



# CROSSROADS

WINTER 2023 ISSUE

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# CROSSROADS MAGAZINE

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**CROSSROADS** is published quarterly by the Mississippi Rural Health Association

### What is **CROSSROADS**?

Crossroads is a publication of the Mississippi Rural Health Association and aims to communicate up-to-date health care news and events through relevant and timely articles.

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LEARN MORE ON FACEBOOK

The Mississippi Rural Health Association is proud to be a state affiliate of both the National Rural Health Association and the National Association of Rural Health Clinics.





## MISSISSIPPI RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES AWARDEES AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Mississippi Rural Health Association recognized significant individuals and hospitals for dedication to excellence during the Mississippi Rural Health Annual Conference held on November 17-18, 2022 in Jackson, MS. Held during Mississippi / National Rural Health Day, these awards are presented to symbolize and recognize the superior work performed by providers, administrators and facilities that makeup Mississippi rural health care system.

### AWARDEES ARE AS FOLLOWS

#### State Legislator of the Year

Senator Ben Suber

Senator Suber, among many bills, sponsored the Rural Emergency Hospital bill that will allow hospitals to convert to a new model that emphasizes emergency care in rural communities.

#### National Legislator of the Year

US Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

Senator Hyde-Smith has once again received this award from the association due to her continued support of national legislation supporting rural health practice, including hospital funding, telehealth, reducing administrative burden, and more.

#### Mary Ann Sones Distinguished Leadership Award

Paula Turner, MRHF

The Association's top leadership award was presented to Paula Turner of North Mississippi Health Systems. Paula is a past president of the



Pictured above: Chris Threadgill, Jerry Keever, Senator Ben Suber, Ryan Kelly



Pictured above: Chris Threadgill, Jerry Keever, Umesh Sanjanwala, Ryan Kelly

association and has been an active member for more than a decade. She has led substantial membership growth in the association and has been active in legislative support and advice to the association.

### One Rural Award: Michael Nester

The One Rural Award is presented to Michael Nester, administrator of H.C. Watkins Hospital in Quitman, for his consistent work with the association as treasurer of the organization as well as having been very active in legislative advocacy, often traveling with the Association and MHA to Washington D.C. for legislative visits.

### Hospital Quality Awards

Each year, the Chartis Group recognizes the top quartile of hospitals in the nation based on quality outcomes from CMS data. The following hospitals were recognized and awarded by the Association for this exceptional quality:

- Baptist Memorial Hospital – Booneville
- Baptist Memorial Hospital – Calhoun
- Baptist Memorial Hospital – Leake
- North Mississippi Medical Center – Eupora
- North Mississippi Medical Center – Iuka
- Baptist Memorial Hospital – Attala
- Scott Regional Hospital
- Neshoba County General Hospital
- North Mississippi Medical Center – Pontotoc
- HC Watkins Memorial Hospital
- Laird Hospital
- North Mississippi Medical Center – West Point



Pictured above: Ryan Kelly, Paula Turner



Pictured above: Jerry Keever, Ryan Kelly

All award recipients received a recognition piece for their accomplishment. For questions or more information, please contact

Ryan Kelly  
601-898-3001 | [ryan.kelly@mississippirural.org](mailto:ryan.kelly@mississippirural.org)



## MRHA MEMBERS SUPPORT FOOD / MONETARY DONATION TO MISSISSIPPI FOOD NETWORK

Due to the generous contributions of Mississippi Rural Health Association members, the Association recently donated approximately 150 lbs of food and \$2,500 to the Mississippi Food Network. This effort is on behalf of Association efforts toward celebrating Mississippi Rural Health Day, calling attention to the many food deserts that exist in our state.



# MISSISSIPPI RURAL HEALTH FELLOW



## APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR THE 2023 MISSISSIPPI RURAL HEALTH FELLOW COHORT

The Mississippi Rural Health Association is pleased to offer an opportunity for rural health professionals to engage in a cohort designed to improve their understanding, professionalism and participation in the improvement of rural healthcare in the State of Mississippi.

This program encourages group discussion and engagement around a topic or topics of interest for the cohort, which may last up to 6 months. Successful candidates who complete the cohort will be recognized at the Mississippi Rural Health Conference and may have additional opportunities to showcase their work. Before you apply, please review the following requirements to ensure that you meet the qualifications:

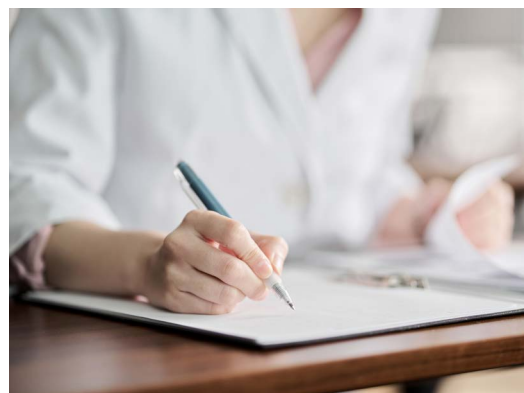
1. Must have at least 3 years or rural-specific professional experience or be pursuing a career in rural health as an active student in a rural-affiliated health discipline.
2. Must actively participate in a cohort of Fellows for the full cohort period. Cohort participation may involve work toward a community improvement project and/or policy review.
3. \$100 application fee (professionals) or \$25 application fee (students).

### How to Apply

If this sounds like the opportunity that you have been waiting for, click [here](#) to apply online.

### Questions

For questions or more information, contact Ryan Kelly at 601.898.3001 or [ryan.kelly@mississippirural.org](mailto:ryan.kelly@mississippirural.org). Or, visit the Fellows page on [msrha.org](http://msrha.org).



Mississippi Rural Health Association  
**Grant Support Program**



The Mississippi Rural Health Association's new Grant Support Program has released two new educational webinars from its team of grant writers.

You may view the videos by clicking here. We hope that these webinars are helping for both novice and experienced grant writers in understanding how to identify a grant and build a team of collaborators around a project.



## REGISTER FOR RURAL HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

NRHA's 34th Rural Health Policy Institute is your chance to guide the future of rural health policy with NRHA leadership and advocate for issues you care about with new and returning members of Congress and the administration Feb. 7-9.

MISSISSIPPI  
**RURAL HEALTH**  
ASSOCIATION



Join us for the

# 2023 Rural Health Clinic Conference

May 19, 2023 | Virtual  
More details coming soon...  
[www.MSRHA.org/events](http://www.MSRHA.org/events)



## TWELVE MISSISSIPPI HOSPITALS EARN ‘A’ RATING FROM HOSPITAL SAFETY GROUP

Kate Royals, Mississippi Today

The nonprofit Leapfrog Group released its hospital safety grades for the fall of 2022, and 12 Mississippi hospitals – including the financially troubled Greenwood Leflore Hospital – received an A rating.

The grade, which is assigned to about 3,000 general acute-care hospitals across the nation twice a year, is based on how hospitals and other health care organizations protect their patients from errors, injuries, accidents and infections. The score comes from hospitals’ performance on more than 30 national measures from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Leapfrog Hospital Survey and other data. Click [here](#) to view the full article

## CMS DESIGNATES NEW RURAL EMERGENCY HOSPITAL (REH) MODEL

Rural Emergency Hospital is a designation given to eligible rural hospitals by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) beginning January 1, 2023. Congress established the Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) designation in December 2020 in Section 125 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and in response to the loss of essential healthcare services in rural areas due to hospital closures. According to the North Carolina Rural Health Research Program, 140 rural hospitals closed between January 2010 and September 30, 2022. In addition, a February 2020 Chartis Group report identified 453 financially vulnerable rural hospitals at risk of closing.

The REH designation is designed to maintain access to critical outpatient hospital services in communities that may not be able to support or sustain a Critical Access Hospital or small rural

hospital. REHs are required to provide 24-hour emergency and observation services and can elect to furnish other outpatient services. Facilities designated as an REH will receive enhanced Medicare payments for certain outpatient services and additional monthly payments.

Note: Final licensure rules are still being developed by the Mississippi State Department of Health at this time, and should be released soon.

## ALL MISSISSIPPI RHCS MUST NOW SUBMIT COST REPORTS VIA THE NEW MISSISSIPPI COST REPORTING WEB PORTAL

The Mississippi Division of Medicaid (DOM) recently informed all rural health clinics in the state about a change in how to submit cost reports. DOM has contracted with Myers and Stauffer (MSLC) & Gainwell Technologies to design and build a secure Cost Reporting web portal. The web portal will be utilized by DOM to securely receive cost report submissions and supplemental information and securely transmit rate letters and policy communication directly to providers. Moving forward, all rural health clinic cost report submissions must be transmitted via the Mississippi Cost Reporting web portal.

In order to access the web portal, you must register using the form that can be downloaded on this site:

- Go to [myersandstauffer.com/client-portal/mississippi](https://myersandstauffer.com/client-portal/mississippi)
- Scroll down to the “Cost Reporting Web Portal” section of the web page
- Click “Web Portal Registration Form 06-17-2021”
- The registration form can now be accessed in your browser’s downloads screen.

This website also contains training information, user guides, and FAQ documents to help acquaint you with the web portal submission process. The completed registration form, and any questions, may be sent via email to [MS\\_Web\\_Portal@mslc.com](mailto:MS_Web_Portal@mslc.com).



## CMS PROPOSES RULE TO EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION AND IMPROVE THE PRIOR AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing commitment to increasing health data exchange and investing in interoperability, CMS issued a proposed rule that would improve patient and provider access to health information and streamline processes related to prior authorization for medical items and services. CMS proposes to modernize the health care system by requiring certain payers to implement an electronic prior authorization process, shorten the time frames for certain payers to respond to prior authorization requests, and establish policies to make the prior authorization process more efficient and transparent.

The rule also proposes to require certain payers to implement standards that would enable data exchange from one payer to another payer when a patient changes payers or has concurrent coverage, which is expected to help ensure that complete patient records would be available throughout patient transitions between payers.

## Accreditation Simplified.



Rural Health  
Clinic



Patient-Centered  
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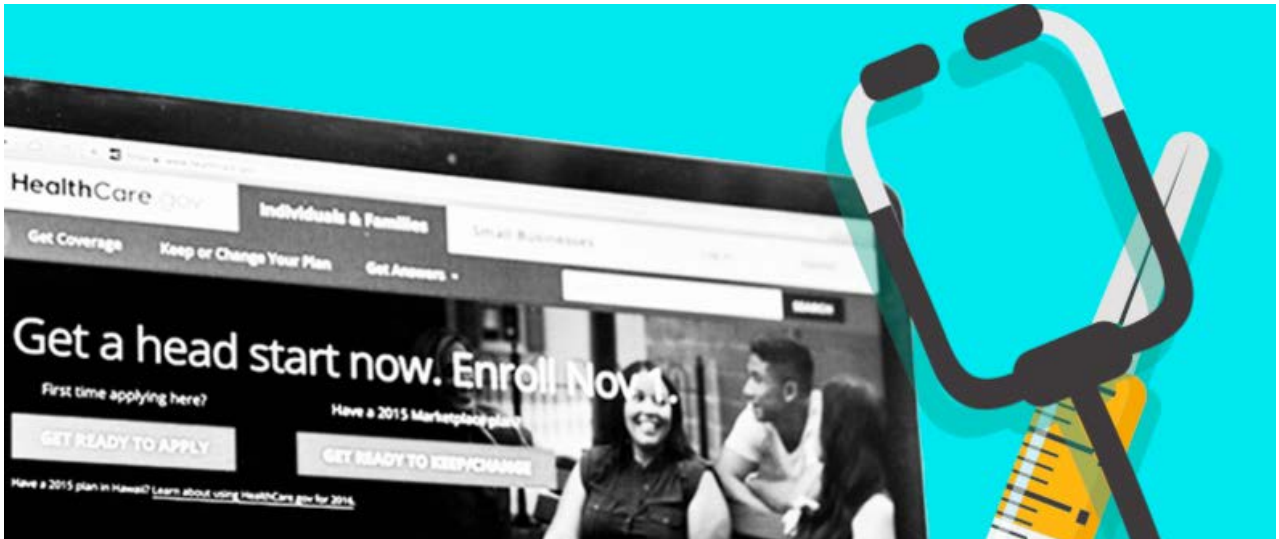


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## ACA ENROLLMENT BREAKING RECORDS

The administration is reporting increased numbers of new customers buying private health insurance from the Affordable Care Act's marketplace. Before Thanksgiving, roughly 3.4 million people had signed up for coverage — an increase of 17% compared to the same time last year. "This

demonstrates very solid demand for health insurance," Massey Whorley, a principal at health consulting firm Avalere, tells Modern Healthcare. "Only time will tell if this is truly, outsized significant growth, or if it is people acting earlier in the open enrollment window."

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## TELEHEALTH DOES NOT LEAD TO INCREASED PRIMARY CARE SPENDING, STUDY FINDS

Naomi Diaz – Becker's Hospital Review  
December 15th, 2022

Telehealth reduces primary care spending, as telehealth utilization has been associated with lower emergency department utilization and inpatient hospitalizations, according to a Dec. 13 study published in Nature.

The study from Boston-based Harvard Medical School researchers analyzed 4,114,651 primary care visits from 939,134 unique patients across three healthcare systems between 2019 and 2021 to see if the increased use of telehealth during the pandemic led to over-utilization of primary care.

### Here's what it found:

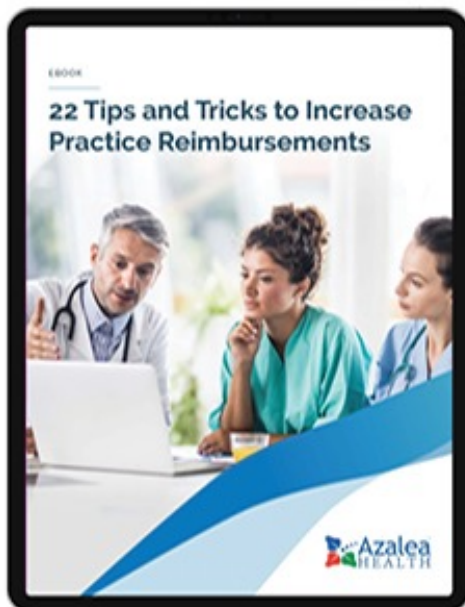
The average number of primary care visits per patient remained stable across patients on

commercial insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.

The results suggested that the availability of telehealth did not result in additional primary care visits. Instead, researchers found that telehealth may have served as a substitute for certain in-person encounters.

Telehealth uptake was highest among vulnerable populations, such as Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, Black patients, and patients with incomes of less than \$25,000.

Researchers also found that telehealth use occurred more by patients with multiple primary care visits, suggesting that virtual care was mostly utilized by patients with complex medical needs.



## 22 Tips to Fix Declining Reimbursements

Take a look at our latest eBook built by our certified billers.

Download



## ASSOCIATION PARTNERS

The Mississippi Rural Health Association is pleased to have these valued partners on-board as a valued asset to our members. We encourage all members to use these vendors as a preferred source for your rural health needs.

Learn more about these partners at [www.msaha.org/sponsors](http://www.msaha.org/sponsors)

### DIAMOND

# MISSISSIPPI STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH AND PRIMARY CARE

### SILVER LEVEL



### BRONZE LEVEL

VesselHealthcare  
Azalea Health  
The Compliance Team  
Amerigroup  
Chartspan  
Community Infusion Solutions

inQuiseek Consulting  
Tango340b  
SAG Medical Solutions  
Medical Disposal Systems  
Impact Healthcare Solutions  
Molina





## REGISTER FOR ALL EVENTS ONLINE AT [MSRHA.ORG/EVENTS](https://msrha.org/events)

The Mississippi Rural Health Association conducts workshops, conferences, receptions, webinars and a variety of other opportunities for healthcare professionals to gain valuable education and networking opportunities throughout the year.

### ON DEMAND

Front Desk Tips – Setting Them Up For Success

Analyzing the New Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) Model from CMS

Rural Clinics' Embrace of the CMS Medicare Chronic Care Management Program—Improving Patient Outcomes & Driving Up

Not just for looks...why treating vein disease matters

COVID-Related Funding: Compliance and Reporting Considerations for Rural Healthcare Facilities

Rural Hospital Board and Leadership Training

Independent and Provider-Based Rural Health Clinic Billing

E&M Guidelines Update

Cost Savings, Increasing Margins, & Exceeding Industry Benchmarks for Healthcare Organizations: Gallagher Introduction

Breaking Down Silos in Your Clinical Revenue Cycle

Swing Bed Quality Certification Program

The Blueprint for Maximizing Value in Your Supply Chain

Coding and Billing for Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

Digital Therapeutics in Rural Maternal Child Health: How to Go from Episodic to Lived Environment Care

Learn How to Save on Purchasing with Alliant and Medline

Mississippi RHC Benchmarking and Performance Improvement Network

Reviewing the Recent RHC Reimbursement Changes from CMS

Sickle Cell Best Practices