National Rural Health Day

A Celebration in Iowa!

Compendium of the November 17th Planning, Celebrations, and Events
National Rural Health Day - November 17 brought forward the uniqueness of our rural culture, the value of our health care providers and organizations, and the joy of a healthy community and family. Also, it raised awareness to the need for increased access to quality health care in rural Iowa. **In Iowa the NRHDay celebrations went over with enthusiasm.  We all did it--- together!!** A committee of members from 26 counties helped with planning and support. Some of the activities in Iowa were:

- Proclamation signing by officials
- Recognition celebrations
- Community health fairs
- Youth health activities
- Editorial in newspapers
- Newsletter articles
- Social Marketing/internet
- Staff recognition & awards
- Hospital celebrations
- Media releases
- Flyers and posters distributed
- Stickers & green beads worn
- Clinic office displays
- Good food shared
- Iowa Rural Story shared nationally
- Rural Health presentations

- The Iowa NRHDay website and toolkit had over 900 hits and downloads.
- The National Rural Health Day press release distributed on November 10 was picked up by more than 210 media outlets;
- According to PR Newswire’s e-monitoring service, “National Rural Health Day” was mentioned in at least another 290 additional media clips;
- According to SocialMention.com, “National Rural Health Day” received mentions in at least 195 blogs, micro blogs, online videos/photos, etc.

To enjoy more of the National Rural Health Day events and stories visit the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health Day web site [http://celebratepowerofrural.org/](http://celebratepowerofrural.org/)

**Iowa Department of Public Health – Rural Health Programs Staff – “Celebrating the Power of Rural!”**

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Iowa **National Rural Health Day** advisory committee: This group of individuals took time from their busy schedules to give recommendations, participate in a conference call, respond to emails and surveys and lead the way for NRHDay activities. (Map with location of committee members.)

Providing Resources, Ideas, Materials, and Energy!

Iowa’s population is 40% rural. 86% of the land is for agricultural production and there are hundreds of small towns. The people, organizations and families in rural areas survive and thrive by helping one another. The advisory committee supported the goal to help with NRHDay communications by providing a “tool kit”. With support from the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH), an online cache of items, templates, and materials was developed. The Iowa Rural Health Association (IRHA) collaborated by posting the tool kit on their URL website. The message on the IRHA site was:

November 17th is National Rural Health Day. The link below will direct you to tool kit items to help spread the word to celebrate the day.

Included in the toolkit are:

- Beautiful Iowa slide show
- Local NRHD Proclamation template
- NRHD Media Release
- NRHD letter size flyer
- NRHD 8.5 x 11 poster
- NRHD sticker template

For more information about National Rural Health Day visit the NOSORH link http://celebratepowerofrural.org/

The tool kit link was also distributed via email to key stakeholders and constituents, and listed on Twitter. Web hit counts showed there were over 900 hits to the NRHDay tool kit link.
National Rural Health Day Messages

 “Rural health providers are helping us become the healthiest state in the nation”. Governor Branstad

 Our facility took the opportunity to educate our community on the many things rural healthcare provide, as well as some of the struggles we face as a healthcare community. Deborah Herzberg, CEO, Davis County Hospital

 We realize how important it is to have healthy customers. We are a home-town store and want to support others who promote health. Fred Greiner, COO, Fareway Stores, Inc. [Fareway Stores Inc. distributed NRHDay flyers at their IA stores!]

 “Iowa’s rural communities are wonderful places to live and work – they are places where people know each other, listen to and respect each other, and work together to benefit the community,” said IDPH Director, Dr. Mariannette Miller-Meeks. “However, rural communities face a lack of healthcare providers, an aging population with a greater number of chronic conditions, and larger percentages of uninsured or underinsured residents. It’s important that private and public partnerships continue to tackle these issues while meeting the unique needs of these areas.”

 The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Rural Health (ORH) will join the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) and other state/national rural stakeholders in celebrating the first-ever National Rural Health Day on Thursday, November 17, 2011.

 The Iowa Public Health Association is proud to celebrate National Rural Health Day!

 Iowa Psychological Association, Training Development Director, Michele Greiner, encourages you to join the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Office of Rural Health and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health in celebrating National Rural Health Day on November 17, 2011. National Rural Health Day is an opportunity to honor small towns, farming communities and rural areas, and also to highlight the unique healthcare challenges the individuals who live in these areas face.

 We celebrated with a hospital luncheon and invited officials to sign a proclamation and recognized staff and the work they do. Frances J. Zichal, Central Community Hospital, Elkader IA.
Iowa Rural Success Story

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health invited states to submit Rural Success Stories to the NOSORH website.

Ringgold County, Iowa (pop 5,131) is a rural county in South Central Iowa. More precisely it is in the southern tier of counties in Iowa on the Missouri border and is the 4th county east of the Missouri River. The county seat is Mount Ayr, with a population of 1691 residents. Agriculture is the major economic engine driving the county.

A well-organized group representing almost every organization and official in the county mounted a huge effort to capture the Iowa Department of Public Health, CDC- Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant project. Ringgold County has shown Iowa and the CDC that a small rural county has the infrastructure, support, and heart to implement a large health and wellness project including the necessary policy changes!

Healthy Role Modeling Prevents Ringgold Youth from Starting to Chew or Smoke

While most Iowans are familiar with the risks associated with indoor secondhand smoke, raising awareness for the need to eliminate tobacco products outdoors can be a challenge. The Ringgold County Communities Putting Prevention to Work project started with developing a two-year community action plan to change social acceptance of tobacco products and foster sustainable system, environmental, or policy change. One of the seven objectives included showing that tobacco use near children and others engaging in recreational activities at parks is detrimental to their health. Ringgold’s tobacco—free parks initiative started with surveying community residents to find out if they believed tobacco products posed harm to youth and whether they would be supportive of tobacco-free policies.

The community advocacy model was repeated when preparing presentations for other towns, which included finding residents and kids the council members, who knew personally to share how tobacco had negatively impacted their lives. Council members were swayed by a message that focused on modeling the types of behaviors we want kids to follow, and helping kids choose a life that doesn’t include nicotine addiction. “This park policy is a good thing. Kids will follow what adults do.”
WHEREAS, rural communities in Iowa and throughout the United States are wonderful places to live and work – they are places where people know each other, listen to/respect each other and work together to benefit the community; and

WHEREAS, ambulatory and emergency medical services are important, where 43 percent of the state’s population lives but significantly high numbers of trauma injury occur; and

WHEREAS, rural hospitals and clinics are also typically the economic foundation of their communities, with every dollar spent generating about $2.20 for the local economy; and

WHEREAS, where compassionate rural healthcare providers assure access to those Iowans who travel 30 minutes or more to access care; and

WHEREAS, through excellence in medical care, agricultural safety practices and public health, rural Iowans will be healthier and continue to be valuable citizens; and

WHEREAS, we are enriched that each day in Iowa there are hundreds of rural hospitals, rural health clinics, community-based organizations, oral health services, and EMS units delivering quality patient-centered care.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, the Hon. Terry E. Branstad, Governor of Iowa, do hereby proclaim November 17, 2011 to be National Rural Health Day in Iowa, and encourage citizens to recognize our rural communities as wonderful places to live and work; and receive health care.

FURTHER, I encourage citizens to recognize the unique healthcare needs and opportunities that exist in Iowa’s rural communities and to acknowledge the organizations, health providers, and local and state agencies that work each day for your good health.
National Rural Health Day Photo Wall

Photos were contributed by: Iowa Public Health Assoc., Central Community Hospital Elkader, NOSORH, Ringgold County Public Health, the Governor’s Office, Davis County Hospital; Peg O’Conner-Mercy Medical Center, and Iowa Dept of Public Health – Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems.

Guests at luncheon wearing green beads! • Rural girl enjoys the day • Hospital staff at luncheon reception • Governor’s Proclamation signing
Rural Health advocates · Hospital staff celebrates · Rural children participating in a coloring contest · Community health fair
November 17th National Rural Health Day was the first ever in the nation and in Iowa.

“It was about rural health and it was about time!” NRHDay seemed to be a meaningful way for communities, health organizations, providers, and supporters to bring attention to rural healthcare issues, and to celebrate the importance of health. Success stories were shared, individuals and health providers were recognized for their excellence, and communities and organizations came together.

Because of the short timeline to prepare nationally, some were amazed at the level of participation. They should not have been-- because rural communities have a long history of coming together to support worthy causes and, enjoy a reason to celebrate!

The Iowa Department of Public Health-Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems-Rural Health Programs staff are grateful for the rally from elected officials, communities, health organizations, hospitals, clinics, corporate business support, and several associations. We recognize-- access to quality and affordable health care, medical services, and public health in rural Iowa is a high calling and Iowans are very fortunate to have individuals and health care organizations with exemplary practices, knowledge and expertise.