



Optimal Health for All Iowans



# Swatches

## Connecting Rural Iowa

February 2015

### In This Issue:

[President's Message](#)

[2014 Conference  
Recap](#)

[IRHA Membership](#)

[Children's Dental  
Health Month](#)

[Iowa Legislative  
Activities](#)

[Board Member  
Changes](#)

### President's Message

Keith J. Mueller, Ph.D.

This is the time of year when members of legislatures in states and in Congress set their policy agendas for what they hope to accomplish in their current sessions.

The state agenda is discussed in other features of this newsletter; at the national level we are challenged to keep our eyes on the prize, having critically important services available locally. In other words, access to care trumps many other issues for those of us concerned about rural communities. In national policy we must be sure that rural access is not unintentionally sacrificed as other legitimate concerns consume debates and lead to policy changes, such as reducing expenditures and promoting the virtues of competition that demand large scale operations which may threaten the existing of small volume rural providers. Watch for multiple examples of what should concern us, starting with the future of local emergency care, short term acute care, and rehabilitative services. Those services are threatened if we lose our small rural hospitals because of reductions in payment, without having alternative means of sustaining essential services.

Your Iowa Rural Health Association and the National Rural Health Association are committed to working with our elected officials to protect the access we enjoy today and find ways to sustain access to critically needed services even as new models are developed that reduce expenditures while sustaining and improving quality. Join us in encouraging our elected officials to keep their eyes on the prize of access even when under intense pressure to focus only on cost.



**Have you  
renewed your**

## IRHA Membership?

The IRHA membership year runs with the calendar year. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2015, please do so today to avoid missing out on your membership benefits.

Renewal is easy and can now be completed online.

To renew online, [click here](#) to be redirected to the online membership form. If you prefer to renew by mail, [click here](#) to download a copy of the membership form.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRHA Office.

## Thank you for your IRHA Membership!

Benefits of being an IRHA member:

1. Health advocacy with a rural perspective
2. Access to resources through the IRHA and NRHA websites and email distribution lists

## Transforming Safety and Health in the Heartland Conference Recap

The November 19th - 20th *Transforming Safety and Health in the Heartland* conference was a joint effort by the Iowa Rural Health Association and Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH). A diverse group of approximately 110 health care professionals, farmers, rural health advocates, researchers, and agricultural safety and health professionals attended the sessions and celebrations. On the first day, keynote speaker Chuck Fluharty president of the Rural Policy Research delivered "Think Big about Small Places." a dynamic message about the glory and challenge of rural residents and communities. On day two, keynote speakers were US Department of Human Services Regional Director Stephene Moore and CoOpportunity Health Vice President Judy Stark. They each delivered messages about national and State health care policy.

Afternoon conference activities included breakout sessions and community promising practices presentations. Throughout the conference attendees were able network, view poster presentations, enjoy local musicians, eat great food, and interact with vendors and exhibitors.

2014 National Rural Health Day in Iowa was celebrated with an awards luncheon. Individuals and organizations were recognized for their exemplary efforts to quality healthcare, wellness and safety of Iowa's rural residents. Recognition and applause were given to individuals and groups. The Iowa Rural Health Association honored 3 individuals.

**Jerry Karbeling Award Recipient:** The Karbeling award is given in honor of a former IRHA Board member. The individual selected is well respected in the health care industry, is community orientated, makes significant contributions to health and wellness of Iowans and is an enthusiast for public health policy. In 2014, Dr. Tom Evans was selected to be honored with the Karbeling award. Dr. Evans is the President and CEO of the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative (IHC). In this role, he leads IHC in promoting a culture of continuous improvement in healthcare. Prior to his position with IHC, Dr. Evans practiced family medicine and served as the Chief Medical Officer for the Iowa Health System.



3. Networking opportunities with professionals from diverse disciplines

4. Input opportunities for State and Federal Policy issues

5. Discounted rates for Annual Conference

6. Opportunities for leadership development

---

## National Children's Dental Health Month

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. [Click here](#) to learn more about the I-Smile(TM) Dental Home Initiative.



[Click to learn more](#)

---



**Rural Health Champion Awardee:** The Iowa Rural Health Champion recognizes an individual who has demonstrated outstanding contributions to the health, wellness, and safety of rural Iowans. The 2014 awardee is Dr. Greg Cohen. Dr. Cohen is a respected leader in Chariton and well-known among his medical colleagues. He has a large primary care and OB practice at the Lucas County Health Center Medical Clinic. Among his numerous medical, clinical and community contributions, Dr. Cohen has delivered over 670 babies!

### **Friend of Iowa Rural Health Association**

**Awardee:** The Friend of IRHA recognizes an individual or organization who, through their partnership, has contributed to the mission and goals of the Iowa Rural Health Association. The 2014 recipient of this award is Jane Schadle. Jane helped establish the IRHA and was a past president and board member. She also served on the National Rural Health Association Board. Also she has given her time and talents to facilitating IRHA strategic planning sessions.



---

## Iowa Legislative Activities

The Iowa Legislature reconvened in January and will be considering a variety of bills impacting rural health in the months ahead. Among the major health-related bills this session is the Iowa Board of Medicine introduction of the Interstate Physician Licensure Compact. Subcommittees in both houses recently held hearings to consider the bills. The compact, if adopted by a minimum of seven states, would enable a physician meeting certain eligibility criteria to pursue an expedited license to practice in any compact member state. Iowa, like other Midwest states, has a far greater proportion of physicians holding a license in more than one state compared with the national average. Currently licensure for physicians practicing in multiple states can take 4-12 months to complete, which can have negative implications for timely patient access to care and recruitment of physicians, particularly in rural, border and

underserved areas. Under the compact, licensure beyond a physician's home state could take as little as a couple days. A variety of major health systems and associations support compact adoption to streamline licensure.

Other bills of significance include those related to shifting the Iowa Health Information Network (IHIN) from a government-led model to a not-for-profit governance model and the option of merging local health departments into district boards of health. In addition, the Legislature will soon begin reviewing proposed department budgets, including those impacting rural health, in February in hopes of finalizing the state budget later this year.

On the regulatory side, the Iowa Board of Medicine is reviewing state laws impacting telemedicine and considering rules to promote its appropriate use. Telemedicine is rapidly changing the landscape of medicine and offers exciting opportunities for improving care and outcomes, particularly for rural and underserved patients.

---

### **IRHA Thanks Board Members for Service and Welcomes New Members to the Board**

The IRHA Board would like to express sincere gratitude to **Barb Blough** and **Tori Squires** for their many years of service to IRHA. Both Barb and Tori completed their board terms at the end of 2014. During their years on the board, these two faithfully attended board meetings, participated on various committees, and served as advocates for rural Iowans. Thank you Barb and Tori!

At the beginning of 2015, IRHA added a number of new board members. We welcome Brandi Janssen, Katie McBurney, Bernard Sorofman, Samra Uzunovic, and Kate Walton to the IRHA Board. Below is a brief bio for each of these board members.

**Brandi Janssen** is a clinical assistant professor in the department of Occupational and Environmental Health and directs Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) at the University of Iowa. As director of I-CASH, she oversees a statewide network of public and private partners dedicated to reducing injuries and fatalities on Iowa farms. Her scholarly research considers the production and marketing strategies of direct market farmers in Iowa. In addition to her academic work, Brandi served as president of Field to Family, a Johnson County non-profit dedicated to developing new markets for local farmers and as the Iowa City Community School District's Farm to School

Coordinator. Brandi earned her BA from Grinnell College and her MA and PhD in Anthropology from the University of Iowa.

**Katie McBurney** is a registered dental hygienist and coordinator for the I-Smile™ program. Katie graduated in 2005 earning her license in dental hygiene. Katie worked in private practice dentistry for three years in rural Iowa. During this time she learned that her heart rested more in the public sector of dental care and switched career paths by taking the position of I-Smile™ Coordinator with Marion County Public Health Department. In this position Katie quickly developed a passion for public health dentistry and outreach. Katie has worked at MCPH for seven years as the I-Smile Coordinator™. Additionally, she coordinates various other grants and programming for the health department including; the hawk-I program outreach, school-based dental program and pre-school programs. Katie has an active interest in health care policy and improving rural Iowans access to quality medical and dental care. Katie is working towards her Bachelor's degree in Healthcare administration and will graduate June 2015 from St. Leo University.

**Bernard Sorofman**, Ph.D, is a Professor and Executive Associate Dean at The University of Iowa College of Pharmacy. He was educated in Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Pharmacy at the University of Oklahoma. He received his doctoral education in Social & Administrative Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota in 1984. His primary research centers on health behavior theory in the context of treatment-oriented health care practices (actions) by patients. He is a past co-chair of the USA-Thai Consortium for Pharmacy Education in Thailand and has given invited presentations in Thailand, Iceland, Israel, Japan and Korea. Dr. Sorofman is a past-president of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Research and Science (APRS) of the American Pharmaceutical Association, and a former member of the American Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees.

**Samra Uzunovic** is a second year Master of Public Health student at Des Moines University. She is an intern at the Iowa Department of Public Health in the 1st Five program and the current president of the Master of Public Health Student Club at Des Moines University. She is also a member of IPHA and IASOPHE and a volunteer for IASOPHE. Her interests are in family health and access to healthcare services.

**Kate Walton** joined UnityPoint Health as the Director of State Government Relations in January of 2014. Before working for UnityPoint Kate was the Vice President of Government Affairs at

the Iowa Medical Society. From 2008-2010 Kate served as the Policy Director for Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge, where she concentrated on Health and Human Services issues. Her professional experience includes working as the Legislative Liaison for the Iowa Department of Human Services, Vice President of Government and Public Relations at Orchard Place and consulting work on a number of projects including the American Medical Association Voice for the Uninsured campaign. She also worked for the national Democratic party and served on the staff of Senator Tom Harkin in Washington, DC.



This email was sent to kbarkley@assoc-mgmt.com by [mprimus@assoc-mgmt.com](mailto:mprimus@assoc-mgmt.com) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



IRHA | 6919 Vista Drive | West Des Moines | IA | 50266