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April 1, 2022

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

Leading the Fight Against Rural Health Disparities

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The SORH Office-

Garnishing Synergy Within the Rural Communities We Serve

In my last newsletter article published on January 1st, I pledged that our focus in 2022 will be on giving attention to the importance of rural healthcare accessibility and creating new innovative ways of providing the best quality care for our rural communities. My vision and goal then and today, is to continue to connect with our partners and communities more than ever before in order to garnish synergy within the rural communities we serve.

"Synergy" is an "interaction or cooperation giving rise to a whole that is greater than the simple sum of its parts", and from the Attic Greek, it means, "working together." My excitement swells, as does my pride, in the work being accomplished within the SORH office and the synergy created thus far.



For example, as you will read in this newsletter, I attended a ribbon cutting ceremony in Fargo, GA recently where Clinch Memorial Hospital has opened a new primary care clinic with Rural Hospital Stabilization funding managed through our office. This clinic provides access to healthcare in a

community that had none.

We are partnering with the Georgia Emergency Medical Services for Children Office of the State Office of EMS and Trauma to begin discussions regarding emergency department readiness for the evaluation and treatment of critically ill and injured children in Georgia's hospitals. This has never been done in Georgia.

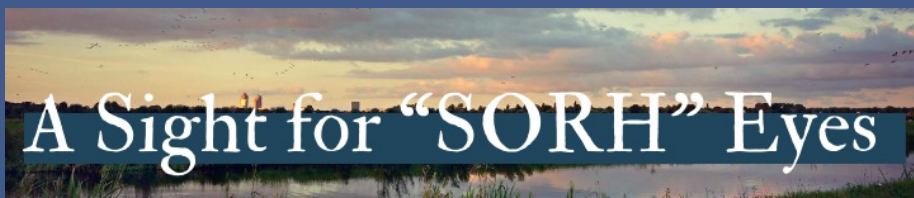
We are assisting qualified providers in National Health Service Corps sites with loan repayment programs up to \$50,000 in order to recruit qualified providers who want to work where their skills are needed most. We are supporting workforce development and retention for our rural areas.

We are encouraging Community Engagement by promoting a local church's mission project that partners with numerous local and regional stakeholders to address the healthcare and social needs of the Hispanic population in the area. I challenge other counties to join this fight as our small rural and critical access hospitals can't continue to address the health disparities in their communities alone.

And last but not least, our staff continues to improve their individual professional skills to prepare themselves for future leadership opportunities.

As one can see, we are pushing forward with the vision and goals we set out to accomplish, and I feel we are only going to continue to gain momentum. Won't you join us?

Stephen Register
SORH Executive Director



Clinch Memorial Hospital Uses RHS Funding to Open New Fargo Primary Care Clinic



Angela Ammons, CEO of Clinch Memorial Hospital, cuts the ceremonial ribbon signifying the opening of the new primary care clinic in Fargo, GA. The Fargo Medical Clinic will begin seeing patients weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 am to 5 pm. Clinch and Fargo Clinic staff along with SORH Executive Director, Stephen Register, were present for the event on March 8th. The clinic was made possible through funding from the [Phase 6 Georgia Rural Hospital Stabilization \(RHS\) Project](#).

Focus on Rural Health



SORH Partners with EMSC to Support Pediatric Readiness Centers in Georgia

In October 2019, the SORH partnered with the Georgia Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Office of the State Office of EMS and Trauma to begin discussions regarding emergency department readiness for the evaluation and treatment of critically ill and injured children in Georgia's hospitals.

The EMSC Office assembled a committee including the SORH and ten additional stakeholders, who participated in strategic planning sessions designed to identify and define readiness elements for Pediatric Readiness Center designation. Natalie E. Lane, MD, Section Chief Pediatric Emergency Medicine and Medical Director for the Children's Hospital of Georgia Emergency Department served as the Chairperson of the Committee.

The Department of Public Health, State Office of EMS and Trauma, authorizes emergency department designations for the State of Georgia. Currently, these designations include Trauma Centers, Cardiac Care Centers, Stroke Centers, and will include Pediatric Readiness Centers in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023.

Through a grant-funded initiative scheduled



Natalie E. Lane, MD

to begin in SFY 2023, the SORH will support rural hospitals interested in obtaining Pediatric Readiness Center designation by coordinating and delivering continuing education courses in rural hospitals to assist with meeting designation requirements.

Dr. Lane recently published a journal article describing the evaluation and preparatory processes involved in Pediatric Readiness Centers designation. For additional information, and to see Dr. Lane's full article, please [click here](#).

From Hospital Services

Community Engagement in Action -

Cordele Church Will Offer Health, Dental and Social Services During Summer Hispanic Outreach Mission



In rural communities, churches and other faith-based organizations can be important stakeholders that are actively engaged in social welfare causes and projects to support the community. Faith-based organizations have long been integral to the safety network of services and resources in most communities, from church-sponsored emergency food pantries to affordable housing.

Working at the community level promotes healthy living, helps prevent chronic diseases and brings the greatest health benefits to the

greatest number of people in need. It also helps to reduce health gaps caused by differences in race and ethnicity, location, social status, income, and other factors that can affect health.

Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, a widely revered public health leader, has made this very point: "Through partnership with faith organizations and the use of health promotion and disease prevention sciences, we can form a mighty alliance to build strong, healthy, and productive communities"

The Cordele First United Methodist Church (FUMC) and its Missions Committee is an excellent example of this mighty alliance. The church and its partners are planning a mission program to serve, evangelize, and support its local Hispanic congregation and underserved residents in the Crisp County area. FUMC is partnering with other local churches, Phoebe Putney Mobile Health Care Clinics, the Georgia Baptist Dental Clinic, the Georgia Department of Public Health, Crisp Regional Hospital, area Rural Health Clinics, Federally Qualified Health Care Centers, and local providers to provide health, dental, and other social services for the community this summer.

[Read the full article here.](#)



From the Primary Care Office

Up to \$50,000 in Loan Repayments Available to Qualified Providers Working in NHSC-Approved Sites

National Health Service Corps (NHSC)-approved clinics 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 March through May (dates will be announced by HRSA), the NHSC will begin accepting applications from new sites. The Georgia Primary Care Office (PCO) encourages clinics to consider applying. By becoming a NHSC approved site, clinics are helping to improve care for patients in Georgia. For more information visit:

<http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/sites/index.html>. To receive notification of site application cycle, please visit [Apply to Become an NHSC Site | NHSC \(hrsa.gov\)](#)



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 assists with increasing access to primary health care services in your community.

[Read the full article here.](#)



Farmworker Program

Georgia Farmworker Health Program Growing Future Leaders



The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) recently developed new educational opportunities for employees interested in taking on future leadership roles. The Aspiring Leadership Experience (ALE) is a program designed to prepare existing talent for future DCH leadership roles. During this 12-month development opportunity, employees who are accepted through an application process learn about themselves, others, and the practice of leadership.

The Georgia Farmworker Health Program's Program Operations Specialist, Tina Register, completed the 12-month ALE program. The experience involved four quarters of key learning events. During each quarter, participants were required to video themselves speaking on assigned topics and receive critiques on areas needing improvement or additions. Each month was a different lesson and interaction was expected. There were talks with DCH Leaders that included sharing their experience as leaders. Participants participated in workshops that helped to explore their strengths, how to have crucial conversations, leadership 101, and how to manage.

[Read the full article here.](#)



You Might be Rural If...



...a 12-county yard sale is an annual weekend adventure!

Pictured above is one of the many official sites of the 17th Annual Peaches to Beaches Yard Sale. Dubbed "Georgia's Longest Yard Sale", the event spans along Georgia Highway 341 and features official vendors selling just about everything including antiques, locally crafted items, food, and the traditional yard sale items.

Official yard sites range from individuals to multi-organizational sites and churches. Pictured above are shoppers scurrying about looking for treasures at an official site between Pulaski and Dodge Counties during the Saturday sale. The event hosts vendors in Glenn, Wayne, Appling, Jeff Davis, Telfair, Dodge, Pulaski, Houston, Peach, Crawford, Monroe, and Lamar Counties and is held on the second Friday and Saturday in March. For many rural residents, Peaches to Beaches is an annual weekend adventure where they make stops along the way in all 12 counties.



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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.

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