOUR FACULTY

Jerrod Anzalone, PhD

Assistant Professor
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA

Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer
Remora Health LLC

Nicholas Brand

Cybersecurity Advisor
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency –
Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Stephanie Brown

Protective Security Advisor
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency –
Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Meghan Chaffee, JD

Chief Advocacy & Legal Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

Michael Chase, JD, MHA

Partner
Baird Holm, LLP

Carly Clem

Senior Managing Director of Recruiting
Jackson Physician Search

Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, MPA

Chief Policy Officer
National Rural Health Association

John Cook

Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former
Head Volleyball Coach
University of Nebraska

Dan DeFreece, MD, MBA

President
CHI Health St. Mary's

Deborah Doke, BA

Chief Marketing & Development Officer
Syracuse Area Health

Susan Dorris, BSN, RN

Emergency & EMS Nurse Manager
Avel eCare

Nadhal Eadeh

Federal Affairs & Health Policy
WellHive

Scott Ferguson

Research Analyst II
Nebraska Department of Labor

Sara Gadeken

Chief Marketing Officer
Flood Communications

Laura Gamble, BSN, RN

Chief Executive Officer
Pender Community Hospital

J.R. Greene, FACHE

Founder
Psychiatric Medical Care

Senator Bob Hallstrom

State Senator
District 01

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C

Executive Director
Nebraska Rural Health Association

Attila J. Hertelendy, PhD, MHA, MS

Assistant Professor
Florida International University

Tim Johnson, MBA

Chief Financial Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

Blaine Kahle

Chief Technology Officer
Five Nines

Ali Khan, MD, MPH, MBA

Dean of the College of Public Health
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Julianne Kipple, BSBA, MBA

Healthcare Shareholder
Lutz

Harrison Kratochvil, JD

Attorney
Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP

Todd Linden, MA, FACHE

President
Linden Consulting

Amber Lubben, BSN, RN, MBA-c

Senior Director of Quality
Nebraska Hospital Association

Jodie Meyer

Research Analyst II
Nebraska Department of Labor

Dave Miers, PhD, LIPC

Senior Director Behavioral Health Services
Bryan Medical Center

Jonathan Neufeld, PhD, HSPP

Project Director
gpTRAC

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA

President & CEO
Nebraska Hospital Association

Jeff Norman

Principal
Baker Tilly

Stan Odenthal, JD, MA

Senior Director, Workforce Initiatives
Nebraska Hospital Association

Daniel Oldenburg, JD

Partner, Chair of the Immigration Law Practice
Section
Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP

Jeff Ordway

Patient Partner Consultant for Engaged Research
Retired

Cori Pierce, CRCR, CSBI

Senior Health Care Advisor
NHA Advisory Services

Amy Pope

Manager, Clinical Quality & Informatics
Medical Solutions / WorldWide HealthStaff
Solutions

Sarosh Rana, MD, MPH

Professor & Chair of OB/GYN
University of Nebraska Medical Center/Nebraska
Medicine

Sanam Roder-DeWan, MD, DrPH

Associate Professor, Community & Family
Medicine
Dartmouth Health

Andy Ruback

Chief Executive Officer
Flood Communications

Amy Schroeder

Senior Health Care Advisor
NHA Advisory Services

Tim Sheley

Executive Vice President, Business Development
Jackson Physician Search

Brett Shippee, LUTCF

Chief Operating Officer
United Professional Advisors
Co-Founder
United Professional Benefits

Jesse Vo

Senior Manager
Baker Tilly

Treg Vyzourek, BS, MDI, RT(R), CT, MBA

Chief Executive Officer
Brodstone Healthcare

John Werner

Chief Executive Officer
Pawnee County Memorial Hospital

Christine Widman, MHA, CBIS

Vice President, Program Operations
Nebraska Hospital Association

Margaret Woepfel, MSN, RN, CPHQ, FACHE

Chief Nursing & Informatics Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

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VersaBadge
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Well Hive

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

Monday, June 8

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.	PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION STRENGTHENING YOUR HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY THROUGH RURAL RESEARCH: RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES, RESULTS	GOLD 10
4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.	WELCOME RECEPTION	PRE-FUNCTION FOYER

Tuesday, June 9

8:30 A.M. - 8:40 A.M.	OPENING REMARKS Jed Hansen Executive Director, NeRHA & Jeremy Nordquist President & CEO, NHA	SILVER 4-6 - 10-12								
8:40 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.	BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: THE VA'S STRATEGY FOR RURAL HEALTH EQUITY & ACCESS Howard Manuel, JD Senior Advisor, United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs	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. - 10:50 A.M.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS									
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12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M.	LUNCH & AWARDS	GOLD 4-6 - 10-12								
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4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.	SPONSOR RECEPTION	GOLD 1-3 - 7-9								
5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.	NHAPAC RECEPTION	CUNNINGHAM'S ON THE LAKE								

Wednesday, June 10

8:30 A.M. - 9:20 A.M.	VIEW FROM THE HILL: UPDATES ON RURAL HEALTH POLICY Carrie Cochran-McClain National Rural Health Association (NRHA)	SILVER 4-6 - 10-12								
9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS									
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11:30 A.M. - 12:20 P.M.	DREAM LIKE A CHAMPION John Cook Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former Head Volleyball Coach, University of Nebraska	SILVER 4-6 - 10-12								
12:20 P.M. - 12:30 P.M.	CLOSING REMARKS Jed Hansen Executive Director, NeRHA & Jeremy Nordquist President & CEO, NHA	SILVER 4-6 - 10-12								

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

Monday, June 8

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.	PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION STRENGTHENING YOUR HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY THROUGH RURAL RESEARCH: RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES, RESULTS	GOLD 10
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9:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.	SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING	GOLD 1-3 – 7-9
10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M.	FROM CONTRACTS TO ACTUALS: USING DATA TO STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN RURAL CLINICS Jeff Grandia Co-Founder & CEO, REDi Health Analytics	SILVER 7
11:00 A.M. - 11:50 A.M.	RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM & RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES Jed Hansen Executive Director, NeRHA & Jeremy Nordquist President & CEO, NHA	SILVER 4-6 – 10-12
12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M.	LUNCH & AWARDS	GOLD 4-6 – 10-12
1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.	EXHIBIT HALL HOUR	GOLD 1-3 – 7-9
2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M.	RURAL HEALTH CLINIC COMPLIANCE UPDATE Kate Hill Vice President Client Success, The Compliance Team	SILVER 7
3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M.	RURAL HEALTH CLINIC QUALITY REPORTING UPDATES 2026 Nicole Thorell Senior Consultant, Wintergreen	SILVER 7
4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.	SPONSOR RECEPTION	GOLD 1-3 – 7-9
5:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.	NHAPAC RECEPTION	CUNNINGHAM'S ON THE LAKE

Wednesday, June 10

8:30 A.M. - 9:20 A.M.	VIEW FROM THE HILL: UPDATES ON RURAL HEALTH POLICY Carrie Cochran-McClain National Rural Health Association (NRHA)	SILVER 4-6 – 10-12				
9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M.	PRACTICAL AI DEPLOYMENT IN RURAL HOSPITALS Brady Beecham Chief Medical Officer, Gothenburg Health	SILVER 7				
10:30 A.M. - 11:20 A.M.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>OPERATIONS</th> <th>WORKFORCE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nebraska Medicaid State Directed Payment Program – A Comprehensive Look SILVER 1-3</td> <td>Workforce Trends Post Covid: What Employees are Looking For SILVER 4-6 – 10-12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	OPERATIONS	WORKFORCE	Nebraska Medicaid State Directed Payment Program – A Comprehensive Look SILVER 1-3	Workforce Trends Post Covid: What Employees are Looking For SILVER 4-6 – 10-12	
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Nebraska Medicaid State Directed Payment Program – A Comprehensive Look SILVER 1-3	Workforce Trends Post Covid: What Employees are Looking For SILVER 4-6 – 10-12					
11:30 A.M. - 12:20 P.M.	DREAM LIKE A CHAMPION John Cook Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former Head Volleyball Coach, University of Nebraska	SILVER 4-6 – 10-12				
12:20 P.M. - 12:30 P.M.	CLOSING REMARKS Jed Hansen Executive Director, NeRHA & Jeremy Nordquist President & CEO, NHA	SILVER 4-6 – 10-12				

* Pre-Conference session is available as an optional add-on
* Welcome Reception is open to ALL Rural Health Conference attendees

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA

MONDAY, JUNE 8

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. | PRE-CONFERENCE

STRENGTHENING YOUR HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY THROUGH RURAL RESEARCH: RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES, RESULTS

Jerrod Anzalone, PhD | Assistant Professor, UNMC

Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA | Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer, Remora Health LLC

David Edwards, MS | Chief Executive Officer, Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System

Serena Gaines, MBA, MSN, RN | Research Nurse Manager, UNMC

Carol Geary, PHD, MBA, RN | Associate Professor, UNMC College of Nursing

Ryan Larsen, EdD, MHA, FACHE | Chief Executive Officer, Community Medical Center

Russell (Rusty) McCulloh, MD | Associate Vice Chancellor, Clinical Research, UNMC

Mel McNea, MHA | Interim Chief Executive Office, Chase County Community Hospital & Clinics

Jeff Ordway | Patient Partner Consultant for Engaged Research, Retired

Sanam Roder-DeWan, MD, DrPH | Associate Professor, Community & Family Medicine, Dartmouth Health

Joseph Ruybal, MS | Division Director, Clinical Research, HCA Healthcare

Brian Shelmadine, DO, PhD | Chief Medical Officer & Interim Chief Executive Officer, Box Butte General Hospital

This session highlights the value of rural health care research in improving financial performance, enhancing staff satisfaction, and strengthening outcomes for rural communities in Nebraska. Participants will explore how to communicate these benefits across interprofessional teams, identify key relationships and resources supporting critical access hospital research, and review research approaches such as comparative effectiveness, implementation science, and pragmatic studies. Attendees will also learn how to evaluate research protocols for their impact on partnerships, resources, and results, and will identify current rural research needs and opportunities that encourage broader participation.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how rural research improves the bottom line, enhances staff satisfaction, and benefits rural communities, while communicating these impacts effectively across interprofessional teams to support shared understanding and coordinated action.
- Identify interprofessional relationships and resources that support critical access hospital research.
- Describe research options—including types (e.g., comparative effectiveness and implementation science) and approaches retrospective observational and pragmatic.
- Discuss how to evaluate research protocols and their impact on critical access hospital relationships, resources, and results.
- Identify rural research needs in Nebraska and opportunities that inspire participation.

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

WELCOME RECEPTION

Kick off the 2026 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 Jimmy Weber as well as refreshments and appetizers.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

8:30 A.M. - 8:40 A.M.

OPENING REMARKS

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

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

8:40 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. | OPENING KEYNOTE

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: THE VA'S STRATEGY FOR RURAL HEALTH EQUITY & ACCESS

Howard Manuel, JD | United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs

While nearly a quarter of all veterans live in rural communities, they often face significant geographic issues when seeking the care they have earned. In this keynote address, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Howard Manuel will outline the Department's 2026 roadmap for dismantling barriers to rural health access. The discussion will focus on the VA's Veterans First mission, highlighting new federal investments in telehealth infrastructure, the modernization of rural VA facilities, and the expansion of the Community Care Program. Attendees will gain a firsthand look at how the VA is partnering with local and civilian health systems to ensure that a veteran's zip code no longer determines their quality of care or health outcomes.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify VA policies improving rural care coordination and claims processing.
- Understand partnership models between VA medical centers and health care facilities.
- Assess how virtual care and digital tools improve access and mental health services.

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

SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING

10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **COMMUNITY**

CLOSING THE GAP: IMPROVING HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR RURAL VETERANS

Dan DeFreece, MD, MBA | President, CHI Health St. Mary's

Nadhal Eadeh | Senior Vice President, Federal Affairs & Health Policy, Wellhive

Amber Spitzer | Deputy Chief, Department of Veterans

Rural veterans often face barriers to timely health care, including travel distance, provider shortages, and scheduling challenges. This session will explore the VA's External Provider Scheduling (EPS) initiative, which allows VA staff to schedule appointments directly with participating community providers. Panelists will discuss how stronger VA–community partnerships can improve coordination, reduce delays, and expand access to care closer to home.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify barriers to health care access for rural veterans.
- Explain the External Provider Scheduling (EPS) initiative.
- Discuss strategies to strengthen VA–community provider partnerships.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA

TUESDAY, JUNE 9 (CONT.)

10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **OPERATIONS**

OPTIMIZING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOARD: AN EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Todd Linden, MA, FACHE | President, Linden Consulting

Few relationships have a greater impact on organizational success than the partnership between executive leadership and the governing board. While organizations often focus on “educating the board,” strong governance partnerships are intentionally shaped by engaged executive leaders. In this session, Todd Linden draws on more than 30 years of experience as a hospital CEO and governance advisor to share practical strategies for building high-trust, high-performing board relationships. Participants will explore ways to strengthen communication, clarify roles, support strategic planning, and provide meaningful board education. Executives will leave with actionable ideas for fostering productive partnerships that promote strategic clarity, strong governance, and long-term success.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand leadership’s role in strong board relationships.
- Apply strategies to improve communication and alignment.
- Identify ways to strengthen governance and planning.

10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **POPULATIONS**

IMPROVING MATERNAL OUTCOMES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Laura Gamble, BSN, RN | Chief Executive Officer, Pender Community Hospital
Sarosh Rana, MD, MPH | Professor & Chair of OB/GYN, UNMC/NE Medicine
Sanam Roder-DeWan, MD, DrPH | Associate Professor, Community & Family Medicine, Dartmouth Health

Improving maternal health outcomes remains a critical priority for rural communities. This panel will explore emerging strategies to strengthen maternal care, with a focus on translating research into practical improvements for patients. Experts will discuss topics including early induction practices and management of hypertension during pregnancy and the postpartum period, highlighting clinical insights and ongoing research. Panelists include leaders from Dartmouth Health and University of Nebraska Medical Center, including Sarosh Rana, a nationally recognized maternal-fetal medicine specialist. Moderated by Laura Gamble, the session will include time for audience questions and discussion on improving maternal outcomes in rural settings.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe maternal health challenges in rural communities.
- Explain how research can improve maternal care and outcomes.
- Identify strategies to strengthen local maternal health services.

10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **WORKFORCE**

VITAL SIGNS: WHAT LABOR MARKET DATA TELLS US ABOUT NEBRASKA’S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

Scott Ferguson | Research Analyst II, Nebraska Department of Labor
Jodie Meyer | Research Analyst II, Nebraska Department of Labor

Health systems across the country are facing unprecedented workforce challenges, including persistent shortages, rising demand, and changing training needs. This session explores how labor market data can help health care leaders understand workforce trends, anticipate future needs, and develop strategic recruitment, retention, and training strategies. Participants will learn about the current status of Nebraska’s health care workforce, how to interpret workforce indicators, and how to apply these insights to support sustainable workforce development. The session will also highlight how labor market data can inform career planning, workforce initiatives, and strategic talent development in health care and beyond.

Learning Objectives:

- Interpret key labor market indicators for Nebraska’s health care workforce.
- Identify resources for tracking workforce trends and shortages.
- Apply workforce data to support recruitment, retention, and training strategies.

11:00 A.M. - 11:50 A.M. | GENERAL SESSION

RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM & RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, NeRHA
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) established the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), creating a landmark opportunity to strengthen rural health care in Nebraska. This session will unpack the program’s intent, funding opportunities, and implementation timeline, and examine its potential impact on hospital operations, workforce, and innovation. Attendees will learn how Nebraska hospitals can position themselves to lead in shaping and benefiting from this investment.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the structure and intent of the RHTP.
- Evaluate potential impacts on rural health systems.
- Develop strategies to leverage program opportunities.

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

LUNCH & AWARDS

1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

EXHIBIT HALL HOUR

2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **COMMUNITY**

BUILDING A FANBASE: BRANDING, LOYALTY & COMMUNITY IN RURAL HEALTH CARE

J.R. Greene, FACHE | Founder, Psychiatric Medical Care

Hospitals don’t just need patients. They need fans! In this engaging and energizing session, J.R. Greene, host of the “Superfan Diaries” podcast, shares how rural and community hospitals can strengthen their brand, foster loyalty, and rally community support by thinking like a sports team. Drawing from his own experiences, including his story as ESPN’s “Big Orange Tux Guy” and two decades of working with rural health systems, J.R. uses sports metaphors and real-world examples to show how hospitals can move beyond traditional marketing to create lasting community connections.

Learning Objectives:

- Use storytelling to build patient and staff advocacy.
- Create a brand that reflects local culture and strengthens trust.
- Strengthen community engagement and loyalty in rural markets.

2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **OPERATIONS**

MAKING MARKETING MATTER: BUDGET STRATEGIES & COST REPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL HOSPITALS

Deborah Doke, BA | Chief Marketing & Development Officer, Syracuse Area Health
Sara Gadeken | Chief Marketing Officer, Flood Communications
Julianne Kipple, BSBA, MBA | Healthcare Shareholder, Lutz
Andy Ruback | Chief Executive Officer, Flood Communications

Marketing is often viewed as an expense, but for rural hospitals it can also be a strategic investment. This session will explore how Critical Access Hospitals can approach marketing budgets more intentionally while identifying opportunities to maximize reimbursement through the Medicare cost report. Hear perspectives from a leading cost report preparation firm, a health care marketing leader, and a CAH that has leveraged organic marketing strategies. Panelists will share practical examples, lessons learned, and ideas rural hospitals can use to strengthen community engagement and maximize financial opportunities.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the value of marketing in rural hospitals.
- Identify Medicare cost report reimbursement opportunities.
- Apply marketing strategies to strengthen community engagement.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA

TUESDAY, JUNE 9 (CONT.)

2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **POPULATIONS**

RURAL RESEARCH NETWORK: WHAT IT IS & WHY IT MATTERS

Jerrold Anzalone, PhD | Assistant Professor, UNMC
Jeff Ordway | Patient Partner Consultant for Engaged Research, Retired
Sarosh Rana, MD, MPH | Professor & Chair of OB/GYN, UNMC/NE Medicine
Sanam Roder-DeWan, MD, DrPH | Associate Professor, Community & Family Medicine, Dartmouth Health

Research plays a critical role in improving care for rural communities, but rural providers are often underrepresented in clinical research. This session will introduce the Rural Research Network and explore how it connects providers to meaningful research opportunities. Panelists will share examples of clinical research already taking place in rural settings and discuss why expanding rural participation is essential to improving health outcomes and informing policy. Moderated by Jeff Ordway, the discussion will also leave time for audience questions and conversation about how rural organizations can engage in future research efforts.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role and impact of rural clinical research.
- Identify opportunities through the Rural Research Network.
- Explore practical examples and strategies for engagement.

2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **WORKFORCE**

THE \$100K BARRIER: NAVIGATING NEW H-1B VISA FEES

Dan Oldenburg, JD | Partner, Chair of the Immigration Law Practice Section, Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, L.L.P.

Rural hospitals have long relied on international medical graduates to fill critical workforce gaps, particularly in underserved and rural communities. The new \$100,000 H-1B visa application fee now threatens access to this essential talent pipeline, placing added strain on smaller, low-margin facilities. This session will examine how these policy changes disproportionately impact rural health care and provide practical strategies to help hospitals adapt. Participants will gain actionable insights for navigating workforce challenges and planning for long-term staffing sustainability.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the impact of rising H-1B visa costs on rural health care staffing.
- Recognize challenges rural facilities face in maintaining workforce pipelines.
- Identify strategies to adapt to new recruitment and staffing constraints.

2:50 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING

3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **COMMUNITY**

CRISIS LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW DISASTER ERA— EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE, ALL AT ONCE

Attila J. Hertelendy, PhD, MHA, MS | Assistant Professor, Florida International University

Natural and manmade disasters are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity, requiring health care leaders to navigate “polycrisis” situations where multiple crises happen at once. Whether incidents occur within a facility or the surrounding community, health care organizations are often directly involved. Research shows a significant gap in crisis leadership education, particularly for nonclinical emergencies. While organizations are generally prepared for clinical events, many lack the leadership skills needed to manage overlapping disasters such as wildfires and cyberattacks. This session will explore practical strategies for strengthening crisis leadership and provide a toolkit for immediate implementation.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the concept of polycrisis and impact on health care leadership.
- Identify gaps in current crisis leadership preparedness.
- Apply practical tools for leading multiple simultaneous crises.

3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **OPERATIONS**

REVENUE CYCLE & OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Tim Johnson | Chief Financial Officer, NHA
Cori Pierce, CRCR, CSBI | Senior Health Care Advisor, NHA Advisory Services
Amy Schroeder | Senior Health Care Advisor, NHA Advisory Services

This session will provide practical insight into challenges faced by hospitals navigating financial pressures. Designed for all levels of health care providers, the discussion highlights common and unique revenue cycle and operational issues while offering real-world solutions that support short-term stability and long-term sustainability. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of proven strategies, implementation approaches, and the impact these changes can have on hospital operations and reimbursement. Whether involved in administration, finance, revenue cycle, or operations, participants will leave with practical ideas to strengthen decision-making.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand challenges facing hospitals at risk of closure.
- Identify effective operational solutions.
- Explore strategies to improve hospital sustainability.

3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **POPULATIONS**

THE GOOD LIFE: STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES & OUR WAY FORWARD

Ali Kahn, MD, MPH, MBA | Dean, College of Public Health, UNMC

Dr. Khan will provide a snapshot of health in Nebraska and discuss key issues facing everyday Nebraskans. He will take a closer look at where Nebraska ranks amongst other states, highlighting strengths and opportunities for improvement, with a spotlight on rural communities. This session will not only provide an overall ‘temperature check’ on Nebraskan health, but also discuss how communities ensure The Good Life for future generations.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand Nebraska’s current health status and rankings.
- Recognize key health challenges and strengths, in rural areas.
- Explore community strategies to promote long-term well-being.

3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **WORKFORCE**

BUILDING NEBRASKA’S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE PIPELINE

Stan Odenthal, JD, MA | Senior Director, Workforce Initiatives, NHA
Christine Widman, MHA, CBIS | Vice President, Program Operations, NHA

Nebraska hospitals are facing persistent workforce shortages that require coordinated, innovative solutions. This session will highlight the Nebraska Hospital Association’s (NHA) workforce initiatives designed to strengthen the health care talent pipeline, from early career exploration to clinical training, apprenticeships, and statewide recruitment strategies. Participants will learn how hospitals, educators, and workforce partners are collaborating to expand training capacity, support students, and connect job seekers to health care careers across Nebraska.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify workforce challenges and pipeline strategies for Nebraska hospitals.
- Explain innovative workforce development models and partnerships.
- Discuss talent strategies supporting Nebraska’s future health care workforce.

4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

SPONSOR RECEPTION

5:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

NHAPAC RECEPTION

Join us for the NHAPAC Reception at Cunningham’s Journal on the Lake!
610 Talmadge St Suite A, Kearney, NE 68845

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

8:30 A.M. - 9:20 A.M. | KEYNOTE

VIEW FROM THE HILL: UPDATES ON RURAL HEALTH POLICY

Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, MPA | Chief Policy Officer, National Rural Health Association

This session will provide a Federal update from both Congress and the Trump Administration in order to keep rural health leaders knowledgeable about how national policies might impact their provision of health care.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn about the most recent actions by the Trump Administration impacting rural health providers and patients.
- Learn about what is happening on Capitol Hill with the most recent legislative activity impact rural health care.
- Learn about how session participants can engage in rural health advocacy on behalf of their communities.

9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — COMMUNITY

PROTECTING PATIENT ACCESS IN A NEW ERA OF MEDICAID

Meghan Chaffee, JD | Chief Advocacy & Legal Officer, NHA

Jeff Norman | Principal, Baker Tilly

Jesse Vo | Senior Manager, Baker Tilly

With the implementation of H.R. 1 and Nebraska's early enforcement of Medicaid work requirements, an estimated 50,000 Nebraskans are at risk of losing coverage. These changes may do more than just impact individual health, they can threaten the financial stability of rural hospitals. This panel discussion brings together policy experts and health care leaders to navigate these challenges. Attendees will gain an inside look at how the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) and regional partners are mobilizing to ensure patients stay covered through proactive outreach and education. Expert panelists will provide a high-level overview of recent redetermination trends, offering specific strategies for monitoring patient mix, and sustaining 340B compliance despite shifting eligibility.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the implications of Medicaid work requirements and the federal HR1 on rural patient enrollment and hospital reimbursement in Nebraska.
- Formulate data-driven methods for monitoring patient eligibility and adapting organizational criteria amidst evolving Medicaid enrollment landscapes.
- Execute effective patient communication and education strategies to minimize procedural disenrollment and maintain continuity of care for rural residents.

9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — OPERATIONS

WHEN CYBER THREATS STRIKE: MANAGING RISK, COMPLIANCE & COMMUNICATION

Nicholas Brand | Cybersecurity Advisor, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency — Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Stephanie Brown | Protective Security Advisor, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency — Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Michael Chase, JD, MHA | Partner, Baird Holm, LLP

Blaine Kahle | Chief Technology Officer, Five Nines

Margaret Woepfel, MSN, RN, CPHQ, FACHE | Chief Nursing & Informatics Officer, NHA

Cybersecurity threats are evolving rapidly, and rural hospitals face unique vulnerabilities. This panel will provide a comprehensive look at current cyber risks, including emerging phishing schemes and other sophisticated attacks. Experts will discuss technical threats, cover the legal implications, and highlight broader threat landscapes and assessment strategies. There will also be guidance on crisis communications and public messaging when cyber threats strike. Attendees will gain actionable insights on protecting systems, managing legal and operational risks, and effectively communicating during cybersecurity incidents.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the evolving cybersecurity threat landscape.
- Evaluate legal, technical, and operational responses to cyber incidents.
- Develop effective communication strategies during cybersecurity events.

9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — POPULATIONS

TELEHEALTH IN ACTION: CONNECTING RURAL PATIENTS TO CARE

Susan Dorris, BSN, RN | Emergency & EMS Nurse Manager, Avel eCare

Harrison Kratochvil, JD | Attorney, Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP

Amber Lubben, BSN, RN, MBA-c | Senior Director of Quality, NHA

Dave Miers, PhD, LIPC | Senior Director, Behavioral Health Services, Bryan Medical Center

Jonathan Neufeld, PhD, HSPP | Project Director, gpTRAC

Rural Nebraskans often face limited access to health care, particularly behavioral health services. Telehealth is helping bridge this gap by connecting patients with providers and expanding care options across rural communities. This session will highlight innovative telehealth models and partnerships led by organizations such as Avel eCare and Bryan Health. Presenters will discuss how virtual care is improving access, strengthening rural care teams, and creating new opportunities to deliver timely, high-quality care closer to home.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how telehealth addresses behavioral health gaps in rural communities.
- Identify key components of successful telehealth programs and partnerships.
- Explore strategies to use telehealth to improve access, support care teams, and deliver high-quality rural care.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 (CONT.)

9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **WORKFORCE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR RURAL WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT**

Senator Bob Hallstrom | State Senator, District 01
Stan Odenthal, JD, MA | Senior Director, Workforce Initiatives, NHA
Brett Shippee, LUTCF | Chief Operating Officer, United Professional Advisors, Co-Founder, United Professional Benefits
Treg Vyzourek, BS, MDI, RT(R), CT, MBA | Chief Executive Officer, Brodstone Healthcare

John Werner | Chief Executive Officer, Pawnee County Memorial Hospital
Access to affordable, convenient housing remains a significant barrier to recruiting and retaining staff in rural communities. This session will highlight innovative approaches Nebraska hospitals are using to overcome these challenges, featuring real-world examples from Pawnee, Superior, and David City. Senator Bob Hallstrom will discuss what lawmakers are doing to improve housing access and affordability. A representative from Ameritas will share creative housing strategies that support workforce recruitment, retention, and community development and explore how deferred compensation tools, such as 457(f) plans, can be leveraged to enhance housing initiatives and strengthen rural health teams.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand housing-related barriers in rural workforce recruitment and retention.
- Explore innovative housing solutions in rural health settings.
- Apply financial and policy tools to support workforce housing initiatives.

10:30 A.M. - 11:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **OPERATIONS NEBRASKA MEDICAID STATE DIRECTED PAYMENT PROGRAM — A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK**

Tim Johnson, MBA | Chief Financial Officer, NHA
Christine Widman, MHA, CBIS | Vice President, Program Operations, NHA
In this session, NHA staff will provide a thorough overview of the Nebraska Medicaid State Directed Payment Program (SDP) and its impact on hospitals and health care providers across the state. Attendees will learn about the program's structure, implementation, and implications for hospital operations, reimbursement, and patient access to care. This session is designed for professionals in finance, administration, and policy seeking practical guidance on program participation and compliance.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the purpose and key components of the NE Medicaid SDP.
- Evaluate the financial and operational impact on Nebraska hospitals.
- Identify strategies for program participation and compliance.

10:30 A.M. - 11:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — **WORKFORCE WORKFORCE TRENDS POST COVID: WHAT EMPLOYEES ARE LOOKING FOR**

Carly Clem | Senior Managing Director of Recruiting, Jackson Physician Search
Amy Pope | Manager, Clinical Quality & Informatics, Medical Solutions / WorldWide HealthStaff Solutions
Tim Sheley | Executive VP, Business Development, Jackson Physician Search

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped workforce expectations across health care. This session will explore emerging trends in recruitment and retention, focusing on what physicians and other health professionals are looking for in a post-pandemic workplace. Representatives from Jackson Physician Search will share insights on physician recruitment, while Medical Solutions will present trends and expectations from other health care employees. Attendees will gain actionable strategies to attract and retain top talent in today's evolving health care environment.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how COVID-19 has changed expectations around recruitment, retention, and workplace culture.
- Distinguish factors influencing physician recruitment and broader workforce trends.
- Identify strategies to attract, engage, and retain health care talent in a competitive workforce market.

11:30 A.M. - 12:20 P.M. | CLOSING KEYNOTE

DREAM LIKE A CHAMPION

John Cook | Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former Head Volleyball Coach, University of Nebraska

Former Nebraska Volleyball head coach shares a practical look at what it takes to build and sustain success in his keynote, "Dream Like a Champion." Drawing on his experience leading one of the nation's top programs, Cook discusses leadership in real terms, what works, what doesn't, and what he learned along the way. He also explores the importance of staying adaptable, being open to change, and having a clear sense of purpose.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand practical leadership principles that drive consistent team success.
- Recognize the value of adaptability and openness to change in high-performance environments.
- Identify and articulate a clear personal or organizational "why" to guide decisions and actions.

12:20 P.M. - 12:30 P.M.

CLOSING REMARKS

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, NeRHA
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK AGENDA

TUESDAY, JUNE 9 (CONT.)

8:30 A.M. - 8:40 A.M.

OPENING REMARKS

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, NeRHA
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

8:40 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. | OPENING KEYNOTE

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: THE VA'S STRATEGY FOR RURAL HEALTH EQUITY & ACCESS

Howard Manuel | United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs

While nearly a quarter of all veterans live in rural communities, they often face significant geographic issues when seeking the care they have earned. In this keynote address, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Howard Manuel will outline the Department's 2026 roadmap for dismantling barriers to rural health access. The discussion will focus on the VA's Veterans First mission, highlighting new federal investments in telehealth infrastructure, the modernization of rural VA facilities, and the expansion of the Community Care Program. Attendees will gain a firsthand look at how the VA is partnering with local and civilian health systems to ensure that a veteran's zip code no longer determines their quality of care or health outcomes.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify VA policies improving rural care coordination and claims processing.
- Understand partnership models between VA medical centers and health care facilities.
- Assess how virtual care and digital tools improve access and mental health services.

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

SPONSOR BREAK & NETWORKING

10:00 A.M. - 10:50 A.M. | RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK SESSION

FROM CONTRACTS TO ACTUALS: USING DATA TO STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN RURAL CLINICS

Jeff Grandia | Co-Founder & CEO, REDi Health Analytics

Rural health clinics face growing reimbursement challenges, making it critical to understand the gap between contracted payments and actual revenue. This session will explore practical strategies for identifying lost revenue and improving financial performance using data-driven insights. Through a case study from Uintah Basin Healthcare and its rural clinics, participants will learn how leaders used analytics to uncover opportunities in payer contracts, provider productivity, denials management, and revenue cycle performance to drive measurable improvement.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify reimbursement payment gaps.
- Use data to assess productivity, denials, and revenue cycle performance.
- Improve financial transparency and operational outcomes.

11:00 A.M. - 11:50 A.M. | GENERAL SESSION

RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM & RURAL ADVOCACY UPDATES

Jed Hansen, PhD, APRN, FNP-C | Executive Director, NeRHA
Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) established the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), creating a landmark opportunity to strengthen rural health care in Nebraska. This session will unpack the program's intent, funding opportunities, and implementation timeline, and examine its potential impact on hospital operations, workforce, and innovation. Attendees will learn how Nebraska hospitals can position themselves to lead in shaping and benefiting from this investment.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the structure and intent of the RHTP.
- Evaluate potential impacts on rural health systems.
- Develop strategies to leverage program opportunities.

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

LUNCH & AWARDS

1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

EXHIBIT HALL HOUR

2:00 P.M. - 2:50 P.M. | RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK SESSION

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Kate Hill, RN | Vice President Client Success, The Compliance Team

Maintaining compliance and survey readiness in Rural Health Clinics remains essential for operational success and quality patient care. This session will review the CMS Conditions for Certification for RHCs, including common deficiencies identified during surveys and practical approaches to avoiding them. The session will further elaborate on necessary documentation requirements related to chart reviews, program evaluations, and emergency preparedness. Practical tools and strategies will also be shared to help clinics strengthen compliance efforts and remain survey ready at all times.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify current RHC regulatory requirements.
- Recognize common areas of non-compliance in an RHC.
- Apply updated documentation expectations.
- Implement strategies to improve survey readiness.

3:00 P.M. - 3:50 P.M. | RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK SESSION

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC QUALITY REPORTING UPDATES

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

Quality reporting continues to evolve, with increasing expectations tied to value-based payment models, regulatory programs, and payer requirements. This session will provide an updated overview of 2026 Rural Health Clinic quality reporting requirements, including key changes, measure updates, and reporting expectations impacting rural providers. Attendees will gain clarity on how quality data is used across programs and why accurate, timely reporting is critical for both compliance and financial performance. The session will also focus on practical approaches to integrating quality reporting into daily clinic workflows to reduce burden and improve performance.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize 2026 Rural Health Clinic quality reporting updates.
- Explain how quality reporting affects reimbursement, value-based care, and compliance.
- Implement strategies to improve data capture, workflows, and reporting accuracy.

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

SPONSOR RECEPTION

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

NHAPAC RECEPTION

Join us for the NHAPAC Reception at Cunningham's Journal on the Lake! 610 Talmadge St Suite A, Kearney, NE 68845

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

8:30 A.M. - 9:20 A.M. | KEYNOTE

VIEW FROM THE HILL: UPDATES ON RURAL HEALTH POLICY

Carrie Cochran-McClain, DrPH, MPA | Chief Policy Officer, National Rural Health Association

This session will provide a Federal update from both Congress and the Trump Administration in order to keep rural health leaders knowledgeable about how national policies might impact their provision of health care.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn about the most recent actions by the Trump Administration impacting rural health providers and patients.
- Learn about what is happening on Capitol Hill with the most recent legislative activity impact rural health care.
- Learn about how session participants can engage in rural health advocacy on behalf of their communities.

9:30 A.M. - 10:20 A.M. | RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK SESSION

PRACTICAL AI DEPLOYMENT IN RURAL HOSPITALS

Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA | Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer, Remora Health LLC

Dr. Brady Beecham, Chief Medical Officer at Friend Community Healthcare System, presents on current uses of AI across clinical, operational, and quality domains in rural hospitals, along with a realistic discussion of deployment. The emphasis for this breakout session is AI pragmatism—what small hospitals can actually do today without large budgets or technical teams.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore where AI adds value versus where it creates risk or noise by delving into real use cases.
- Understand how to implement AI within existing systems.
- Assess HIPAA considerations, including what can and cannot be done safely.

10:30 A.M. - 11:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — OPERATIONS

NEBRASKA MEDICAID STATE DIRECTED PAYMENT PROGRAM — A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK

Tim Johnson, MBA | Chief Financial Officer, NHA

Christine Widman, MHA, CBIS | Vice President, Program Operations, NHA

In this session, NHA staff will provide a thorough overview of the Nebraska Medicaid State Directed Payment Program (SDP) and its impact on hospitals and health care providers across the state. Attendees will learn about the program's structure, implementation, and implications for hospital operations, reimbursement, and patient access to care. This session is designed for professionals in finance, administration, and policy seeking practical guidance on program participation and compliance.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the purpose and key components of the NE Medicaid SDP.
- Evaluate the financial and operational impact on Nebraska hospitals.
- Identify strategies for program participation and compliance.

10:30 A.M. - 11:20 A.M. | BREAKOUT SESSION — WORKFORCE

WORKFORCE TRENDS POST COVID: WHAT EMPLOYEES ARE LOOKING FOR

Carly Clem | Senior Managing Director of Recruiting, Jackson Physician Search

Amy Pope | Manager, Clinical Quality & Informatics, Medical Solutions / WorldWide HealthStaff Solutions

Tim Sheley | Executive Vice President, Business Development, Jackson Physician Search

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped workforce expectations across health care. This session will explore emerging trends in recruitment and retention, focusing on what physicians and other health professionals are looking for in a post-pandemic workplace. Representatives from Jackson Physician Search will share insights on physician recruitment, while Medical Solutions will present trends and expectations from other health care employees. Attendees will gain actionable strategies to attract and retain top talent in today's evolving health care environment.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how COVID-19 has changed expectations around recruitment, retention, and workplace culture.
- Distinguish factors influencing physician recruitment and broader workforce trends.
- Identify strategies to attract, engage, and retain health care talent in a competitive workforce market.

11:30 A.M. - 12:20 P.M. | CLOSING KEYNOTE

DREAM LIKE A CHAMPION

John Cook | Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former Head Volleyball Coach, University of Nebraska

Former Nebraska Volleyball head coach shares a practical look at what it takes to build and sustain success in his keynote, "Dream Like a Champion." Drawing on his experience leading one of the nation's top programs, Cook discusses leadership in real terms, what works, what doesn't, and what he learned along the way. He also explores the importance of staying adaptable, being open to change, and having a clear sense of purpose.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand practical leadership principles that drive consistent team success.
- Recognize the value of adaptability and openness to change in high-performance environments.
- Identify and articulate a clear personal or organizational "why" to guide decisions and actions.

12:20 P.M. - 12:30 P.M.

CLOSING REMARKS

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

Jeremy Nordquist, MPA | President & CEO, NHA

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

2026 SPEAKERS (PRE-CONFERENCE)



JERROD ANZALONE, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Jerrod Anzalone is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. His work focuses on using electronic health records and real-world data to advance rural health research, improve care quality, and address health disparities. He emphasizes the secondary use of health data through secure data sharing, interoperable standards, and advanced analytics to support large-scale clinical and translational research. Since 2022, he has led funded public-private data integration efforts across Nebraska, partnering with public health systems, health care organizations, and clinical enterprises to strengthen data infrastructure for rural health research. He holds leadership roles within the Great Plains IDeA-CTR, including Deputy Director of the Research and Evaluation Data Infrastructure Core and Co-Director of the Biomedical Informatics and Bioinformatics Core. He also serves as technical lead for UNMC's participation in the Greater Plains Collaborative within PCORnet, supporting multisite, data-driven population health initiatives.



BRADY BEECHAM, MD, MPH, MBA
Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer
Remora Health LLC

Dr. Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA, is Principal and Fractional Chief Medical Officer at Remora Health LLC and a recognized leader in rural health care innovation and policy. A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, she earned her medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science & Technology in India. Dr. Beecham previously served as Chief Medical Officer at Gothenburg Health and Medical Director for the Two Rivers Health Department, where she led regional COVID-19 response efforts. A Fellow of the National Rural Health Association and former NeRHA board member, she is dedicated to improving health care access, workforce development, and public health outcomes in rural communities.



DAVID EDWARDS, MS
Chief Executive Officer
Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System

David Edwards serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Winnebago Comprehensive Health System for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. In his role, he leads initiatives focused on strengthening emergency services, expanding integrated primary care, and developing community- and home-based services to improve overall community health. David is also passionate about workforce engagement and personal development, emphasizing practical strategies that help health care teams stay motivated and effective in challenging environments. He is the author of a book focused on personal motivation and leadership principles for frontline staff and patients.



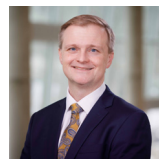
CAROL GEARY, PhD, MBA, RN
Associate Professor
University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing

Dr. Geary has a long career in health care delivery, produce 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.



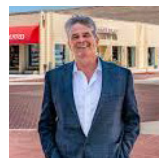
RYAN LARSEN, EdD, MHA, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer
Community Medical Center

Ryan Larsen has been the Chief Executive Officer at Community Medical Center since September 2005. During his tenure, CMC built a new facility, which opened in November 2009, and completed an expansion in 2018. Ryan has a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics from Brigham Young University and a Master's in Business and Health Administration from the University of Missouri. He received his Ed.D from Nebraska Methodist College in 2024. Ryan's previous senior healthcare management experience includes three years with Wamego City Hospital in Wamego, KS, as Chief Financial Officer, and a year and a half at Memorial Hospital Association in Carthage, IL, as their Chief Financial Officer. He is also a Board-Certified Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



RUSSELL (RUSTY) MCCULLOH, MD
Associate Vice Chancellor, Clinical Research
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Russell "Rusty" McCulloh serves as associate vice chancellor for clinical research at University of Nebraska Medical Center and vice president for research at Nebraska Medicine. A nationally recognized leader in clinical and translational research, he provides strategic vision for expanding clinical trials, fostering interdisciplinary research collaborations, and advancing large-scale grant initiatives across Nebraska's academic health system. Dr. McCulloh also serves as medical director for Clinical and Translational Research Operations at Children's Nebraska and is a professor in pediatrics and infectious diseases. Since joining UNMC in 2018, he has helped strengthen statewide clinical research infrastructure and improve opportunities for patients and families to participate in innovative research studies.



MEL MCNEA, MHA
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Chase County Community Hospital & Clinics

Mel McNea is an experienced health care executive and former CEO of Great Plains Health, where he led major growth and operational initiatives, including a successful rebranding campaign, construction of a \$100 million patient tower, and development of an Orthopedic Center of Excellence. Previously serving as COO and Director of Diagnostic Imaging, he helped strengthen financial performance and expand services across the organization. Known for his steady leadership and strategic vision, Mel has also served as interim CEO at Regional West Health Services and currently provides interim leadership support while hospitals navigate executive transitions and long-term planning.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

2026 SPEAKERS (PRE-CONFERENCE)



JEFF ORDWAY
Patient Partner Consultant for Engaged Research
Retired

Jeff Ordway is a nationally recognized patient leader and powerful advocate for patient-centered research. He brings a deeply informed, lived-experience perspective that has shaped The Patient Centered Outcomes Research Network (PCORnet®)'s approach to engagement, governance, and real-world evidence generation through his roles as a patient partner, patient Co-Investigator, and project manager for the network. His work is to ensure that patient priorities, community values, and real-life needs remain at the heart of national research initiatives. His voice has helped strengthen trust, transparency, and partnership across the network. In addition, he has served as a Co-Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator on research projects, which include both rural and urban foci. A retired high school educator, he brings that experience to bear in his roles as a talented facilitator and collaborator. He owns a small farm, which leads him to work doubly hard to ensure that the rural voice is present in all that he does.



JOSEPH RUYBAL, MS
Division Director, Clinical Research
HCA Healthcare

Joseph Ruybal is a clinical research leader with more than 15 years of experience in bench research and clinical trial operations. He currently serves as Division Director of Clinical Research and previously established the Clinical Research Institute at Great Plains Health. Joseph earned both a Master of Healthcare Leadership and a Master of Science in Management from Wake Forest University. His published research includes federally funded studies on eosinophilic esophagitis. Passionate about advancing innovation and patient access through research, he continues to lead efforts that strengthen clinical trial programs and health care collaboration.



SANAM RODER-DEWAN, MD, PhD
Associate Professor, Community & Family Medicine
Dartmouth Health

Dr. Roder-DeWan is a global health scholar, applied health systems scientist, public health leader, and family physician with nearly 20 years of experience in maternal and newborn health equity. She is internationally recognized for her work on Service Delivery Redesign, a health system reform that improves care organization, equity, and outcomes, particularly for rural and remote populations. Her mixed-methods research is widely published, and she serves on global expert committees, including with the World Health Organization, and advises the World Bank on designing and evaluating health system innovations. She emphasizes participatory approaches, collaborative learning, and team science that centers lived experience. Her current work focuses on rural maternal and perinatal health in the U.S., sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia, including a multi-state U.S. study on elective induction and geographic risk.



BRIAN SHELMADINE, DO, PhD
Chief Medical Officer & Interim Chief Executive Officer
Box Butte General Hospital

Brian Shelmadine has built a career that combines clinical care, academic research, administration, and community commitment to rural health care. 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 experience includes clinical care, athletic sports coverage, and research in both urban and rural settings. Currently serving as Chief Medical Officer at a Critical Access Hospital, Brian focuses on improving access to care and long-term health outcomes for rural communities through initiatives such as the NeRHA Research Network.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

2026 SPEAKERS



JERROD ANZALONE, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Jerrod Anzalone is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. His work leverages electronic health records and real-world data to advance rural health research, improve care quality, and reduce health disparities. He specializes in the secure and effective use of health data through interoperable systems, data integration, and advanced analytics to support clinical and translational research. Since 2022, he has led statewide public-private data integration initiatives across Nebraska, partnering with health systems, public health agencies, and clinical organizations to strengthen research infrastructure. Dr. Anzalone serves in leadership roles within the Great Plains IDEa-CTR and helps lead UNMC's participation in PCORnet's Greater Plains Collaborative.



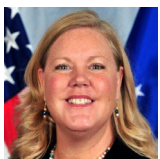
BRADY BEECHAM, MD, MPH, MBA
Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer
Remora Health LLC

Dr. Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA, is Principal and Fractional Chief Medical Officer at Remora Health LLC and a recognized leader in rural health care innovation and policy. A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, she earned her medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science & Technology in India. Dr. Beecham previously served as Chief Medical Officer at Gothenburg Health and Medical Director for the Two Rivers Public Health Department, where she led regional COVID-19 response efforts. A Fellow of the National Rural Health Association and former NeRHA board member, she is dedicated to improving health care access, workforce development, and public health outcomes in rural communities.



NICHOLAS BRAND
Cybersecurity Advisor
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency –
Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Mr. Brand serves as a Cybersecurity Advisor/Cybersecurity Coordinator for Nebraska in Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, and NE) for the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Integrated Operations Division. Based in Lincoln, NE, he supports the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) mission of strengthening the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure. His programs coordinate cyber preparedness, risk mitigation, and incident response. He provides Cybersecurity resource briefings, Cybersecurity assessments, and Incident Response planning to the nation's sixteen critical infrastructure sectors and state, local, tribal, and territorial government entities.



STEPHANIE BROWN
Protective Security Advisor
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency –
Integrated Operations Division - Region 7

Stephanie has over 35 years of experience in Contingency Planning, Security, Enterprise Integration, Antiterrorism, Insider Threat, Enterprise Risk Management, and Emergency Operations. She is a subject matter expert in critical infrastructure protection and resiliency, including emergency preparedness, physical security, and vulnerability mitigation in convergent environments. Stephanie directly contributes to the development of the national risk picture by assisting with identification, assessment, monitoring, and minimizing risk to the nation's critical infrastructure.



MEGHAN CHAFFEE, JD
Chief Advocacy & Legal Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

Meghan Chaffee serves as Chief Advocacy & Legal Officer at Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA), overseeing advocacy and legal efforts for the organization. In her role, Meghan provides daily analysis and guidance on policy matters, working collaboratively with stakeholders and elected officials to advocate on behalf of Nebraska's hospitals. She plays a key role in developing and recommending policies and positions related to relevant state and federal initiatives. Before joining NHA, Meghan held the position of Chief Legal Counsel at CyncHealth. With thirteen years of experience in legal, health care, and policy industries, Meghan brings a wealth of expertise to her role. She is also a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association.



MICHAEL CHASE, JD, MHA
Partner
Baird Holm, LLP

Michael W. Chase is a partner in the Health Care Section at Baird Holm LLP. Mr. Chase counsels clients on federal and state regulatory matters including the Federal health care fraud and abuse laws, HIPAA, compliance programs, and institutional review board compliance. Mr. Chase is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association, the Healthcare Financial Management Association, the Health Care Compliance Association and other civic organizations. He studied health care law at Saint Louis University School of Law and also received his Masters in Health Administration from Saint Louis University School of Public Health.



CARLY CLEM
Senior Managing Director of Recruiting
Jackson Physician Search

Carly brings more than 19 years of health care recruiting experience, successfully placing physicians across nearly every specialty in hospitals, health systems, and medical groups nationwide. She is passionate about helping providers advance their careers while identifying candidates who are the right long-term fit for health care organizations and the communities they serve. Carly's expertise includes physician recruitment, business development, strategic planning, and provider relations in national markets. A graduate of University of Louisville, she leads JPS's Louisville office. With 14 years at the firm, Carly is also a partner and is deeply committed to the success of her clients, providers, and health care partners across the country.



CARRIE COCHRAN-McCLAIN, DRPH, MPA
Chief Policy Officer
National Rural Health Association

Dr. Carrie Cochran-McClain serves as Chief Policy Officer at the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), where she leads the organization's federal advocacy efforts and policy agenda on behalf of its 21,000 members. Since joining NRHA in 2020, she has served as the association's chief lobbyist, advancing policies that strengthen rural health care nationwide. Dr. Cochran-McClain brings more than 20 years of experience in federal health policy, including service in the Senior Executive Service at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as Deputy Director of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, and as a Principal at Health Management Associates. She earned a BA in Sociology from Willamette University, an MPA from Syracuse University's Maxwell School, and a DrPH from UNC Gillings focused on rural obstetrical care access.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

2026 SPEAKERS



JOHN COOK

**Special Assistant to the Athletic Director; Former Head Volleyball Coach
University of Nebraska**

John Cook, who has led Nebraska volleyball since 2000, embodies the philosophy: Dream Big. Taking over from legendary coach Terry Pettit, Cook envisioned even greater potential for the Huskers. Under his leadership, Nebraska has won four NCAA Championships, reached 12 NCAA Semifinals, and captured nine Big 12 and five Big Ten titles, compiling a 722-103 record (.875 winning percentage). His teams have produced five Olympic medalists, 72 AVCA All-Americans, and 25 Academic All-Americans. Entering the 2025 season, his career record stands at 883-176, ranking first among active Division I coaches and fourth all-time in win percentage (.834). A three-time AVCA National Coach of the Year and eight-time conference coach of the year, Cook was inducted into the AVCA Hall of Fame in 2017. He and his wife Wendy, a former two-time All-American setter, have two children and two grandchildren.



DAN DEFREECE, MD, MBA

**President
CHI Health St. Mary's**

Dr. DeFreece, a Tecumseh native, has dedicated more than 30 years to family medicine and health care leadership in Nebraska. He earned his undergraduate degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University, completed medical training at the University of Kansas, and finished his residency at the Lincoln Family Practice Program. Since 2018, he has served as President of CHI Health St. Mary's Hospital. Previously, he held leadership roles with The Physician Network, including Director of Quality and Clinical IT Medical Director, where he led initiatives focused on quality improvement and electronic health record implementation. Dr. DeFreece continues to practice family medicine and is passionate about building long-term patient relationships and promoting community health.



DEBORAH DOKE, BA

**Chief Marketing & Development Officer
Syracuse Area Health**

Deborah Doke is the Chief Marketing and Development Officer at Syracuse Area Health in Southeast Nebraska, where she leads growth, fundraising, and community engagement. She brings a diverse background across health care, nonprofit leadership, media, and entrepreneurship, along with hands-on experience as a rural real estate investor. Deborah is passionate about leveraging marketing to improve health care access and elevate quality of life for rural Nebraskans.



SUSAN DORRIS, BSN, RN

**Emergency & EMS Nurse Manager
Avel eCare**

Susan Dorris earned her nursing degree in 2008 and has worked in emergency nursing since then. After six years as a bedside RN, she transitioned to telehealth emergency medicine in 2015. Over the past decade, she has advanced through roles including staff nurse, supervisor, and Nurse Manager. In her current position at Avel, she oversees daily operations and provides leadership and clinical guidance to nursing staff supporting rural health care facilities. Susan has expertise in emergency nursing, telemedicine, and remote clinical support. She and her team deliver care for complex patients, provide virtual nursing support and medical direction, and strengthen rural health systems through collaborative partnerships.



NADHAL EADEH

**Senior Vice President, Federal Affairs & Health Policy
WellHive**

Nadhal Eadeh leads marketing, strategy, congressional outreach, and government services for WellHive. He plays a key role in the VA External Provider Scheduling (EPS) program, a national initiative that partners with rural health associations, critical access hospitals, and VA academic affiliates to improve care coordination for Veterans. Prior to joining WellHive, Nadhal spent more than a decade in federal service with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, serving under several Under Secretaries for Benefits. In his final VA role, he served as Special Assistant and Intergovernmental and Veteran Service Organization Liaison, helping build partnerships to advance Veteran services and benefits. He holds degrees from Georgetown University and John Carroll University.



SCOTT FERGUSON

**Research Analyst II
Nebraska Department of Labor**

Scott Ferguson is a Research Analyst with the Nebraska Department of Labor, where he has eight years of experience analyzing workforce and labor market trends. He leads the Labor Availability Study, a statewide research initiative examining employer hiring needs, workforce challenges, and worker motivations across Nebraska. His work provides data-driven insights to inform workforce development and economic planning across Nebraska.



SARA GADEKEN

**Chief Marketing Officer
Flood Communications**

Sara Gadenken is the Chief Marketing Officer at Flood Communications with over 17 years of experience in marketing strategy, media, and digital communications. She leads Critical Marketing, a specialized division focused on health care and critical access hospital marketing. She specializes in supporting critical access hospitals through compliant, educational, and community-focused communication strategies aligned with Medicare guidelines. Her expertise includes behavior and audience targeting, and performance analytics to effectively reach and inform rural and underserved populations.



LAURA GAMBLE, BSN, RN

**Chief Executive Officer
Pender Community Hospital District**

With a career dedicated to rural health care in Northeast Nebraska, this speaker has served in clinical and leadership roles beginning as a floor nurse in a critical access hospital. Their experience includes surgery, emergency response, labor and delivery, and serving as Director of Nursing. They later focused on quality and compliance, helping improve rural health care and maternal services. As CEO of Pender Community Hospital, they lead a hospital delivering approximately 120-130 babies annually in a community of 1,000 residents. Passionate about access to high-quality care close to home, they remain a strong advocate for rural health care and obstetrical services.

NHA - NeRHA Rural Health Conference

2026 SPEAKERS



J.R. GREENE, FACHE
Founder
Psychiatric Medical Care

J.R. Greene is a health care executive, branding expert, and founder and chairman of Psychiatric Medical Care, a leading behavioral health management company. For more than two decades, he has helped hospitals strengthen service lines, engage teams, and build trust within their communities. Before entering health care, he held leadership roles with Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, and Revlon, bringing extensive marketing and brand-building expertise to organizations nationwide. A frequent speaker on behavioral health, rural health innovation, and leadership, J.R. is also known as ESPN's "The Big Orange Tux Guy" and hosts Superfan Diaries.



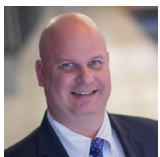
SENATOR BOB HALLSTROM
State Senator
District 01

Bob Hallstrom is a Republican member of the Nebraska State Senate representing District 1 since January 2025. A lifelong resident of Syracuse, Nebraska, he graduated from Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca High School and earned bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Nebraska. Before joining the Legislature, Hallstrom served as general counsel for the Nebraska Bankers Association, developing expertise in legal and financial matters. Active in his church and community, he brings a practical, service-oriented approach to public service. His legislative priorities include economic development, education, health care, and strengthening Nebraska communities.



JED HANSEN, PhD, APRN, FNP-C
Executive Director
Nebraska Rural Health Association

Dr. Jed Hansen is Executive Director of the Nebraska Rural Health Association and Senior Rural Consultant for the Nebraska Hospital Association. A native of Minden, Nebraska, Dr. Hansen's work focuses on improving health care access and sustainability in rural communities. His academic and clinical background centers on health care utilization and barriers to care in ambulatory settings, and he continues to practice in Urgent Care and Emergency Departments across Nebraska. He leads initiatives related to the rural emergency hospital model, veteran access to care, rural dental and mental health, interoperability, and workforce development. Dr. Hansen is a Fellow of the National Rural Health Association and was named the 2023 NRHA Advocate of the Year. He has been recognized statewide and nationally for his leadership, advocacy, and contributions to rural health care innovation and education.



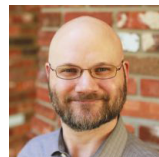
ATTILA J. HERTELENDY, PhD, MHA, MS
Assistant Professor
Florida International University

Dr. Attila J. Hertelendy has more than 28 years of leadership experience in emergency and disaster management, including the development and evaluation of public health emergency plans. He has held hospital leadership roles across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Canada, and the United States, overseeing emergency management operations for major health systems. Dr. Hertelendy serves as Director of Innovation and Technology, Director of Research, and faculty for the Disaster Medicine Fellowship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School. He also teaches at Florida International University and serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. His research focuses on health care resiliency, artificial intelligence, climate change, and disaster medicine.



TIM JOHNSON, MBA
Chief Financial Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

With over 35 years of dedicated health care 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, health care IT application development and CMS billing compliance. 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.



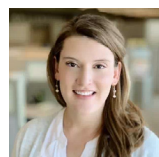
BLAINE KAHLE
Chief Technology Officer
Five Nines

Blaine Kahle is the Chief Technology Officer for Five Nines, responsible for its technical direction, R&D, and security. He joined Five Nines in 2008, two years after the company opened its doors. Blaine's 25+ years of IT experience include five years in the lottery industry, where he implemented networks and systems that processed billions of dollars in several American states, Taiwan, and Australia; and five years managing the data center, servers, and networking for a local Internet Service Provider.



ALI KHAN, MD, MPH, MBA
Dean of the College of Public Health
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH, MBA, is a global health security leader, tenured epidemiologist, and former Assistant Surgeon General (retired) of the U.S. Public Health Service. He is currently the Dean, Richard Holland Presidential Chair, and Tenured Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Nebraska, where he achieved a 4-fold increase in extramural research funding and a 240% increase in student enrollment. Formerly the Director of the CDC's preparedness office, he co-founded the U.S. biodefense program and led or consulted on over 25 international outbreaks, including Ebola, SARS, and Anthrax Bioterrorism. Dr. Khan also serves on the WHO Steering Committee for Global Outbreak Preparedness and Response the board of rare disease drug developer, Intrabio Inc..



JULIANNE KIPPLE, BSBA, MBA
Healthcare Shareholder
Lutz

Julianne Kipple began her health care accounting and consulting career in 2008, specializing in rural and critical access hospitals. She provides outsourced CFO services, including Medicare and Medicaid cost reporting, software conversions, and financial management support. In addition to serving clients, Julianne helps lead departmental operations, focusing on strategic growth and team development. Passionate about sustaining rural health care, she partners with organizations to navigate complex challenges and support long-term success. Known for her collaborative approach, she is committed to delivering practical solutions and mentoring future health care professionals.

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2026 SPEAKERS



HARRISON KRATOCHVIL, JD

Attorney
Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP

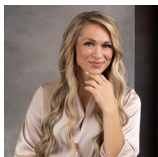
Mr. Kratochvil is an attorney whose practice includes advising health care clients on compliance issues. He has previously worked with clients on matters related to Medicare telehealth rules.



TODD LINDEN, MA, FACHE

President
Linden Consulting

Todd Linden is President of Linden Consulting, bringing more than 30 years of experience as a hospital CEO. He has also spent eight years as a governance consultant, advising health care organizations on leadership and board effectiveness. In addition, Todd has over three decades of experience as an adjunct professor at the University of Iowa and Des Moines University, where he has contributed to the education and development of future health care leaders.



AMBER LUBBEN, BSN, RN, MBA-c

Senior Director of Quality
Nebraska Hospital Association

Amber Lubben is a health care executive with more than 25 years of experience in rural health care quality, patient safety, and innovation. As Senior Director of Quality at the NHA, she leads statewide initiatives to improve care transitions and support rural hospitals through technical assistance. Amber has held leadership roles including Chief Nursing Officer at Gothenburg Health and Director of Quality and Patient Safety at Kearney Regional Medical Center, where she implemented data-driven strategies to improve outcomes and patient satisfaction. She also leads telehealth initiatives focused on remote patient monitoring and teleconsultation to expand access to care in rural communities.



HOWARD MANUEL, JD

Senior Advisor
Office of the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Howard L. Manuel, J.D., serves as Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, where he advises on federal health care policy and works closely with the White House to advance the Administration's health care priorities. A respected federal health policy leader, Mr. Manuel collaborates with organizations including the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges to align national priorities with the needs of providers and health systems. He has played a key role in major VA initiatives, including VA External Provider Scheduling and the Rural Health Transformation Program. Mr. Manuel also advises on Community Care, Direct Care, suicide prevention, veteran homelessness, and VA Police modernization.



JODIE MEYER

Research Analyst II
Nebraska Department of Labor

Jodie Meyer is a Research Analyst with the Nebraska Department of Labor's Office of Labor Market Information, where she has worked for the past 20 years. Her responsibilities include producing industry and occupational employment projections, developing career planning resources using labor market data, delivering presentations, and responding to data requests. Before joining the department, she worked as a graduate research assistant, supporting classroom instruction and contributing to a variety of research projects while completing her graduate studies.



DAVE MIERS, PhD, LPC

Senior Director, Behavioral Health Services
Bryan Medical Center

Dave Miers is Senior Director of Behavioral Health Services at Bryan Medical Center, where he has served for 29 years. He earned his PhD from the University of Nebraska and oversees a full continuum of behavioral health services, including a 24/7 Mental Health Emergency Department. Dr. Miers also led the development of a telehealth program supporting 26 emergency departments statewide. A recognized suicidologist and member of the American Association of Suicidology, he has published suicide research and helped launch several prevention initiatives, including the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition and Lincoln's HOPELNK Youth Coalition. He continues to serve in leadership roles supporting behavioral health policy and community mental health initiatives across Nebraska.



JONATHAN NEUFELD, PhD, HSP

Project Director
gpTRAC

Jonathan Neufeld, PhD, is Director and Principal Investigator of the Great Plains Telehealth Resource and Assistance Center, a federally funded program housed within the University of Minnesota Institute for Health Informatics. For more than 15 years, he has consulted on rural health and telehealth initiatives, helping health care organizations implement and enhance virtual care services. Dr. Neufeld has published and presented nationally on telemedicine, behavioral health, clinical decision support, and health care technology. Prior to his current role, he served as Vice President of Information Technology and Integrated Care at Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, where he led telebehavioral health initiatives in primary care settings. He earned his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Ohio University.



JEREMY NORDQUIST, MPA

President & CEO
Nebraska Hospital Association

Jeremy Nordquist became the fifth president of the Nebraska Hospital Association in December 2021. He has served as a state legislator, congressional staffer, and nonprofit leader. Previously, he was Government Affairs Director for Nebraska Medicine, leading efforts to expand telehealth coverage and establish a state crisis standards of care framework. In Washington, he was chief of staff to Reps. Brad Ashford (NE) and Tom O'Halleran (AZ), advancing rural health, veterans' care, and Native American health initiatives. From 2009–2015, Jeremy represented Omaha in the Nebraska Legislature, chairing the Retirement Systems Committee and driving health, education, and economic policy reforms. He has been recognized nationally, serving as NCSL Health Committee chair and appearing in major media including MSNBC, BBC, and Politico. Raised in rural South Dakota, Jeremy earned honors from Creighton University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He lives in Nebraska with his wife Shannon and their two children.

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JEFF NORMAN
Principal
Baker Tilly

Jeff Norman has been a leader in Baker Tilly's Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursement practice since 2003. As part of our services, we provide Medicare DSH, Uncompensated Care, Medicare Bad Debt, Cost Report Preparation, Wage Index, Geographical Reclass, organ acquisition reimbursement, Medical Education service, 340B qualification, compliance and strategy, and more. We currently work with over 650 hospitals nationally, assisting with data reporting, appeals, and litigation related to government reimbursement programs.



STAN ODENTHAL, JD, MA
Senior Director, Workforce Initiatives
Nebraska Hospital Association

Stan Odenthal is the Senior Director of Workforce Initiatives at the Nebraska Hospital Association, where he leads statewide efforts to strengthen and grow Nebraska's health care workforce pipeline. Stan brings extensive experience in workforce development, education partnerships, and talent strategy, and is passionate about helping job seekers discover meaningful careers that make a difference in their communities. Stan has led a variety of government and nonprofit programs in Nebraska and has worked nationally as a consultant focusing on workforce development, strategic planning, and public policy. In his free time, he enjoys playing tennis, watching movies, and reading books.



DANIEL OLDENBURG, JD
Chief Executive Partner, Chair of the Immigration
Law Practice Section
Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP

Daniel Oldenburg has practiced exclusively immigration law for 24 years and was previously employed by the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service. He routinely advises health care employers on immigration and nationality issues to ensure they can employ the best health care providers from around the world.



JEFF ORDWAY
Patient Partner Consultant for Engaged Research
Retired

Jeff Ordway is a nationally recognized patient leader and advocate for patient-centered research. Through his roles as a patient partner, patient Co-Investigator, and project manager within The Patient Centered Outcomes Research Network (PCORnet®), he has helped shape the network's approach to engagement, governance, and real-world evidence generation. His work focuses on ensuring that patient priorities, community values, and lived experiences remain central to research and health care innovation. Jeff has also served as a Co-Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator on projects addressing both rural and urban health issues. A retired high school educator, he brings strong facilitation, collaboration, and communication skills to his work. As a small farm owner, he is committed to ensuring rural perspectives are represented in research, policy, and practice.



CORI PIERCE, CRCR, CSBI
Senior Health Care Advisor
NHA Advisory Services

Cori Pierce is a Senior Health Care Advisor with the Nebraska Hospital Association, specializing in revenue cycle optimization, rural health care analytics, and strategic advisory services for Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Health Clinics. She has more than 12 years of experience in rural health care operations and revenue cycle management, with expertise in payer operations, denial management, reimbursement, and analytics. Cori partners with hospital leadership teams to turn complex data into actionable strategies that support operational improvement, financial stability, and informed decision-making.



AMY POPE
Manager, Clinical Quality & Informatics
Medical Solutions / WorldWide HealthStaff Solutions

An MSN-prepared Registered Nurse and Manager of Clinical Quality & Informatics, this speaker has clinical experience dating back to 2007 and nursing leadership experience since 2016. They specialize in leading enterprise-wide change across informatics, quality, and operations by aligning stakeholders, establishing strong governance and communication practices, and driving measurable results. Their work includes optimizing EHR workflows, standardizing operational processes, and leveraging automation and data analytics to improve performance and adoption. In addition, they have led nursing operations in high-acuity pediatric settings, partnering with senior and executive leaders to maintain safe, reliable patient outcomes during periods of transition and organizational change.



SAROSH RANA, MD, MPH
Professor & Chair of OB/GYN
University of Nebraska Medical Center
Nebraska Medicine

Dr. Sarosh Rana is Professor and Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and leads the EMBRACE program. Her research focuses on predicting adverse outcomes in women with preeclampsia, identifying disparities in obstetric care, and understanding the connection between preeclampsia and long-term cardiovascular risk. She also studies biomarkers and develops strategies to reduce cardiovascular risk, including pioneering the STAMPP-RPM program. Dr. Rana is leading efforts to transform obstetric care across Nebraska through EMBRACE. She has authored or co-authored 143 peer-reviewed publications, with more than 15,000 citations and an H-index of 52. She serves as President of the International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy and was recently nominated to the Nebraska Rural Healthcare Transformation Advisory Committee.

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2026 SPEAKERS



SANAM RODER-DEWAN, MD, PhD
Associate Professor, Community & Family Medicine
Dartmouth Health

Dr. Roder-DeWan is a global health scholar, applied health systems scientist, public health leader, and family physician with nearly 20 years of experience advancing maternal and newborn health equity. She is internationally recognized for her work on Service Delivery Redesign, a health system reform that improves care organization, equity, and outcomes, particularly for rural populations. Her research focuses on health system innovation, implementation, and evaluation, and she serves on global expert committees, including with the World Health Organization, while advising the World Bank on health system reforms. She emphasizes participatory approaches and collaborative learning. Her current work focuses on rural maternal and perinatal health in the United States, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia.



ANDY RUBACK
Chief Executive Officer
Flood Communications

Andy Ruback is the Chief Executive Officer of Flood Communications, where he oversees strategic growth across television, radio, digital, and emerging media platforms. With over two decades of experience in media, sales, and executive leadership, Andy has led the expansion of integrated communication strategies that support organizations across multiple industries. Under his leadership, Flood Communications has grown into one of the largest media companies in Nebraska, with expanded capabilities in digital and health care marketing through Critical Marketing. Andy's expertise includes media strategy, audience engagement, and organizational leadership, with a focus on developing effective communication approaches that connect organizations with the communities they serve.



AMY SCHROEDER
Senior Health Care Advisor
NHA Advisory Services

Amy Schroeder is an experienced health care operations executive with more than 30 years of success improving organizational performance, patient care, and financial stability across health care systems. Known for her collaborative leadership style and problem-solving approach, she has led initiatives that strengthened operations, modernized credentialing processes, and improved revenue cycle management. Amy secured \$200,000 in grant funding for chronic disease management programs and identified more than \$600,000 in savings through contract negotiations and operational adjustments within her first year of leadership. She also successfully guided the implementation of a new electronic health record system and has served in interim executive leadership roles, including CIO. In partnership with hospital boards, Amy has facilitated strategic planning efforts focused on long-term organizational growth and sustainability.



TIM SHELEY
Executive Vice President, Business Development
Jackson Physician Search

Tim has devoted his career to addressing the growing needs of the health care community. His introduction to physician search began nearly 30 years ago, and he has been part of the Jackson Physician Search team since 2003 when it was known as Jackson & Coker Permanent. As Executive Vice President of Business Development, Tim enjoys contributing to the company's continuous growth in a fast-changing health care recruitment marketplace. Leveraging his health care business development expertise at the C-suite level, Tim frequently shares insights through industry articles and speaking forums, with a focus on generating a return on investment in the recruitment and retention of physicians and advanced practice providers. Tim resides in the Atlanta area with his wife and is a proud dad of three talented daughters. He enjoys cycling and spending time near the water during his free time.



BRETT SHIPPEE, LUTC
Chief Operating Officer, United Professional Advisors
Co-Founder, United Professional Benefits

Brett Shippee has more than a decade of experience in rural health care insurance and benefits strategy. As Chief Operating Officer of United Professional Advisors, he helps lead innovative workforce and financial solutions designed to strengthen rural hospitals and provider networks. His work focuses on addressing recruitment, retention, and long-term sustainability challenges through strategic partnerships and integrated benefit programs. Brett has helped develop initiatives that combine advanced benefit design, deferred compensation, and direct-to-provider health plan models to reduce health care costs, support workforce housing, and improve access to care in rural communities. He also works with data-driven health plan optimization and community-based care strategies that have delivered measurable savings and workforce stability for rural hospitals nationwide. Brett frequently collaborates with state rural health associations on scalable health care solutions.



JESSEE VO
Senior Manager
Baker Tilly

Jesse has worked in the health care finance industry since 2011. His primary area of focus is provider reimbursement, in which he assists hospitals and health systems report their Medicare Disproportionate Share Payments (DSH) and uncompensated care reimbursement. His experience includes preparing Medicare DSH and Worksheet S-10 data for initial and amended cost report filings, reviewing and drafting hospital financial assistance policies, and overseeing Medicare DSH and Worksheet S-10 audits and appeals. He also has experience in data forecasting and analysis for the Medicaid and Social Security Income percentage population for providers concerned with 340B. He also has experience in state Medicaid cost reporting, audits, appeals, and staying current on all federal and state government regulatory payment changes and updates.

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TREG VYZOUREK, BS, MDI, RT(R), CT, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
Brodstone Healthcare

Treg Vyzourek has served as CEO of Brodstone Healthcare since 2018, leading the organization to national recognition, including a 5-star CMS rating and multiple Top 20 Critical Access Hospital rankings. With more than 30 years of health care leadership experience in PPS hospitals, critical access hospitals, and clinics, Treg is a dedicated advocate for rural health care. He currently serves as 2026 Chair of the Nebraska Hospital Association Board and has held numerous leadership roles within the association. His accomplishments have earned him the American Hospital Association Grassroots Champion Award and recognition by Becker's Hospital Review as a "Top Critical Access Hospital CEO to Know" for three consecutive years. Treg holds an MBA in Health Care Management from Fort Hays State University.



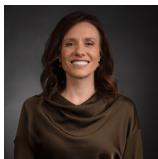
MARGARET WOEPPEL, MSN, RN, CPHQ, FACHE
Chief Nursing & Informatics Officer
Nebraska Hospital Association

With more than 20 years of experience in health care leadership, this speaker has dedicated their career to advancing quality improvement, organizational performance, and sustainability across health systems. They have partnered with hospitals, rural health clinics, and state health programs to implement data-driven strategies that strengthen operations and improve patient outcomes. A former President of the Nebraska Rural Health Association and past member of the National Rural Health Association's Rural Health Congress, they have been a strong advocate for rural health care policy, education, and leadership development. Recognized as a 40 Under 40 Nurse Leader, they are passionate about mentoring future rural health leaders and fostering innovative, scalable solutions that expand access to high-quality care in rural communities.



JOHN WERNER
Chief Executive Officer
Pawnee County Memorial Hospital

John Werner has had the opportunity to work across several areas in health care, including academic medicine, private practice, and health systems. Most recently, his time and attention have been focused on working in critical access hospitals in Nebraska. A major factor affecting rural Nebraska is housing. Partnering with local organizations is key to developing strategies that create a housing plan capable of attracting and retaining a vibrant population.



CHRISTINE WIDMAN, MHA, CBIS
Vice President, Program Operations
Nebraska Hospital Association

Christine Widman is Vice President of Program Operations for the Nebraska Hospital Association, where she leads initiatives focused on workforce development, hospital sustainability, and expanding health care access across Nebraska. She oversees grant programs, Community Benefit reporting, and operational initiatives that support hospitals and their communities. Christine's background includes public health and clinical rehabilitation, leading federally funded programs focused on heart disease and stroke prevention while collaborating with providers to improve chronic disease management. She also spent nearly a decade in neurological rehabilitation, providing inpatient physical therapy for individuals recovering from brain injuries and strokes. Christine is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and is committed to operational excellence and continuous improvement in health care systems.

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2026 SPEAKERS (RURAL HEALTH CLINIC TRACK)



BRADY BEECHAM, MD, MPH, MBA
Principal & Fractional Chief Medical Officer
Remora Health LLC

Dr. Brady Beecham, MD, MPH, MBA, is Principal and Fractional Chief Medical Officer at Remora Health LLC and a recognized leader in rural health care innovation and policy. A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, she earned her medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science & Technology in India. Dr. Beecham previously served as Chief Medical Officer at Gothenburg Health and Medical Director for the Two Rivers Public Health Department, where she led regional COVID-19 response efforts. A Fellow of the National Rural Health Association and former NeRHA board member, she is dedicated to improving health care access, workforce development, and public health outcomes in rural communities.



JEFF GRANDIA
Co-Founder
REDi Health Analytics

Jeff Grandia is Co-Founder and CEO of REDi Health, with over 25 years of health care leadership experience focused on helping small and rural hospitals use data to improve care quality, operational performance, and financial sustainability. He specializes in value-driven, data-informed strategy, health equity initiatives, and supporting organizations in the transition to value-based care. At REDi Health, Jeff works closely with health care systems to leverage analytics, strengthen care processes, and address disparities in underserved communities, driven by a deep commitment to rural health care and equitable access to high-quality care.



KATE HILL, RN
Vice President, Client Success
The Compliance Team

Kate Hill, RN, joined The Compliance Team in 2012 to direct TCT's RHC accreditation program and has fallen in love with Rural. She has a passion for the delivery of the best care possible to every patient. She presently serves on the Board of the NRHA. She speaks at meetings countrywide, which gives her the opportunity to learn firsthand the diverse issues clinics are facing. Kate also works with clinics in TCT's PCMH and Swing Bed programs and is seeing that PCMH accreditation is being increasingly rewarded by payers as we move into value-based care, and that Swing Bed certification increases patients in those beds. Kate lives in suburban Philadelphia near her three granddaughters.



NICOLE THORELL, MSN, RN, FNP-C
Senior Consultant
Wintergreen

Nicole Thorell is a seasoned health care consultant and practicing Family Nurse Practitioner with over a decade of experience advancing rural health. With leadership roles including Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Risk and Quality, she has led initiatives to improve patient care, boost regulatory compliance, and strengthen operational efficiency in Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Health Clinics. Nicole holds a Master's in Nursing Administration and is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, known for driving results in patient safety, provider performance, and workplace culture. Through her dual roles as a provider and consultant, she brings practical, hands-on insight to help rural health care systems thrive.



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