

# The High Performance Rural Health Care System of the Future

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*for the*

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# Goals of Session

- Gain a shared understanding of a vision of a high performance rural health system and its foundations
- Identify approaches to achieve the vision, with a special focus on quality
- Prepare to take action

# Who is Stratis Health?

- Independent, nonprofit, community-based Minnesota organization founded in 1971
  - Mission: Lead collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serve as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities
- Working at the intersection of research, policy, and practice
  - Develop and lead quality and safety projects and campaigns across care continuum
  - Service on the national RUPRI Health Panel (Rural Policy Research Institute)



# RUPRI Health Panel

- Established in 1993 to provide science-based, objective policy analysis to federal policy makers
  - 6 members from academia, research, practice
- Policy briefs, white papers, presentations, comments on proposed rules available at:
  - <http://www.rupri.org/panelandnetworkviewer.php?id=9>

# Characteristics of Rural Health Care Today

- Disproportionately elderly and un/under-insured
- Reliance on primary care, mid-levels
- Patient-centeredness occurs more naturally
- Small patient volumes make measurement challenging
- Unique opportunity and need for community-oriented approaches

# RUPRI “Futures” Paper

- An aspirational vision
- Builds on IOM rural health report, the Commonwealth Commission report
- Intended to be a guide or roadmap during rapidly a changing policy and program environment
- Released in September 2011
  - <http://www.rupri.org/panelandnetworkviewerr.php?id=9>

# What is the high performance health care system of the future?

The RUPRI Health Panel envisions rural health care that is affordable and accessible for rural residents through a sustainable health system that delivers high quality, high value services. A high performance rural health care system informed by the needs of each unique rural community will lead to greater community health and well-being.

# Vision Reflects The Triple Aim

- **Better Care**
  - Improve quality, by making health care more patient-centered, reliable, accessible, and safe
- **Better Health**
  - Improve the health of the U.S. population by supporting proven interventions to address behavioral, social, and, environmental determinants of health
- **Lower Cost**
  - Reduce the cost of quality health care for individuals, families, employers, and government



# Foundations of a High Performance Rural Health System

1. Affordable
2. Accessible
3. Community-focused
4. High quality
5. Patient-centered

# Foundation #1

- Affordable
  - An individual/family's health care costs as a % of their income are reasonable and do not impoverish those in need of care
  - Health care costs are equitably shared so disproportionate costs or disparities in affordability do not arise
  - Health care is effective and efficient

# Foundation #2

- Accessible
  - Core rural health services are available: primary care, EMS, and public health
  - For services not locally available, a regional infrastructure exists that includes transportation, technology, and provider relationships to access the full continuum of care
  - Care integration and coordination are proactive and effective

# Foundation #3

- Community-focused
  - Wellness, personal responsibility, and public health are fundamental and supported
  - Prevention and screening are a priority
  - Community capacity in health care is linked to and aligned with local and regional social and economic development

# Foundation #4

- High Quality
  - Quality improvement is a central focus, through education and technical assistance, transparency and public reporting
  - Payment systems reward high quality care
  - Rural sustainability is not jeopardized by payment policies that are exclusively volume-dependent

# Foundation #5

- Patient-Centered
  - System is responsive to the unique needs of each rural community and resident
  - Health care is a partnership between the patient and his/her health care team -- primacy care focus, use of shared decision making, culturally competent care

# How Can We Achieve the Vision?

# A Flexible Approach

- Public and private sector initiatives are underway
  - ACA and Minnesota health reform include many opportunities to move toward the vision, as do private sector efforts
- No single model of rural health care will fit all communities and regions
  - Flexibility in design and implementation is called for



# Flexible, but a common core?

Are some rural health care system characteristics universal?

- Using Health Information to Manage Care
- Paying for Value
- Collaborating to Integrate Services
- Health People in Healthy Communities

# Public Sector Initiatives

- New payment models – ACO/shared savings, total cost of care
- Patient-centered medical homes (in MN, health care homes)
- Community transformation grants for public health
- Value-based purchasing
- Health insurance/benefit exchanges
- Workforce training and payment

# Private Sector Initiatives

- Payer-provider contracts for “accountable care”
- Patient-centered teams
- Evolving systems that combine providers and provider types
- Use of telehealth
- Optimum use of current and emerging workforce

# A Focus on Quality

RUPRI Health Panel offered input into the new National Quality Strategy (NQS) called for in the ACA

- To help ensure that rural providers, people, and places receive the full benefit of the NQS, we suggested the following rural-specific and nationwide actions:

# Focus on Quality (continued)

- Develop quality measures and reporting systems that are relevant and meaningful to rural providers and patients
- Design measurement that does not imply that small size and low volumes mean poorer quality
- Ensure that rural providers participate in new payment and demo programs that reward quality, safety, efficiency, and effective care coordination

# Focus on Quality (continued)

- Provide assistance and tools build the long-term capacity of rural providers to continually improve quality
- Monitor rural health care workforce status to ensure programs keep pace with demand
- Coordinate QI activities within federal agencies to minimize duplication, leverage existing programs, and utilize common rural-relevant quality measures

# Focus on Quality (continued)

- Report agency-specific National Quality Strategy progress regularly to the Secretary
- Implement strategies to align public and private payers regarding quality and patient safety efforts
- Incorporate quality improvement and measurement in the strategic plan for health information technology as required by ARRA (HIT)

# Actions You Can Take



# Be in the know

Know your trusted sources to stay on top of information to guide your planning

– Federal gov't health reform web site

<http://www.healthcare.gov/>

– Kaiser Family Foundation

<http://healthreform.kff.org/>

• Minnesota Health Reform Initiative

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/>

# Share your insight

- Federal and state agencies are seeking input via public comment periods on a variety of health reform related efforts
  - Monitor the Public Comment and Notice of Proposed Rule Making opportunities
  - Offer your comments as individual organizations, and as part of trade and professional associations

# Be alert for areas of concern

- Issues are surfacing in public policies:
  - Access standards and patterns of health care utilization
  - Network adequacy
  - Measurement problems due to small volume
  - Definitions of rural markets
  - Treatment of rural providers – CAHs, RHCs, etc.

History teaches us that the great revolutions aren't started by people who are utterly down and out, without hope and vision. They take place when people begin to live a little better – and when they see how much yet remains to be achieved.

*Hubert H. Humphrey*

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Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities.

