



# *Swatches*

## Connecting Rural Iowa

November 2012

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by **Tori Squires, IRHA President**

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**Thank you for your  
IRHA Membership!**

Benefits of being an  
IRHA member:

1. Health advocacy  
with a rural  
perspective

Thanks to everyone who attended the Iowa Rural Health Association/Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics joint Fall Meeting in September. This was the first meeting the two organizations held together and it was a great success.

During the meeting we recognized this year's IRHA Jerry Karbeling Award recipient, Dr. Kenneth Anderson. Dr. Anderson is the Lucas County Health Center's Chief of Staff and is responsible for implementing numerous policies which improved patient care and addressed the health care changes related to the Affordable Health Care Act. He also has extensive clinical and emergency room experience and has provided breast and cervical cancer screenings and cardiac screenings to women that are uninsured or underinsured. Dr. Anderson has been a mentor to bring other physicians to rural practice and has been active with numerous community committees and initiatives to bring health, economic development and family wellness to Lucas and Wayne Counties.

A special thanks to our sponsors for the event, including our "Rural Health Partners" sponsors - Iowa eHealth, Prognosis Health Information Systems, Rural Physicians Group, The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, and UnitedHealthcare - our "Rural Health Supports" sponsors - Family Planning Council of Iowa and Mediacom - and our "Rural Health Ambassadors" sponsors - American Lung Association in Iowa, Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, Iowa Primary Care Association, and The University of Iowa Center on Aging.

If you were not able to join us, presentations from each of the sessions can be found on our website at <http://www.iaruralhealth.org/index.nhn>

2. Access to resources through the IRHA and NRHA websites and email distribution lists

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

### **New IRHA Member Benefit!**

IRHA is excited to announce a new benefit for our members - an Online Career Center.

IRHA members looking to fill open positions are now able to post employment

opportunities to the IRHA website at no cost. Also, IRHA members looking for positions are able to post their qualifications and type of employment they are seeking at no cost.

be found on our website at <http://www.iaruralhealth.org/index.php/educational-events-mainmenu-34>

Next on the horizon is the second annual National Rural Health Day on November 15. IRHA, the State Office of Rural Health, and other organizations will be celebrating the entire week of November 12-16 by recognizing rural health champions and rural health success stories, which will be posted on the IRHA website at <http://www.iaruralhealth.org>. We encourage everyone to participate in the Iowa Rural Health Day Twitter Fest on November 15 by using Twitter to spread the word about Rural Iowa. Feature your organization, community or favorite person. Include a #IARuralHealth hash tag.

### **Iowa Mission of Mercy Another Successful, Fulfilling Event**

Five years ago, the Iowa Mission of Mercy (Iowa MOM) kicked off with abundant enthusiasm and optimism that this could be the start of something special. We didn't know the half of it.

At this year's Iowa MOM in Davenport, we provided 1,389 patients with \$923,373.00 in free dental care. That brings our five year total to almost 7,000 patients and more than \$4.4 million in free dental care provided. The most significant difference we saw this year was patient flow. We had the initial rush in the mornings with approximately 400 people in line but by 10 a.m., there was no line outside and a steady flow of patients walking up and immediately getting into the system. Most areas were open for services well into the afternoon - a first for Iowa MOM. However, what this really meant was that for many of our patients, dentists were able to address multiple priorities - more care per person!

Now that Iowa MOM is five years strong, we don't see any signs of stopping because barriers to dental care remain. Iowa MOM removes an important barrier to care - cost. The patient stories consistently show they cannot afford dental care because many don't have insurance and, for those who do, their insurance is little or no help.

A couple of examples:

A man from northeast Iowa has been driving Amish families to Iowa MOM since the 2009 Newton event. Back then he had great teeth but then he was in an accident that led to extensive dental needs. He has put \$9,000 worth of braces on his two children in two years. He could not afford the upper and lower partials he needed to replace the teeth he lost. He left Davenport with a big smile!

A breast cancer survivor drove all the way from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on her dentist's recommendation. Three years ago, she was working full time and had a great dental plan. She visited her dentist on a regular basis.

This service is also available to non-IRHA members for a nominal fee.

To take advantage of this new member benefit, visit [www.iaruralhealth.org](http://www.iaruralhealth.org) and click the "Career Center" link on the main menu.

When she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she had to have aggressive chemo and radiation treatments. Although she is cancer free, she lost her job, and her mouth, in her words, was a mess. She had cavities on nearly every tooth along her gum line. Fourteen fillings later and with a grateful smile, she left with optimism that her life really is starting to turn around.

These are but a couple of the many heartwarming stories we hear each year at the Iowa Mission of Mercy. We are very grateful for the scores of volunteers, financial and in-kind donors that make everything possible for the Iowa Mission of Mercy! Another mission accomplished!



Dr. Mary Mariani, Iowa Dental Foundation President, puts a young patient at ease prior to treatment.



Almost 1,400 patients were treated at the 2012 Iowa MOM.



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