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31ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**RURAL
HEALTH**
ASSOCIATION OF TENNESSEE

November 19 - 21, 2025
202 Gist Creek Road, Sevierville, TN



GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

*Transforming lives through collaborative and inclusive education,
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Our office oversees 70 ACGME accredited programs and 27 non-standard programs. Our oldest programs are over 100 years old.



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The downtown and midtown live music scenes, and outdoor music festivals

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2026

RURAL HEALTH

ASSOCIATION OF TENNESSEE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MARCH 3** | RHA Day on the Hill
Nashville, TN
- **MARCH 17** | West Regional Event
Humboldt Medical Center, Humboldt, TN
- **MARCH 26** | East Regional Event
Walter State Community College:
Seiverville Campus, Sevierville, TN
- **APRIL TBD** | Middle Regional Event
Sewanee: The University of the Old South
Sewanee, TN
- **June 23** | RHC Network Annual Summit
Murfreesboro, TN
- **November 18-20** | 32nd Annual RHA Annual Conference
Marriott Downtown, Knoxville, TN



Scan the code to view RHA's detailed calendar including webinars, trainings, networking events, and assistance with access to healthcare services and insurance (re)enrollment.

RHA is leading the way for a healthy tomorrow throughout Rural Tennessee through Partnerships, Advocacy, Education, and Resources



PO Box 656, Decaturville, TN 38329 • 615-907-9707 • www.tnruralhealth.org

Vision

For every rural community to have the resources and support needed to achieve health and prosperity.

Mission

Lead the way for a healthy tomorrow throughout Rural Tennessee
Partnership • Advocacy • Education • Resources

Values

Diversity: Maintain a diverse membership representative of the rural and underrepresented communities we serve and foster an inclusive environment through respect of people and thought.

Health Equity: Promote the overall health of rural Tennesseans through the removal of barriers attributed to social drivers of health and increasing affordability and accessibility of quality, compassionate care in rural areas.

Health Education: Support and deliver evidence-based education and information to professionals and communities to improve overall health.

Collaboration: Partner with engaged communities, partner organizations, and policymakers to identify and address the healthcare needs in rural Tennessee.

Ethics: Adhere to the highest standards of professional integrity in all interactions and encourage others to do the same.

Sustainability: Maintain financially sound practices and good stewardship to achieve the long-term goals of improved social, physical, and emotional well-being of the rural and underserved citizens of Tennessee. Recognize the benefits of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in order to positively impact health comes.

Updated by RHA Membership November 21, 2024

RHA receives partial funding from the Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Rural Health.

It is the policy of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee to provide equal opportunity to all members, board members, employees, contractors, subcontractors and volunteers regardless of any individual's race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or any other protected class status in accordance with applicable federal law. In addition, it is the policy of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee to comply with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination.

In support of this policy, the Rural Health Association of Tennessee expressly prohibits any form of harassment based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or an individual's status in any class protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

National Rural Health Day

Celebrating the **Power of Rural!**®



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025

On November 20, 2025, we are proud to support National Rural Health Day. Join us in recognizing and honoring the incredible efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health, and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America.



**State Office of Rural Health
Division of Health Disparities Elimination**



#PowerOfRural | powerofrural.org



Welcome 2025 Board President

Anna M. Hurt, MPH

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the **31st Annual Conference of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee (RHA)**. This year, as we gather in the foothills of the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains, I am proud to serve as your Board President during such a pivotal time for our organization.

Over the past year, I had the honor of witnessing the incredible work and dedication of our members, partners and staff.

RHA continues to make meaningful strides in improving access, equity and quality of care for rural Tennesseans.

Our conference theme this year, **“Connecting Care, Strengthening Communities,”** reflects the very heart of RHA’s mission. Together, we are building bridges—bridges between providers and patients, between healthcare and community and between today’s challenges and tomorrow’s solutions.

Over the next few days, you’ll have opportunities to engage with thought leaders, gain new tools and insights, and share your own experiences in driving positive change. Whether this is your first conference or your thirty-first, I encourage you to take full advantage of the sessions, networking events and the energy of our statewide rural health community gathering here.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our sponsors, exhibitors and members whose unwavering support makes this event possible, and to **Jacy Warrell, CEO, the dedicated RHA staff and planning committee** for their tireless effort in bringing this conference to life.

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism and determination. The strength of RHA lies in its people—in your passion, advocacy and your unwavering commitment to advancing rural health. Together, we are shaping a healthier future for every Tennessean, no matter where they live.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for your continued dedication to the RHA mission. We hope this conference leaves you inspired, connected and re-energized to continue the vital work we do across our great state.

Best,

Anna M. Hurt, MPH

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Department of Family Medicine
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Memphis, Tennessee

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Coordinated School Health
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Tennessee Hospital Association
Brentwood, Tennessee

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West Tennessee

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Cleveland, Tennessee

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Outreach Specialist
Project Transition
Antioch, Tennessee

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Tennessee Primary Care Association
Nashville, Tennessee

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Rural and Community Programs
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Camden
Bolivar, Tennessee

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Milbank Memorial Fund
Nashville, Tennessee

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Walters State Community College
Sevierville, Tennessee

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Milan, Tennessee

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Safe Families Coordinator
Bethany Christian Services
Johnson City, Tennessee

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NHC Healthcare
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Chief Executive Officer
Jacy@tnruralhealth.org

2025 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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RHA

Emily Weyant Blevins

ETSU Quillen Library

Leslie Brasfield

Manchester City Schools (retired)

Jackie Cavnar

HEOPS, Inc.

Dana Cobb

Tennessee Commission on Children
and Youth (TCCY)

Amanda Cook

Volunteer Behavioral Health

Dawson Dale

RHA

Beth Fox

ETSU Quillen College of Medicine

Melisa Fuhrmeister

Tennessee Department of Education
- CSH

Kate Galyon

Loudon County Schools - CSH

Audrey Gilliam

Project Transition

Anna Hurt

RHA Board President

Brenda Jones

Lee University School of Nursing

Erica Johnson Lockett

RHA Board Member

Christin McWhorter

RHA

Tyler Melton

UTHSC College of Pharmacy

Tiffany Padgett

RHA

Freda Russell

Ascension St. Thomas Three Rivers

Mary Linden Salter

TAADAS

Jennifer Sanchez

Tennessee Department of Health

Rick Wallace

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Thank You

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East Tennessee State University

Center for Rural Health and Research

Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development

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Rural Family Physicians

Tennessee Rural Health Care Center of Excellence

at University of Tennessee Health Science Center

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Stellar RX

TDH: Division of Family Health and Wellness

Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians

Phoenix Bio-Medical Equipment Services, LLC

Equality Health

BlueCare TN

Prevounce Health

Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Clarvida

Amwell

The Compliance Team

Jackson Area Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (JACOA)

Cornerstone Recovery

VirtuCare

Healthcare Business Specialists

Project Transition

Tennessee Association of Nurse Anesthetists

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Men's Health Network

Erlanger Health

Lipscomb University

Charlie Health

Thank You
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Volunteer Behavioral Health

A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of TN

Tennessee Radon Program

Centerstone

Tennessee Medical Foundation

East Tennessee Human Resource Agency – ETAAAD / SHIP

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

American Cancer Society

Milligan University

ETSU College of Nursing

PAST PRESIDENTS

2024 Barry Cooper, MBA
2023 Jackie Cavnar, MBA
2022 Freda Russell, RN
2021 Dana Cobb
2020 Elaine Jackson, MS
2019 Aaron Haynes, MSBA
2018 Mary Vance, MS, CMPM
2017 Kathryn Atwood, M.A.
2016 Randall Kirby, BS/EMPT, PCC, WC
2015 Bill Jolley, MPA
2014 Joellen Edwards, PhD
2013 Angie G. Dotson, RN, BSN
2012 Jill Beason, MSN
2011 Bill Moats, EdS
2010 Betti Wilson

2009 Deborah O. Murph, RN
2008 Larry Stanifer, MPH
2007 Betti Wilson
2006 Betti Wilson
2005 Patricia Totty
2004 Lisa A. Heaton, MSN
2003 Sue Standifer
2002 Sue Standifer
2001 Cindy Siler
2000 Al Grant
1999 Joyce Hopson, PhD
1998 Charles Ball, MD
1997 Phil Campbell
1996 Al Grant
1995 Al Grant

SPECIAL EXEMPLARY PROJECT

- 2024:** Steve Parker, GrowWell and Jonathan Greene, Lincoln Memorial University
2023: Dr. Sherry Jimenez and SAART
2022: Volunteer Behavioral Health Systems Co-Responder Program
2021: Tennessee Health Care Campaign & Buffalo Valley and McNabb Center
2019: The Kenley Award, LMU-DCOM
2018: Maury Regional Medical Center & Lewis Health Center Project
2017: Dolly Parton & the Dollywood's Foundation's "My People Fund"
2014: Tennessee Emergency Medical Services for Children
2013: Mary Jane Dewey, Thoris Campbell, Ciara Gordon for "Ask Me", "Teal for Two" and "ManiCure for the Cure"
2012: Southwest Area Agency on Aging and Disability: Connected Transitions, Trousdale County Health Council - Teen Time: Tools & Ties/Petals & Pearls, and Jefferson County Health Council's SEED Project
2011: Tasty Tuesday
2010: Mornings in Motion
2009: Gibson County Coordinated School Health - Kellie Carroll
2008: C. Martin and Marci Joy - Loudon County Schools Physical Education Program
2007: Elaine Jackson and Denise Settle -KATS Team- Kids Against Tobacco Substances
2003: Through the Eyes of a Student
2002: ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Library
1998: Apples to Apples
1997: Appalachian Preceptorship Project of Department of Family Practice of ETSU
1996: Community Partnerships for Health Professions Education
1995: East TN Community Health Agency Intake and Referral Network Program

RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

- 2024:** James Warren (JW) Randolph
2023: David Dill
2022: Dr. Jana Dreyzehner
2021: Dr. Richard Wallace
2019: Dr. Joe Florence
2018: Ruby Kirby
2017: Dr. Mark-Dalle-Ave
2015: Tonya Garner
2012: Gerald Bowker
2011: Sheila Garvin Bates
2010: Mrs. Elizabeth Dick
2008: Trudy Stein-Hart, MS
2007: Connie Givens, M.Ed.
2003: Linda Buck
2002: Paul Erwin, MD

2001: Mar Steinbuck
1998: Paige Wilson Williams, MS, CHES, “Break the Cycle”
1997: Dennis A. Wolford, Administrator, Macon Co. General Hospital
1996: Steven Shima, Mid-Cumberland Community Services Agency
1995: Brenda S. Maxey, Hancock Co. Health Department

AWARD OF MERIT

2023: Michael Meit and Leslie Brasfield
2022: Jered Croom and Samuel LaFave
2021: The Office of Health Disparities Elimination
2017: Byron Harbolt, MD
2016: Cheryl Wooten
2015: Karen and Steve Wickham, Grundy County
2014: Bonnie Crews, Volunteer, State Health Insurance Assistance Program, Hickman County
2013: Sheldon Livesay and the of One Accord Ministry in Hawkins County
2012: East TN State University’s Rural Interprofessional Rural Community Assessment and Projects Courses
2011: Sara Smith, TN Department of Education
2010: Mary Winslow
2009: Methodist Fayette Hospital
2008: Janita Oakes-Integrated Care Partnership, Centerstone
2007: Amy McLean-Le Bonheur Community Health Services Team
2003: Rebecca Nunley, DDS
2002: Juvenile Judge James L. Cotton, Jr.
1998: Community Development Project of the TN Department of Health
1997: Tennessee National Guard MediGuard Program
1996: Billy Alred, Community Healthcare Alliance
1995: Stan Brock, Remote Area Medical

RURAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR

2024: Dr. Diana Dedmon
2022: Amy Smith, PA
2021: Dr. Dee Blakney
2018: Dr. Jose Velasco
2017: Dr. Robert Lee
2016: Dr. Charles Alderson
2015: Jim Shine, MD
2014: Sullivan Smith, MD
2013: Hanna Ilia, MD
2012: Dr. P. William Dysinger
2010: Mary Beth Davis, NP and Darryl Adams, APN
2009: Norman Henderson MD and Kermit Dugger, NP
2007: Dr. Bernardino Marcelo and Dr. Josefina Marcelo
2003: Linda Housewright, FNP
2002: Loren Crown, MD
1998: Chet Gentry, MD, FAAFP

1997: James E. Hampton MD
1996: Hobart H. Beale, MD & Michael T. Hood, MD
1995: Charles W. Ball, MD

AL GRANT AWARD

2024: Bill Jolley
2023: Dr. David Reagan
2022: Dr. Barbara Levin
2018: Sajeesh Kumar, MD
2016: Dennis Wolford
2015: Autry O.V, “Pete” DeBusk
2011: Peggy Grant
2009: Rhonda Phillippi, RN
2007: Governor Phil Bredesen
2003: Cindy Siler; Bruce Behringer

RURAL HEALTH HERO AWARD

2024: Dr. Walter Fletcher, MD
2023: Tammie Connor and Jan Stewart
2022: Dr. Lawrence Jackson
2017: Heather & Sonny Melton
2012: Cindy Johnson
2011: Jesse King

ELOISE HATMAKER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

2024: Bill Dobbins
2023: Ann Cranford
2022: Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development
2021: Ruby Kirby
2019: Carolyn Sliger
2018: Angie Allen
2015: Mary Vance
2013: Cindy Siler
2009: Cindy Chafin
2008: Rex A. Lynch
2007: Darlene Swart, BSN, MS
2002: Scott Bowman
1998: David Sullins, Jr. O.D.
1997: Doris G. Spain
1996: Hugh S. Bellany

COLLABORATION AWARD

2024: BlueCare, Wellpoint and UnitedHealthcare
2023: Chrystal Taylor, MALS, RN and Dr. Simpfronia Taylor

2022: Premier Primary Care, UTHSC College of Nursing, Alcoa City Schools & TCAT Knoxville
2021: Dr. Claude Pirtle & Trousdale County Health Council
2018: TN Department of Health State Office of Rural Health
2017: Kathy Ann Watson, BSN, RN
2016: TN's CSH initiative, TN Department of Education
2015: South Cumberland Health Network
2014: Obion County Hometown Walk of Hope and Obion County Cancer Agency
2013: PlanET

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

2024: Rep. Brock Martin
2023: Sen. Clay Doggett
2022: Sen. London Lamar and Congressman Mark Green
2019: Sen. Becky Massey
2018: Sen. Bo Watson
2017: Sen. Ken Yager
2016: Rep. Matthew Hill
2015: Rep. Steve McDaniel
2014: Rep. Kelly Keisling and Sen. Doug Overby
2012: Rep. Mike Harrison
2010: Rep. Tony Shipley
2009: Rep. Kevin Brooks
2003: Rep. Gary Odom
1998: Rep. Gary Odom
1997: Sen. Randy McNally and Rep. Douglas Jackson

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

2024: Cynthia Chafin
2023: Anna Hurt and Allie Haynes
2021: Elaine Jackson
2020: Dana Cobb, Bill Jolley (presented at 2021 Conference)
2019: Julie Clyce, Angie Dotson, Cathy Dyer
2017: Angie Britt, Elaine Jackson, Bill Jolley
2016: Bill Jolley; Walter Fletcher
2015: Angie Dotson, Elaine Jackson, Aaron Haynes
2014: Joellen Edwards, Bill Jolley, Angie Dotson, Katherine Atwood, Jill Beason
2013: Bill Moats, J. Mark Wilson, Cindy Siler
2012: Deborah Murph RN; Myrtle Russell
2009: Frank Shelton; Myrtle Russell; Shirley Kee; Bruce Behringer; Deborah Murph, RN; Jill Beason; Sandy Halford
2008: Betti Wilson; Paula Postai RN; Sandy Hayes MPH; Michael Caudle MD; Sandy Halford
2007: Walter Fletcher, MD; Sandy Hayes; Frank Shelton
2000: Lisa Heaton, RN; Rhonda Phillippi RN; Phil Campbell
1999: Doris Spain; Dennis Freeman PhD; Hugh Bellany; Bill Jolley; Cindy Nance (Siler); Charles Turner
1998: Bess Stout; Dennis Freeman PhD; Diane Eggers; William MacMillan Rodney

- 1997:** Susan Veale; Becky Bell MPH; Jane Wilson-Mitchell; Page Temple MS; Wayne Winfree
- 1996:** Becky Bell MPH; Bill Jolley; Sandy Sauceman; David Strauss; Jane Wilson-Mitchell
- 1995:** Hugh Bellamy; Ken Cherry; Eloise Q. Hatmaker; Montgomery Co. WIC Clinic; Doris Spain, Susan Veale

BILL MOATS EMERITUS SERVICE IN HEALTHCARE

- 2024:** Mike Leventhal
- 2023:** Wilma Jean Pippenger
- 2022:** Deborah Chumley and Alicia Metcalf
- 2021:** Dr. Angie Dotson
- 2019:** Bill Dobbins
- 2018:** Mary Vance
- 2017:** Bill Moats

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

- 2024:** Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)
- 2023:** Chrissy Hood

CONNIE GIVENS SCHOOL HEALTH AWARD

- 2023:** Lori Paisley, Tennessee Department of Education

A Note About Breakout Session Learning Tracks

@pc_imsr qcqgmlq_pc mpe_lgxcb glrm rfc `cjm u rp\_aiq rm fcjn escrq c\_qg jw gbclrgdw \_l glrcpcqr \_pc\_ ? lw ncpqml k\_w \_rrclb \_lw qcqgml\* pce\_pbjcq md u fgaf am lqgrsc law epmsn rfcw `cjm le rm,

@cjm u gq _jgqr md helpful conference gathering locations:

- Maternal Health** - Kccrg le Pmm k /
- Clinic and Hospital** - Kccrg le Pmm k 0
- Healthy Aging** - Kccrg le Pmm k 1
- Mental and Behavioral Health** - Kccrg le Pmm k 2
- School Health** - @_jjpmm k ?
- Exhibitors** + @_jjpmm k @
- General Sessions** + @_jjpmm k A\$B

Agenda At-a-Glance

RHA 31st Annual Conference

Pre-Conference

November 19, 2025

Conference

November 19-21, 2025

Connecting Care, Strengthening Communities

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025 – PRE-CONFERENCE

8:00 – 11:00 a.m. | Coordinated School Health

Presenters: Melisa Fuhrmeister and Taylor Rayfield - Tennessee Department of Education

This engaging session is ideal for school district staff, health professionals, community partners and anyone else who wants to better understand the student and family perspective and strengthen coordinated efforts to improve health and academic outcomes.

Objectives:

- Experience the barriers that students and families encounter in addressing health and wellness needs
- Gain insight into how social, personal, and physical health impact learning
- Collaborate with peers to develop strategies for realistic, sustainable solutions that support children and families

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. | Rural Health Clinics: From Planning to Performance: Evaluating Emergency Preparedness Programs and your clinic with a Program Evaluation

Presenter: Kate Hill, RN - The Compliance Team

Learn how to assess, strengthen and sustain your clinic's emergency preparedness program using practical evaluation methods that enhance readiness, compliance and continuous improvement.

Objectives:

- Understand the Core Components of Emergency Preparedness. Identify the key elements of an effective emergency preparedness plan and how they align with Rural Health Clinic (RHC) and CMS requirements
- Apply Program Evaluation Methods to Measure your Clinic. Learn how to use evaluation tools and performance metrics to assess your clinic's emergency preparedness activities and identify areas for improvement
- Develop a Continuous Improvement Framework. Create a sustainable approach for ongoing program evaluation that strengthens your clinic and ensures compliance

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. | Rural Health Clinics: Rural Health Clinic Washington, DC Update

Presenter: Sarah Hohman, MPH, CRHCP – National Association of Rural Health Clinics

The RHC Washington DC Update will cover the latest health policy updates and trends pertaining to the Rural Health Clinic program and day-to-day operations. From regulatory to legislative updates, this is a vitally important session for RHC attendees seeking the latest information and opportunities to be involved in federal advocacy.

Objectives:

- Gain insight into the most up-to-date federal legislative and regulatory updates that impact RHCs, including telehealth and Medicare Advantage
- Review the regulatory and lawmaking processes in Washington, D.C. and better understand RHC's role in impacting them
- Step back to gain perspective on how national politics impact health care, including Medicare and RHC operations

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. | Rural Health Clinics: Q&A/Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. | Lunch – Visit Exhibits

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025

11:30 – 12:30 p.m. | Opening Welcome, Luncheon and Member Meeting

Moderators: Anna Hurt, RHA Board President and Jacy Warrell, CEO of Rural Health Association of Tennessee

Rural Health Association of Tennessee's Annual Member Meeting to provide a status of the association, highlights and achievements over the last year, and conduct annual business.

12:30 – 12:45 p.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits

12:45 – 1:45 p.m. | Afternoon Plenary – Panel Discussion: Innovative Age-friendly Projects in Rural Tennessee presented by Experts in Aging

Moderator: Sidney Enns, CVA, MPA, ACNP, CRS-A/D - Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging

Panelists: Amanda Newell - Harlan Morris Retirement Community, Kathy Motsinger Eller - Johnson County Senior Center, Angie Gwaltney - First TN AAAD Disability, Lana Hillis - McMinnville Warren County Senior Center, Jane Blevins - My People Senior Activity Center

Join a dynamic panel of Tennessee experts in aging as they highlight innovative, age-friendly initiatives transforming rural communities. Discover how local partnerships and creative programs are helping older adults thrive where they live, work and age.

1:45 – 2:00 p.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Maternal Health: Breaking Barriers: Maternal Mental Health and Substance Misuse in the Postpartum Period

Presenter: Rhonda Williams, MD, MPH, MSc - East Tennessee State University

This session will discuss the impact of maternal mental health during the postpartum period for women with substance misuse disorders or histories of substance misuse, using the Levesque Framework's five dimensions of access: approachability, acceptability, availability, affordability and appropriateness.

Attendees will gain insights into barriers to care, evidence-based interventions and strategies to improve access to integrated mental health and substance use services, ultimately enhancing outcomes for mothers and their children.

Objectives:

- Understand the Levesque Framework's five dimensions of access and their application to maternal mental health care for women with substance misuse disorders
- Identify barriers to accessing postpartum mental health services for women with substance misuse histories and explore evidence-based solutions to address these challenges
- Develop actionable strategies to improve access to integrated care models that address both mental health and substance use disorders in postpartum women

Clinic/Hospital: Bridging the Gap - Partnerships to Improve Rural Health Outcomes

Presenter: Sonya Walker-McShan, MSHA - Erlanger Health Systems

Rural areas across the country including TN are most at risk of being underserved or a healthcare desert. Collaboration with community organizations and larger health systems are key to achieving the best health outcomes.

Objectives:

- Identify how geographical, social and economic factors affect health disparities in rural areas
- Identify key benefits to community and health system collaborations
- Analyze the outcomes of these partnerships and other components to improve the outcomes

Healthy Aging: A Mobile Approach to Rural Health

Presenters: Megan Oslund OTD, OTR/L and Stephanie Blaine, M.Ed. - University of Tennessee School of Nursing

The MobileMOC uses an interdisciplinary approach to improve access to care for older adults in rural communities. University faculty and students provide occupational therapy, social work and nutrition services. To address all domains of the 5 Ms of Geriatrics (Mind, Mobility, Medications, Multi-complexity and Matters Most), we collaborate with community partners, including the Speech & Hearing Center, Southeast Area on Aging and Disability, and other local organizations to connect older rural adults with essential health and support services.

Objectives:

- Describe the interdisciplinary framework of the MobileMOC and how it integrates occupational therapy, social work and nutrition to support older adults in rural areas
- Explain how the 5 Ms of Geriatrics are addressed through community collaboration and service delivery
- Identify strategies for building effective partnerships with local organizations to enhance access to care and support services for older adults in underserved rural communities

Mental/Behavioral Health: Exploring the Intersection of Human Trafficking and Mental Illness: A Seminar on Healing and Awareness

Presenters: **Melissa Zensen, BS, LMSW, MPA** - Volunteer Behavioral Health and **Sarah McKinnis** - WillowBend Farms

We will discuss the prevalence of Human Trafficking and the impact of vulnerability factors in rural communities, as well as the mental health concerns that impact individuals and increase susceptibility to becoming victims of trafficking. Lastly, presenters will discuss a proven blueprint of what and how communities can effectively address these issues collaboratively.

Objectives:

- Participants will learn the impact that Sex Trafficking has on rural communities
- Participants will learn the vulnerability factors contributing to its prevalence

School Health: Supporting Cross-District Learning and Innovation in School-Based Mental Health Services

Presenters: **Sara White** - Vanderbilt University and **Taylor Rayfield** - Division of Coordinated School Health, Tennessee Department of Education

This session will present insights on how rural schools are working to improve children's mental health based on a statewide research study through the partnership of Vanderbilt University and Tennessee Department of Education. Presenters will facilitate an interactive discussion on how school districts and health care providers can tap into this information and learn collectively. There will be a new dashboard demonstration, with discussion of its possible uses, as well as opportunities to provide feedback.

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to discuss the common strategies that school districts are using to implement school-based mental health programs in rural Tennessee
- Participants will be able to access, navigate and filter the TN school-based health dashboard to learn about mental and physical health programs in peer districts
- Participants will have an opportunity to provide feedback on how ongoing research on how the TN school-based mental health landscape can best support the work of school and community-based staff

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits**3:15 – 4:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions**

Maternal Health: Optimizing the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Workflow with Asana: A Seamless Approach to Application & Reporting

Presenters: Elizabeth King, MS and Mary Ellen "Emmie" Gorman MPH, MS - Tennessee Department of Health

The Tennessee Department of Health improved MCH Block Grant management by adopting Asana, replacing inefficient Excel-based coordination. Asana streamlined task tracking, improved communication and enhanced collaboration among 218 staff and partners. This led to 98% deadlines being met and a 20% increase in productivity. Despite initial resistance, training and support ensured successful adoption. The project showcases how digital tools can boost public health grant efficiency and offers a replicable model for future use.

Objectives:

- Improve coordination and communication across teams managing the MCH Block Grant
- Ensure timely completion of grant deliverables by streamlining task tracking and accountability
- Establish a replicable digital system to manage future grant cycles more efficiently

Clinic/Hospital: Denial Management and Prevention: Let's Flip the Script

Presenter: Jonathan Hendricks – Blue & Co.

In this session, attendees will learn about the current hot button denial issues and come away with strategies and techniques to combat and reduce denials.

Objectives:

- Identify top issues and trends in denials
- Execute workflow and process improvements to tackle existing denials
- Take steps to reduce future denials

Healthy Aging: Panel - Tennessee Bureau of Investigation - Protecting & Serving Tennessee

Panelists: **Josh DeVine**, TBI Assistant Director; **Shelly Smitherman, ASAC**, Criminal Intelligence Unit; **Andy Corbitt, SAC**, Medicaid Fraud Control Division; **Nick Christian, ASAC**, Cybercrime & Digital Evidence Unit

In this session, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation will discuss several high-impact ways the organization is championing public safety for the state's elderly and vulnerable population. Speakers will discuss Medicaid Fraud, cybercrime, missing people and efforts to educate the public on how to better protect themselves and those for whom they care.

Objectives:

- Participants will learn about new resources to better understand and protect against crimes impacting the state's elderly and vulnerable population
- Participants will learn about the TBI Find app, TBI's cutting-edge resource to aid in missing persons cases and its Silver Alert program
- Participants will learn practical ways to report crimes or concerns involving themselves or those in their care

Mental/Behavioral Health: The Triple Whammy for Rural Communities - Substance Use Disorder, Behavioral Health and Stigma

Presenters: **Robert Merritt MSN, RN and Rebecca Lagan** - Myrtle Recovery Centers, Inc

Living in rural communities can have substantial benefits; however, there are also significant challenges, particularly if you or a loved one is living with a substance use disorder and a co-occurring behavioral health condition. There is a very strong correlation between substance use disorders and behavioral health issues, making it difficult to find a treatment location equipped to address both conditions simultaneously. Often, there is a considerable distance between their home and the nearest treatment facility. Additionally, the stigma surrounding behavioral health and substance use can be greater in rural communities.

These factors, combined with limited access to comprehensive treatment options, greatly reduce the ability of rural patients to receive effective harm reduction services and contribute to higher rates of overdose and substance use in rural Tennessee.

Objectives:

- Discuss cultural, social and economic factors that contribute to stigma in rural areas
- Examine the real-world effects on the rural population experiencing difficulty accessing treatment, including barriers to seeking help, isolation and increased suicide rates
- Share strategies for reducing stigma, including community-based initiatives, policy changes and personal advocacy

School Health: Dodging the Pitchforks and Torches: Teaching Family Life Education in Rural Tennessee

Presenter: Adam Pollock and Whitney Salyer, B.A. - Centerstone

Teaching teen pregnancy prevention in Tennessee schools is hard. There's a lot to navigate, whether that's the ever-changing family life education laws, public perception or fear of what parents MIGHT think or do. Join professionals who specialize in Teen Pregnancy Prevention grants for this session that will dive into the varying challenges of running a comprehensive specialized educational program. This session will include lessons learned, offer tips and advice and help school administrators and staff navigate facilitating this tough topic.

Objectives:

- Educate the audience about the Tennessee Youth Prepared for Success (TYPs) program
- Talk about issues faced with teaching Family Life Education in schools
- Talk about how to deal with those issues, give tips on how school systems might be able to handle issues should they arise and most importantly, how to avoid them in the first place

<i>END OF DAY ONE</i>

7:45 – 8:30 a.m. | Hot Buffet Breakfast – Ballroom C & D

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

Maternal Health: Interrupting Generational Transmission of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Presenters: Sharon Moore, D.Ph. and Hope Nelson – ONE Tennessee

ACEs and cycles of family trauma can profoundly impact an individual's health and well-being in numerous ways throughout the lifespan. We will discuss evidence-based education and empowerment strategies, by which families can effectively prevent ACEs transmission, mitigate the adverse effects of ACEs and toxic stress, while fostering resilience. Collaboration is paramount, involving community partners, healthcare professionals and individuals.

Objectives:

- Recognize Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), their relationship to ACE-Associated Health Conditions and their consequences to health and well-being
- Recognize Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), their relationship to resiliency building and improved health and well-being
- Describe the use of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and ACEs education as a mechanism of empowerment

Clinic/Hospital: RHC Compliance Made Practical: Turning Requirements into Daily Habits

Presenter: Kate Hill, RN - The Compliance Team

This session breaks down the essentials of Rural Health Clinic (RHC) compliance into simple, actionable steps that fit naturally into clinic team's daily workflow. Attendees will learn how to identify common pitfalls, apply practical strategies to maintain readiness year-round and create sustainable processes that make compliance a seamless part of everyday operations.

Objectives:

- Identify the most common compliance deficiencies affecting Rural Health Clinics in 2025
- Apply practical strategies to integrate compliance into daily clinic operations
- Develop processes that reduce survey stress by making compliance a continuous, routine practice

Healthy Aging: Office of Healthy Aging: An Overview

Presenter: Chlesa Ridley MPH, RN - Office of Healthy Aging, Tennessee Department of Health

This session introduces the Tennessee Department of Health's Office of Healthy Aging and its statewide initiatives that promote health, independence and quality of life for older adults. Participants will gain insight into current programs, priorities and partnerships shaping Tennessee's approach to healthy aging across communities.

Objectives:

- Describe the mission, goals and key initiatives of the Office of Healthy Aging
- Explore implementation of Age-Friendly Public Health Systems in Tennessee
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with the Office of Healthy Aging to advance community-based healthy aging initiatives

Mental/Behavioral Health: Preliminary Outcomes of a Targeted Initiative to Enhance Mental Health Support for Children and Adolescents in Tennessee

Presenters: Kristina McClanahan and Angela Okonji, MD, MPH, CPH - Tennessee Department of Health

The Tennessee Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Education and Support program (TCAPES) is designed to strengthen the integration of mental health care within pediatric primary care settings. By supporting pediatric providers, TCAPES helps address the growing behavioral health needs of children and adolescents, while also responding to the critical shortage of mental health professionals across Tennessee. This initiative is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Objectives:

- Understanding Mental Health Needs: Session will identify youth mental health challenges, including major depressive episodes and limited access to services, and analyze their impact on youth and communities
- Knowledge of TCAPES Program: Session will explain TCAPES structure, goals and behavioral health integration in pediatric care
- Implementation of Teleconsultation Practices: Session will discuss the use of the TCAPES teleconsultation line for mental health guidance and describe effective referral practices

School Health: Coordinated School Health - Partnering to Improve Community Health

Presenter: Kathryn Atwood, B.S., M.A. - Trousdale County Schools

This session will work with CSH coordinators & others who are interested in improving the health of their community by identifying an issue and working with community partners for lasting change. Participants will review the steps needed and discuss applications for various situations where change is needed. Resources will also be identified.

Objectives:

- Assist other Tennessee school districts, community groups, towns, counties, etc. in solving a community health issue in their area
- Provide a framework for an organized group, such as a School Wellness Team, School Health Advisory Council, or County Health Council to solve health issues in their community
- Encourage and support other groups to work as positive change agents in their communities to improve the health status of their clientele such as students, staff, families, residents, etc.

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits

9:45 – 10:45 a.m. | Morning Plenary: The Latest Health Policy News from Washington, D.C.

Presenter: Sarah Hohman, MPH, CRHCP – National Association of Rural Health Clinics

Health policy has undergone drastic changes so far in President Trump's second term and the 119th Congress, from Medicaid and Affordable Care Act reforms to increase attention on the Medicare Advantage program. This session will provide the latest news and insights and share how providers and other interested stakeholders can remain involved and updated.

Objectives:

- Gain insight into the latest federal legislative and regulatory updates impacting rural providers and communities
- Understand how current state and federal politics impact health care
- Acquire important perspectives on the critical role you play in shaping current and future health policy developments

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits

11:00 – 12:00 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Maternal Health: Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee - Tennessee Safe Haven Law

Presenters: Julie Garner-Scruggs and Dr. Nancy Kemp (Board Member) - A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee

This session will include information regarding Tennessee's Safe Haven Law and how A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee (501-C3) is working to educate and equip Tennesseans with resources and information about the law to end newborn abandonment.

Objectives:

- How the Tennessee Safe Haven Law came into existence
- What the Safe Haven Law is and how it applies to rural communities
- The responsibility of A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee and the work to end newborn abandonment in Tennessee

Clinic/Hospital: Introduction to the Tennessee Rural Health Center of Excellence

Presenters: Wendy Likes, PhD, DNSc, APRN-Bc, FAAN, FAANP - University of Tennessee Health Science Center

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the team for the newly formed Tennessee Rural Health Center of Excellence (CoE) and inform of the structure and governance of the CoE. Goals and services planned for the CoE will be shared. Opportunities for questions and thoughts on the new center will be provided.

Objectives:

- Describe the purpose of the newly formed Tennessee Rural Health CoE
- Explain the governance and structure of the Tennessee Rural Health CoE
- Understand opportunities for engagement with the Tennessee Rural Health CoE

Healthy Aging: Fueling Healthy Aging: Strengthening Nutrition Support for Older Adults in Rural Areas

Presenter: Keita Cole CRS-A/D, CVA, DCCC - Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain critical challenges in rural Tennessee, especially for older adults. Limited access to healthy foods and barriers to care impact overall community health outcomes. This session will explore the issues, needs and opportunities to support older Tennesseans, while highlighting community resources that can connect individuals with nutrition programs and reduce food insecurity.

Objectives:

- Recognize the factors that contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition among older adults in rural Tennessee
- Discuss the health and social impacts of limited access to nutritious foods on aging populations
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between healthcare providers, community organizations and aging services to strengthen food security efforts

Mental/Behavioral Health: Not Just Small Adults: Opportunities in the Unique Landscape of Pediatric Behavioral Health in Rural Communities

Presenters: **Michelle Bowden, MD** and **Timothy Fuller, MD** - University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Children are not simply small adults, especially when it comes to mental health. Pediatric behavioral health requires distinct approaches, developmental awareness and early intervention strategies that differ significantly from adult models of care. This session will explore the unique features of pediatric behavioral health, common rural barriers to care and explore age-appropriate solutions to support children, adolescents and their families. Highlighting how rural providers can lead the way in building effective, community-driven models of care will be part of this session.

Objectives:

- Distinguish key differences between pediatric and adult behavioral health, including developmental considerations, symptom presentation and treatment approaches
- Recognize the specific challenges rural communities face in providing pediatric behavioral health services, and how these challenges impact long-term outcomes
- Explore age-appropriate, scalable strategies for early identification and intervention, including organizational collaboration, school partnerships, integrated care and telehealth models tailored for youth

School Health: Telehealth, A Successful Partnership in Rural East Tennessee

Presenters: Rosemary Jeffers, BSN; Dr. Terri Keeton; Brent Shoemaker Ed. S; Heather Crouch, BSN - Scott County Schools

Scott County School and East Tennessee Children's Hospital (ETCH) entered a partnership in 2023 to provide Telehealth visits to students. This session will share the development and collaboration process between Scott County Schools and ETCH, outlining how this has grown into a successful partnership. Presenters will share the barriers and trials that were encountered and tested along the journey. This session will detail how parent and staff support were achieved. The presenters will also give a demonstration of the technology used for telehealth services.

Objectives:

- Explain the benefits of Telehealth in a rural school setting
- Outline the process of obtaining this program for students
- Provide a demonstration of how the process and equipment works

12:00 – 12:45 p.m. | Awards Luncheon

12:45 – 1:15 p.m. | Presentation of Poster Contest and Awards

Presenters: Conference Committee and Dr. Rick Wallace – East Tennessee State University

1:15 – 1:30 p.m. | Break - Visit Exhibits

1:30 – 2:15 p.m. | Afternoon Plenary: Updates from the Tennessee Department of Health

Presenter: Dr. John Dunn - Tennessee Department of Health

2:15 – 2:30 p.m. | Break – Visit Exhibits

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Maternal Health: Data to Action: Advancing Maternal Health in Tennessee's Rural Communities

Presenters: Jennifer Owens BSN, RN, CPH, CLC - The Division of Family Health and Wellness, Tennessee Department of Health

This session will explore Tennessee's comprehensive approach to improving maternal health outcomes, with a focus on rural and underserved communities.

Drawing from the latest data on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity, the presentation will highlight key trends, contributing factors and regional disparities. Attendees will learn about evidence-based strategies, community partnerships and policy initiatives—such as the Maternal Mortality Review Program, doula integration, the Maternal Health Task Force and perinatal telehealth expansion—that are driving change across the state. The session will also provide actionable insights for stakeholders working to reduce preventable maternal deaths and improve care access in rural areas.

Objectives:

- Interpret recent trends in maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity in Tennessee, including disparities by race, region and cause of death
- Identify key contributing factors to maternal deaths, including mental health conditions, substance use and intimate partner violence
- Understand the role of each maternal health program within the Tennessee Department of Health in advancing maternal health outcomes
- Describe statewide strategies for maternal mortality prevention, including quality improvement initiatives, community-based grants and legislative actions.
- Recognize the role of rural health access in maternal outcomes and evaluate interventions such as telehealth, doula services and workforce development

Clinic/Hospital: AI | The New Landscape

Presenters: Kayur Patel MD, MRO, FACP, FACPE, FACHE, FACEP - My Private MD

This session addresses the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in shaping the future of healthcare. It underscores the necessity for healthcare leaders to embrace AI-driven strategies to stay competitive, improve patient outcomes and meet evolving consumer expectations. By exploring actionable insights on market growth, talent retention and revenue optimization, this session will emphasize innovation and ethical integration of technology, echoing on the touch points of leadership and forward-thinking solutions in an era of rapid change.

Objectives:

- Understand AI's Strategic Role
- Optimize Local Market Presence
- Balance Innovation and Ethics

Healthy Aging: Empowering Communities for Longevity: Strategies for Healthier Living

Presenters: Emma Davis PhD, MPH, CPH - Tennessee Department of Health

This presentation will delve into the key strategies for fostering longevity through community empowerment, highlighting lessons from Blue Zones, successes of the Blue Zones Project and alternative approaches generated by collaborative efforts within Tennessee Department of Health offices and divisions. Together, these insights aim to inspire innovative collaborations and practical solutions for healthier, thriving communities.

Objectives:

- Explain how Blue Zones Project principles, alongside community-driven initiatives and tailored approaches, can promote longevity and enhance public health
- Describe successful strategies, lessons learned and alternative approaches that align with Blue Zones principles
- Describe the Playbook created by the Tennessee Department of Health aimed to assist attendees with creating healthy communities through varied strategies

Mental/Behavioral Health: We Didn't Raise Them This Way! Empowering Clinicians to Help Families Navigate the Challenges of Addiction.

Presenters: Joel Jakubowski, LADAC II, ICADC - Core Civic and Bold Steps Behavioral

This dynamic training will equip clinicians and all attendees with fresh insights, practical communication tools and user-friendly concepts to deepen engagement with the families and loved ones of those struggling with addiction. More than just a clinical overview, this program takes participants "backstage" into the mind, heart and daily reality of both the addicted individual and those closest to them. Through a powerful blend of clinical expertise and 20 years of lived experience, this session's presenter delivers a compelling, unfiltered perspective on addiction's devastating impacts and the path to healing. Attendees will move beyond surface-level understanding, gaining the ability to recognize and articulate the unspoken thoughts and struggles of both the addicted and their families.

With a high-energy, no-nonsense approach infused with humor, hard truths and hope, this presentation challenges conventional thinking while delivering actionable strategies. Topics include the "career cycle" of addiction, common myths, effective vs. ineffective intervention techniques, how families themselves become "addicted," and the journey to wellness.

Objectives:

- Attendees will gain deeper insights into the psychological, emotional and behavioral impact of addiction on both the individual and their loved ones, enabling a more empathetic and effective approach to family support
- Attendees will learn user-friendly, impactful communication tools and techniques to help families navigate the complexities of addiction, fostering stronger engagement and more productive conversations
- Attendees will acquire strategies to guide families in recognizing their own patterns, breaking cycles of enabling or codependency and fostering a path to recovery and wellness for both the addicted individual and their loved ones

School Health: Community Connection: A Comprehensive Look at Vaping Prevention with Restorative Practices

Presenters: Laura Taliaferro MM, MA, CPLC | ASAP of Anderson

This session will explore the development and implementation of a community-based vaping referral course designed to increase adult and student awareness of the harms associated with vaping and provide students with alternative coping skills. This monthly Saturday program requires parent attendance and allows students to have court charges dropped upon completion and receipt of a course certificate. By increasing parent perception of the harms associated with vaping and decreasing student citations, this initiative has shown positive outcomes for both students and families. Participants will learn how to build key partnerships, create a curriculum that engages both parents and students and measure the program's impact. Attendees will walk away with an understanding of how to tailor this program in their local coalitions, fostering collaboration among schools, courts and health departments to combat youth vaping.

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify evidence-based prevention strategies for addressing vaping in their communities
- Participants will be able to differentiate between restorative and punitive approaches/practices to underage vaping
- Participants will be able to recognize which community partners will be best for applying a similar approach in their community

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. | Afternoon Plenary – Panel Discussion: Leading Through Change: Rural Health Leadership in the Era of One Big Beautiful Bill Act

Moderator: Bill Auxier, PhD - Program Director, National Rural Health Association (NRHA), Rural Hospital Certification Programs

Panelists: Jacy Warrell, CEO – Rural Health Association of Tennessee; Andrew Burnett, Vice President – Tennessee Hospital Association; Charles A. James, President, CEO - North American HMS

4:30 p.m. | Silent Auction Ends – Must Be Present to Win

<i>END OF DAY TWO</i>

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025

7:45 – 8:30 a.m. | Hot Buffet Breakfast – Ballroom C & D

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. | Morning Plenary: Insights from Tennessee's Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program

Presenter: Diane Dubinski MEM, BSN, RN, NHDP-BC - Tennessee Department of Health

This session provides an inside look at how the Tennessee Department of Health's Emergency Preparedness and Healthcare Preparedness Programs work together to build statewide readiness and resilience. Participants will learn how Healthcare Coalitions (HCCs) play a vital role in coordinating preparedness, response, and recovery—especially in rural and frontier communities—and hear real-world stories that showcase coalition impact, collaboration, and sustainability in action.

Objectives:

- Summarize the structure and purpose of the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) Emergency Preparedness Program and the Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP)
- Explain the critical role of Healthcare Coalitions (HCCs) in strengthening preparedness, response, and recovery across Tennessee—including rural and frontier communities
- Highlight real-world “stories from the field” demonstrating coalition impact and planning for sustainability

9:30 – 9:45 a.m. | Break- Visit Exhibits

9:45 – 10:45 a.m. | Morning Plenary: Transforming Rural Health Through Culture and Leadership

Presenter: Bill Auxier PhD, Program Director, NRHA, Rural Hospital Certification Programs

This session will explore how strong leadership and organizational culture combine to drive transformation in rural health settings. Bill Auxier will draw on his extensive experience in rural health leadership development to help attendees understand how to build a culture of innovation, resilience and community-focus in rural health clinics and hospitals.

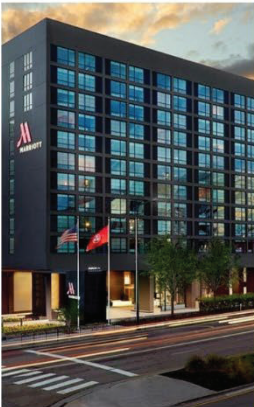
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About Centerstone

Centerstone is a nonprofit health system specializing in mental health and substance use disorder treatment for people of all ages. Services are available in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee through the operation of outpatient clinics, residential programs, school-based services, substance use and inpatient hospital. Centerstone also offers specialized programs available nationwide for the military community, as well as services for children, including therapeutic foster care. Centerstone's Institute provides guidance through research and technology, leveraging the best evidence-based practices for use across the communities. Centerstone's Foundation secures philanthropic resources to support the work and mission of delivering care that changes people's lives.



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