



Georgia Rural Health News & Updates

Seventh Edition - January, 2020



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[Georgia Rural Health News and Updates](#) is the quarterly newsletter from the Georgia State Office of Rural Health for all matters rural. It provides an update on the progress made to improve rural health in Georgia to hospitals, primary care practices, FQHCs, stakeholders, vendors, health care advocates, and legislators.

Our goal is to help create

A Healthy Georgia.

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A Message From Our Executive Director...



Patsy Whaley
SORH Executive Director

In previous newsletters I have introduced new program directors and welcomed new employees to the State Office of Rural Health (SORH). In this and future editions, I will spotlight those who have served the SORH loyally for many years, beginning with Dorothy Bryant our HPSA Analyst.

Dorothy has been a member of the SORH team for 18 years. Her work is essential to rural hospitals, physicians, allied health professionals, Federally Qualified Health Centers and others. It is the foundation on which providers of rural health care are eligible to participate in vital federal and state programs including student loan repayment and enhanced provider reimbursement.

Numerous customers have expressed how much they appreciate the help Dorothy has provided them. They comment on how prompt she is in her responses, the thoroughness of the information she provides, and she always takes her time to address them in a friendly manner. They express their desire to someday meet her and express their appreciation personally.

Not only does Dorothy provide outstanding external customer service, but she also provides excellent internal customer service. She is always willing to lend a hand to her SORH team members. She is helpful, pleasant, responsive and will dedicate the time necessary to resolve a problem, meet a deadline or to serve in any manner for which there is a need. Dorothy is a professional who possesses the loving heart of a servant regardless of whether it is for those with whom she works every day, the customers she serves professionally, or members of her community. SORH is indeed fortunate to have her as a vital team member.

[Patsy](#)



Dorothy Bryant
HPSA Analyst



Rural Hospital Stabilization Program Phase Five Kicks Off with Project Manager Workshop

The Georgia SORH hosted the Project Managers Technical Assistance Workshop on November 15, 2019 for all hospitals included in Phase five of the Rural Hospital Stabilization Grant Program (RHSGP). Hospitals included in Phase five are Candler County Hospital, Jefferson Hospital, Wayne Memorial Hospital, Dodge County Hospital, Jeff Davis Hospital, Wills Memorial Hospital, Stephens County Hospital, and Dorminy Medical Center.

Nita Ham, the SORH Project Manager of the RHSGP presented a variety of topics to the hospital project managers including the origins and history of the grant program which, in turn, offered guidance to the new recipients on how to both wisely manage grant funding and

DCH Mission Statement

The Department of Community Health will provide Georgians with access to affordable, quality health care through effective planning, purchasing and oversight.

We are dedicated to
A Healthy Georgia.

DCH Vision Statement

The Department of Community Health is committed to a lean and responsive state government that promotes the health and prosperity of its citizens through the innovative and effective delivery of quality health care programs.

DCH Purpose Statement

Shaping the future of A Healthy Georgia by improving access and ensuring quality to strengthen the communities we serve.

Have an event you'd
like to share?



Click [here](#)
and we'll include it in our next
newsletter!

Quick Links

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Community Health \(DCH\)](#)

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\(RHI Hub\)](#)

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Area \(HPSA\) Find](#)

effectively choose projects. These topics had been presented during a previous New Grantee Orientation meeting in October, which was a required meeting for all CEOs of the Phase five hospitals.

Sarah Dekutowski of Draffin Tucker, LLP, an accounting firm partnering with the grant program, was also on hand at the November 15th workshop to explain how each site could effectively report core and project specific measures to ensure data was properly transposed between site and grantee. In addition to the aforementioned meetings, representatives of all Phase five hospitals also attended the annual Rural Hospital Stabilization Committee Meeting in Forsyth, GA, on November 7th, 2019. Currently, project managers are working on project descriptions and budgets for the upcoming year. Phase five of the RHSGP is effective September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020.

If you would like more information about SORH projects or have an idea to share, please contact [Nita Ham](#)



A Sight for "SORH" Eyes...

**Evans Memorial Hospital's Windows of Hope:
A Positive Outcome of the Rural Hospital Stabilization
Project**

by Patsy Whaley



*Evans Memorial Hospital Staff are pictured in front of a mural
painted for Windows of Hope patients*

Evans Memorial Hospital was a Phase four Rural Hospital Stabilization Program Grantee. In addition to using funds for Emergency Department (ED) renovation, ED equipment and mammogram upgrades, they focused funding on their geriatric behavioral health unit, Windows of Hope.

I recently had the opportunity to see the Rural Hospital Stabilization funding at work at the hospital which

was most impressive; however, I would like to share recent patient family reviews of Windows of Hope and the care provided to their loved ones which far better communicates the positive impact it has had on those experiencing the Windows of Hope program than I could ever convey:



jennifer sipes

★★★★★ 1 week ago

HOPE! What a great word. When taking care of aging loved ones, hope is what we need. We "hope" that they will be taken care of, we "hope" that they feel loved, we "hope" that their final days will be filled with happy times. Our grandmother was sent to Windows of Hope for some behavioral issues from dementia. She has gotten the BEST care I could have ever "hoped for". Every staff member I have spoken to (I live out of state) has been SO loving and caring. THANK YOU, Windows of HOPE, for giving us HOPE that there really are people out there who CARE about our loved ones. We appreciate YOU!



Karen Mason

★★★★★ Mar 30, 2018

I got to see this facility due to my brother being admitted there. We saw a group of caring professionals that love their

jobs and their patients. He got one on one care that changed him for the better. We saw him laugh and communicate in fun ways with their staff. We had not seen this in a long time. Thank you all so much. You all are the best in Georgia!



C.L. Hill recommends Windows of Hope.

November 26 at 6:54 PM · 🌐



My grandfather suffers from dementia (advanced) and seizures and was placed here. W.O.H. brought him back to above his baseline. I can communicate with grandfather now more than I have been able to in the past six months. This family oriented facility has gone above and beyond to meet my grandfather's needs. Unfortunately they're an acute facility because I'd allow my grandfather to stay with them permanently. The entire staff has shown myself and my family the upmost respect and has made this process run so smoothly. This staff is truly heaven sent!!!

Congratulations to the leadership and entire staff of Evans Memorial Hospital for a job well done.

From Hospital Services...

Clinch Memorial Hospital Wins Spot in National Small Rural Hospital Transition Project

Clinch Memorial Hospital in Homerville was selected as one of nine hospitals nationally to participate in the Small Rural Hospital Transition Project (SRHT) supported by the Health Resources Services Agency (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), the National Rural Health Resource Center and Rural Health Innovations.

Twelve of Georgia's fifty-nine small rural hospitals were eligible and given an opportunity to apply for either a Financial Operational Assessment project or a Transition of Care/Quality Improvement Project for 2019-2020. Hospitals were selected for this opportunity based on leadership, commitment, and organizational preparedness for transitioning to alternative payment and care delivery models of the future. Clinch was the only successful applicant from Georgia.



*Clinch Memorial Hospital
Homerville, GA*

The SRHT Project provides on-site technical assistance and educational opportunities designed to assist small rural hospitals in transitioning to Value-Based Care and Alternative Payment Models (APM) such as patient-centered medical homes and hospital shared saving plans, as well as prepare hospitals for population health management. In-depth onsite consultations will target financial and quality performance improvements that bridge gaps between the current health care system and the newly emerging system of health care delivery and payment.

Angela Ammons, Clinch Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer, said she was very excited about the opportunity for the hospital to participate in SRHT Project and has chosen Financial and Operational Assessment as the focus of their project.

For information about this or any other Hospital Services projects, contact **Dawn Waldrip**, Director.

Robin Rau Recognized as "Community Star"

Robin Rau, CEO of the Hospital Authority of Miller County was



Robin Rau
Miller County Hospital CEO

recently recognized by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) as a "Community Star" in conjunction with National Rural Health Day 2019. She will appear in the 2019 edition of the *Power of Rural*.

"Our entire team is thrilled that Ms. Rau is being recognized nationally for the dedicated work we see her do every day in Miller County", said Jill Brown, CFO of the Hospital Authority of Miller County. "Her leadership, vision, and belief in our staff members are critical to our ability to consistently deliver quality care."

NOSORH, the member organization for the 50 State Offices of Rural Health (SORH), leads National Rural Health Day, an annual day of recognition each November, to shine a light on those who serve the vital health needs of the estimated 57 million people living in rural America.

The Georgia SORH congratulates Ms. Rau on her recognition and applauds her exemplary efforts in providing not only quality healthcare, but for going above and beyond in making a positive impact on her community.

Primary Care Office Provides National Health Service Corp Updates

Clinics approved by the National Health Service Corp (NHSC) improve access to primary care for people in communities with limited access to health care. The loan repayment programs offered through NHSC help practices in primary care shortage areas recruit qualified providers who want to work where their skills are needed most.



How to Become an NHSC Approved Site:

From approximately April through June (dates will be announced by HRSA), the NHSC will begin accepting applications from new sites. The Georgia Primary Care Office urges clinics to consider applying. By becoming a NHSC approved site, you are helping to improve care for patients in Georgia. For more information visit <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/sites/index.html>.

Benefits of Becoming an NHSC Approved Site:

NHSC approved sites have many benefits including:

- Assistance in helping to attract and retain qualified and dedicated primary care providers. Providers working in NHSC-approved sites are eligible for federal loan repayment programs of up to \$50,000 for two years of full-time service. Read more about this program at <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment>
- Opportunities to network with other NHSC-approved sites and community organizations.
- Direct access to the Georgia Primary Care Office that provides assistance with increasing access to primary health care services in your community

Steps to apply:

- Contact Beth Walker or Dorothy Bryant before starting your application to make sure your site qualifies and to determine your HPSA designation. The Georgia PCO will review your application once it is submitted
- Confirm that your clinic meets all eligibility requirements
- Review the NHSC Site Reference Guide-2019

A New guide will be published once the new cycle opens in 2020

- Create an account or sign-in at NHSC to apply for certification
- Compile the required documentation to submit with your application

We are here to help! Contact Beth Walker, PCO Director at 229-276-2750

beth.walker@dch.ga.gov or Dorothy Bryant, HPSA Analyst, at 229-401-3095

dbryant@dch.ga.gov

Georgia Farmworker Health Program Commemorates 30th Year

The Georgia Farmworker Health Program (GFHP) was established in 1990 within the Georgia Department of Human Resources' Office of Primary Care. The program's mission was to improve the lives and health status of Georgia's migrant and seasonal agricultural workers (MSAW) by providing quality primary health care that would be cost effective and culturally appropriate.

In January 2000, the GFHP was transferred to the Georgia Department of Community Health, State Office of Rural Health (DCH/SORH). In 2020, the GFHP will commemorate its 30th year of service to Georgia's MSAW population. Today, the GFHP maintains its mission to serve this extremely valuable population with a sense of pride and determination. Currently, the program encompasses a twenty-one-county service area in rural Georgia made up of nine clinics and four mobile medical units.

The program provides health care services such as primary care, dental, mental health, prenatal and specialty care through a contract voucher system to those who are eligible for the program. If you would like more information about the Georgia Farmworker Health Program please contact Tiffany Hardin, Director at thardin@dch.ga.gov.



*Migrant Farmworkers Tend
Rural Georgia Crops*



January 8-9, 2020

Georgia Hospital Association Annual Patient Safety and Quality Summit

The Ritz Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, Lake Oconee
Greensboro, GA

January 10-12, 2020

Georgia Hospital Association Trustee Conference

The Ritz Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, Lake Oconee
Greensboro, GA

January 13, 2020

Georgia Legislative Session begins

State Capitol, Atlanta

February 6, 2020

CEO/Executive Leadership Day at the Capitol

State Capitol, Atlanta

February 13, 2020

SORH Advisory Board Meeting

SORH Conference Room

502 S. 7th Street, Cordele, GA

You might be rural if...



Your community unites to support breast cancer initiatives!

The staff at Clinch Memorial Hospital in Homerville competed to design the most creative brassiere for Breast Cancer Awareness Month last October. Pictured above are some of the entries. The "Men Too" undershirt served to bring attention to the fact that men get breast cancer too.

The hospital also sold pink flamingos for \$10 each that were placed on the hospital front lawn to bring awareness to the cause and to encourage the community to "Flock" to Clinch Memorial for a mammogram. Proceeds from the sale of the flamingos were used to help patients with the cost of mammograms.