

# RTT COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER

— September 2022 —

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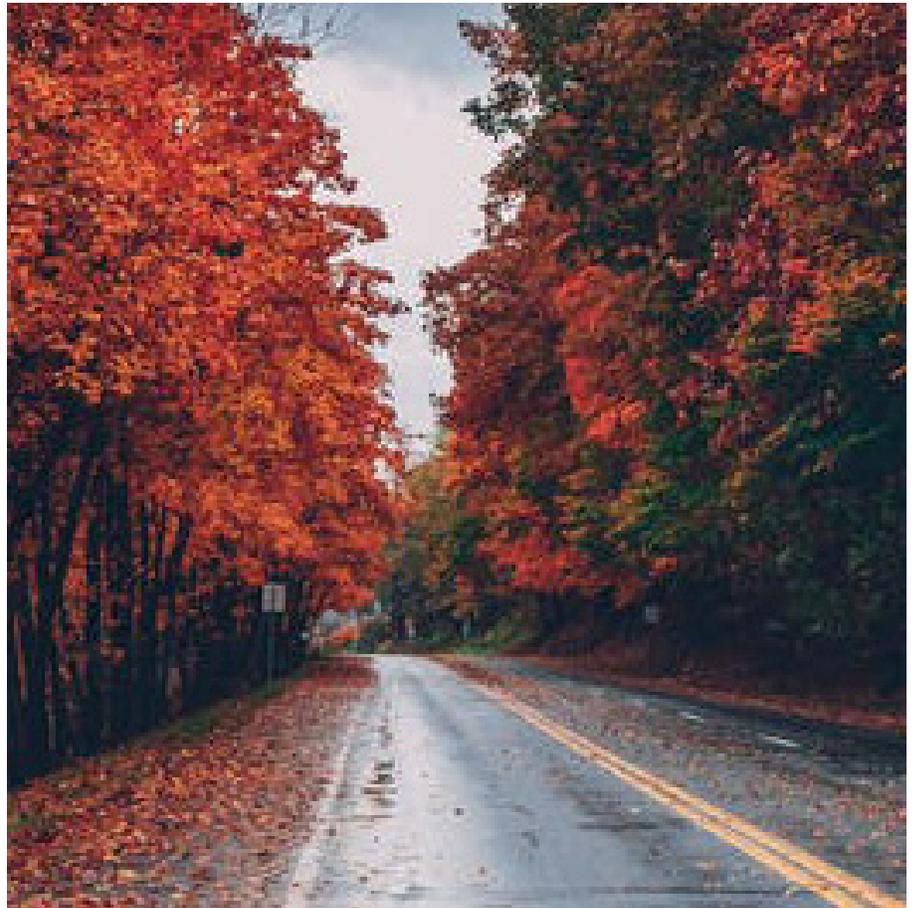
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**The RTT Collaborative**  
in rural health professions education and training  
*Growing our own...together*



Stock Photo Courtesy of Craig Adderley

Happy first official week of autumn, and welcome to our newsletter. Please be sure to stop by page six for information regarding new board member applications!

If you aren't already one of the many dedicated participating programs that participate in our cooperative of rural programs, visit [rttcollaborative.net/join-the-movement](http://rttcollaborative.net/join-the-movement) to learn more.

Contribute to our mission to sustain rural health professions education in rural places by making a [donation](#)!

Further, if you have items you would like to be included in the next newsletter, please submit ideas to [Dr. Hana Hinkle](#).

## Executive Director's Message

### *Re: Autumn Greetings*

Fall is in the air here in the Midwest — we don't have any leaves falling quite yet, but we are seeing some welcomed cooler temperatures at night. When I wrote my first greeting as then new Executive Director of the Rural Training Track Collaborative, we were transitioning into spring and Dr. Darin Bell and I were working closely with Dr. Randy Longencker and Dawn Mollica as we were onboarding into our new roles.

Looking back on these past several months, I am inspired and proud of the work that we have accomplished in collaboration with our board and participating programs. In this issue, we highlight some of those activities and accomplishments.

Since our last edition, we have been involved with the AAFP National Conference, presented grand rounds in collaboration with major medical universities where we were able to share the story of the urgent and important work of the RTTC, identified opportunities for recruitment of medical students to our participating programs and have been instrumental in providing feedback on federal policy initiatives that impact rural GME and rural healthcare delivery. All of this is done under our collective mission of the RTTC and through the lens of inspiring work you do through your programs.

I do have a transition note to share that our incredible Administrative Director, Dawn, is stepping back into her role full time at Ohio University as of the end of this month. We wish her all the best in her full-time position and know she will continue to do good work for the students at Ohio University. As many of you know, Dawn has been instrumental in creating the RTT Collaborative into the organization that it is today and we are forever grateful for her tireless energy, dedication and support. Our collaborative has grown so much since its inception and it is exciting to see our continued development thanks to her efforts.

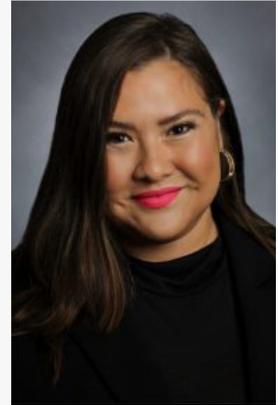
We are in the process of further organizing our leadership and administrative support roles to align with our continued growth and we are looking forward to sharing updates with you on the new staff who will be joining our team in the coming months, including the Administrative Director position. We have heard feedback from our student partners that they would also appreciate more opportunities to engage with us via social media, so we are working with our incredible Ohio University-based communications student, Katey Kruback, to establish new social media platforms for students. We are also in the process up updating our list serv platform so that we have opportunities to interact and communicate more frequently with our participating programs.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our rural cause,

***Hana Hinkle, PhD***

*Executive Director*

*Rural Training Track Collaborative*



Dr. Hana Hinkle  
*Executive Director*

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Stock photo of Lake McDonald, via Pexels

Holiday Inn – Downtown Missoula  
200 S. Pattee St., Missoula, MT, April 5-7, 2023

**The RTT Collaborative: Annual Meeting**  
*Big Sky, Small Places: Innovations in Rural Training*

The RTT Collaborative is enjoying its tenth year of existence as a nationwide cooperative of rural programs and is happy to announce that the 2023 RTTC Annual Meeting will be hosted by our participating programs in Montana. Stay tuned for further details including a call for proposals in late-October, and after the first of the year, a final schedule and registration.

This year we reference the Big Sky as we look to the horizon to navigate the future of rural health professions education. Surrounded by wildlife and national parks, join us as we explore together the many paths and trails that lead us through our own unique journey of rural medical education.

Visit us on the RTT Collaborative's website  
[rttcollaborative.net](http://rttcollaborative.net)



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## Rural Residency Fest *In Review*

On July 19, the RTT Collaborative hosted our 3rd annual Rural Residency Fest and Program Fair. The event was well attended with 110 registered students and 25 participating residency programs in Family Medicine, Surgery, and OB/Gyn, from all over the country. The event began with a panel discussion for 1st and 2nd year students, led by our student representatives to the board, Araminta Ray and Victoria Vorwald, along with a panel targeting 3rd and 4th year students, facilitated by our resident representative, David Nitschmann. Feedback regarding these sessions was overwhelmingly positive. Students felt they were very helpful for framing their perspectives on rural medicine and training.

After the Fest, the virtual Program Fair followed. Despite some technical difficulties and on-the-fly troubleshooting, it also was relatively well attended. The participating programs had interested residents come through to learn about what they had to offer, and to hear their perspectives on what makes for high quality rural training. There were great suggestions from both students and programs about how to make that portion of the event even more engaging and valuable to participants in future years.

It was great to see student enthusiasm, which carried over to the AAFP National Conference the following week. There is high ongoing interest in rural medicine, and we are excited to develop more ways to engage students, and help grow that interest further. This summer's Fest and Fair were a solid step forward in our continued development of programs to benefit our constituent member organizations and the learners they serve. We welcome any additional thoughts and ideas as we refine this process for the future. Thanks to all who participated as panelists, program representatives, and students.

## National Conference

### *In Review*

The Rural Training Track Collaborative was well represented at this year's National Conference of the American Association of Family Physician's conference. We had a very well attended booth at the exhibitors hall where we were able to share information about our participating programs and the work we do in rural graduate medical education. We also appreciate our colleague from NRHA, Brock Slabach who spent time facilitating discussion at our booth. This year, our Administrative Director, Dawn Mollica, provided information via a QR code display at each one of our participating program booths so students could easily identify those exhibitors who are a part of RTTC. A highlight of the experience was hosting our annual student breakfast where medical students who are interested in rural residencies came together for meaningful conversations around their experiences with recruitment and ways that the RTTC can support their growth and development as future rural-based physicians. We are already making plans for next year to make our impact even greater at National Conference!

Visit us on the RTT Collaborative's website  
[rttcollaborative.net](http://rttcollaborative.net)



## Developing Program

### *Highlighting: Wright State, OH*

***What is your name and job position? How long have you held this position?***

**Lori Martensen**, Director, Rural Health Initiatives, Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine, six years. I'm PD on the RRPD grant and serving as the project manager for the development of the residency.

**Carlos Menendez**, MD, CMO, Family Health Services of Darke County, a rural FQHC. I'm also the Residency Program Director for the Wright State Rural Family Medicine Residency, 2 years

***Can you start by telling me about your program?***

**Lori:** The Rural Medical Scholars program at Wright State offers two opportunities for medical students to participate in rural medicine.

First, we have a rural pathway for an in-depth experience. Pathway students complete at least four clinical rotations at rural sites during their medical education, with most students completing more.

Second, we have 'singular' rural clerkship and elective opportunities for students who want to experience rural medicine but are not seeking a long-term experience like the pathway provides.

**Carlos:** The Wright State University Rural Family Medicine Residency had its accreditation site visit in July 2022, and assuming we receive accreditation, will start its first cohort in 2023. The program is a 1-2, with the first year residents participating in the long-established Wright State Family Medicine Residency in Dayton and the second and third years in Greenville, Ohio, about an hour outside of Dayton in rural West Central Ohio. We received the HRSA Rural Residency Planning and Development grant in 2020.

***What makes your program unique?***

**Lori:** For our UME rural program, we've taken the approach that the best way to encourage students with an interest in rural medicine is to put them in rural clinical rotations as much as possible. We've put all our energy into developing rural clinical sites and rotations; we don't have any classroom component to our medical school program. While our goal is always to keep students at one rural health system as much as possible, our pathway students rotate at 2-3 different sites during their clerkship year in order to maximize how much they are in a rural community.

**Carlos:** We haven't started yet, but we feel the robustness of the FQHC that will serve as the residency clinical home makes it a really special place. We already have residencies in pharmacy and dentistry that will give us excellent opportunities for interprofessional education and collaboration. We have fantastic behavioral and mental health services, a full time MAT trainer, and an outstanding physician workforce. Our Clinical Pharmacists work hand in hand with our clinicians on shared visits for patients with uncontrolled diabetes, COPD, and on chronic pain medications.

***How was the RTTC helpful to you in the process of developing your program?***

**Lori:** when I was hired at Wright State in 2016, my boss was a respected and passionate leader in rural medical education. She left the university in 2017, and there wasn't really anyone else in the medical school who had a passion for rural. I started going to RTTC annual meetings because I needed mentors, guidance, education...everything. Involvement in the RTTC

*... continued on next page...*



## Developing Program, *cont.*

### *Highlighting: Wright State, OH*

provided me with both valuable information and much needed encouragement to keep going.

**Carlos:** my involvement in the RTTC began after receiving the HRSA grant in 2020. Because of Covid-19, the first annual meetings I attended was virtual, but it was still incredible valuable and allowed me to start building a network of contacts in the rural residency world. Currently, we are taking advantage of the consultative services available from the RTTC as we develop the structure of our residency, the financing of it, and develop a plan for faculty development.

#### *How has an RRPD grantee status impacted program development?*

**Lori:** How hasn't it impacted it? Obviously, the money is helpful, but the community of RRPD grantees is just as valuable. We hit a barrier very early, and I contacted a few other grantees to seek advice on how they had handled a similar situation. I was so impressed with how transparent and willing to help everyone has been. A fellow grantee who had the same site reviewer as we were assigned helped us prepare for our accreditation site visit. Additionally, the consultative services have been a lifesaver, and the monthly webinars are great. And I have to give a special shout out to Roger Bush, our RRPD TAC advisor, and Randy Longenecker, who has been a mentor to me for years. Both have provided great counsel and been trusted confidants when I have needed advice or just needed to vent to someone!

**Carlos:** Being an RRPD has been validating and given us a boost of confidence for our rural health systems and community. We had been talking about developing a residency for several years and likely would have done so eventually, but receiving the grant showed

that others believed we should be doing this, too, and that we were ready to do this now.

#### *What do you want people to know about your program?*

**Lori:** Four years ago I chaired a task force in my medical school to develop a three year pathway to graduation for students interested in family medicine and pediatrics. While not limited to students interested in rural medicine, we designed the three year pathway so it could be done in conjunction with the rural pathway. A couple years later, we received the RRPD grant. Now, I have my first medical student who is local to the community where we are building our residency, and she has been accepted into the rural and three year pathways and intends to be in our rural residency. A second student is in our first year class and plans to do the same, and both plan to eventually practice locally. It is so rewarding to see the pipeline working!

**Carlos:** Our Center has been in this community for nearly 50 years. This has given us longstanding ties to our patients, now spanning generations. Such a stable and varied population will provide an exciting educational experience. Many of our physicians have been with us over 10 years and some over 20 years. All are excited for the opportunity to teach the new residents who will come our way.

#### *Is there anything else you would wish to add?*

**Lori:** Wright Stat first joined RTTC as a medical school program, and now we are (almost) a residency program member. The RTTC has been valuable for us at every stage of our development, and I'm sure that will continue to be the case as we continue to evolve.



# Board Positions Available

*for students and residents*

## how to apply

The RTT Collaborative is looking to appoint a medical student and resident representative to our Board for a one-year term for calendar year 2023. Responsibilities include quarterly online meetings (using ZOOM), one of which is an in-person meeting usually in association with the Annual Meeting. This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 5-7, 2023, in Missoula, MT. The student and resident member will receive a stipend for travel and free registration to the Annual Meeting.

To be eligible, a student must be a participant in a medical school rural program. Preference will be given to those students from medical schools who are currently [participants in The RTT Collaborative](#). Residents must be from a rural residency on our [map of rural programs](#), and as above, preference will be given to residents from RTTC participating programs,

If you are interested in becoming a student or resident representative to the Board, [click here to complete an application](#) before the *deadline of October 1, 2022*. You will be asked to include a letter of interest explaining why you believe you are a good candidate for this position. Students should include a letter of support from their medical school's rural program director and residents from their residency program director.

Questions should be directed to [Hana Hinkle](#), RTTC's Executive Director or [Darin Bell](#), the Associate Director.

Student Board Representative



Victoria Vorward is currently an MS3 at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and a member of its Rural Program

Resident Board Representative



David Nitschmann, MD is a resident (PGY3) at North Colorado Medical Center/ Sterling RTT

Student Board Representative



Araminta "Minta" Ray is a fourth-year medical student at East Tennessee State University Quillen College of Medicine in Johnson City, TN.

## Call for Board Member Applications

### *Positions beginning January 2023*

The RTT Collaborative is looking for a few new Board members to join us January 2023! If you or someone you know is interested, please submit [your application here](#) by 10.10.22. Board obligations include quarterly 90-minute meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of February, May, August, and November. Generally, meetings are online via ZOOM, but either the February or May meeting is held in person at the time of our Annual Meeting. For more information about The RTT Collaborative please visit: <https://rttcollaborative.net/about/>. If you have questions, please contact [Hana Hinkle](#), Executive Director or [Darin Bell](#), Associate Director.

## NIPDD Grantees

### *National Institute for Program Director Development*

The RTT Collaborative Board awarded three \$5,500 scholarships to cover the cost of the NIPDD fellowship program registrations scholarships for [the NIPDD fellowship program](#) registration fee. Thank you to everyone who applied! Three individuals were chosen: W. Travis Bomengen M.D., Bethany Enoch and Joyce Robert M.D. See them quoted below.

*"I am looking forward to collaborating and sharing ideas in person. I hope to gain lots of knowledge from the PD brain trust to help build a successful program." — **Joyce Robert, MD***

*"Super excited to get started with NIPDD this fall and grow my knowledge in hopes of improving our program. I am also looking forward to networking with other Program Directors and working through some of our programs challenges in this venue." — **Travis Bomengen, MD***

*"I feel very honored to receive the scholarship from the RTTC to attend NIPDD. As a brand-new program director at a brand-new program in an area that has never had residents, I believe I will gain an immense amount of confidence in my ability to lead this budding program, particularly in the administrative areas. While we have taught students for decades, residents are new to our community and I look forward to learning through NIPDD how to equip our faculty to produce excellent future Family Physicians." — **Bethany Enoch***



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## RRPD Corner

### *Grantees*

HRSA recently awarded 13 new grantees up to \$750,000 each for the Rural Residency Planning and Development (RRPD) Program. Each grantee will focus on strengthening its health care workforce through the development of a newly accredited, sustainable rural residency programs in family medicine, internal medicine, OB-GYN, and psychiatry. The new grantees are the fourth cohort in the RRPD grant. Congratulations to the new RRPD grantees:

- Baptist Memorial Hospital — Family Medicine in Union City, TN
- Cheshire Medical Center — Family Medicine in Keene, NH
- Corporation of Mercer University — Family Medicine in Macon, GA
- Corry Memorial Hospital Association — Internal Medicine in Corry, PA
- Healthy Rural California — Family Medicine in Sacramento, CA
- John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital — Family Medicine in Thomasville, GA
- Montana Family Medicine Residency — Family Medicine in Billing, MT
- Mountain Area Health Education Center, Inc. — Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry and OGBYN in Asheville, NC
- Passavant Memorial Area Hospital Association — Psychiatry in Jacksonville, IL
- Regents of the University of Minnesota — Family Medicine in Minneapolis, MN
- Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center — Family Medicine in McComb, MS
- St. Helena Hospital — Family Medicine in Saint Helena, CA
- Sutter Coast Hospital — Family Medicine in Crescent City, CA

**Keep up with and learn more about the RTT Collaborative on our website:**

*[www.rttcollaborative.net](http://www.rttcollaborative.net)*



# Photo Contest

*What does rural health education look like?*

The RTT Collaborative (RTTC) seeks high-quality photographs accompanied by a short story, reflection or poem that describes how the photo depicts rural education and training in 250 words or less. Submit your photos that depict your experience in rural health care education [here](#)!

The top three winners receive a cash prize, with the first place winner receiving **\$250** for the win. Stay tuned for the new photo contest announcements! [ [View past winners here](#) ]

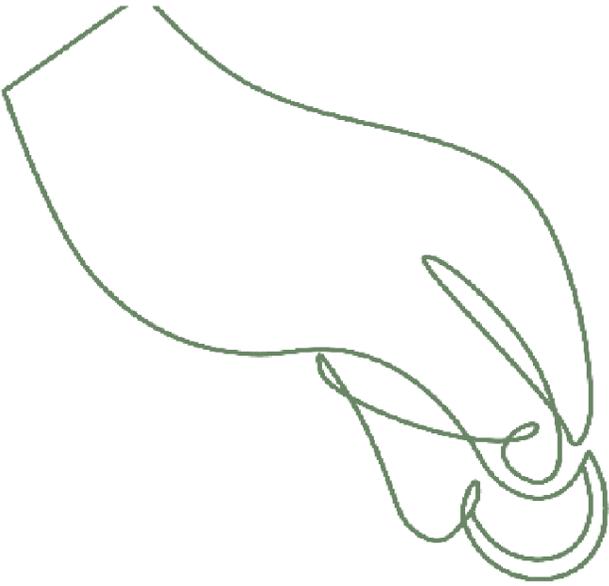


— NOW ACCEPTING APPLICANTS —  
Submit your photos [here](#) for consideration  
and submit by the deadline of Feb. 20, 2023



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**Make a Donation** Help to sustain the work of this organization. Both individual and organizational sponsors are welcome to donate. The RTT Collaborative is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization and contributions are tax deductible. For more information, [click here](#).

## Annual Scholarly Intensive for Rural Programs: Coming Soon

One theme consistently identified in surveys of rural residency programs over the past ten years is the need for resources, faculty development, and technical assistance in promoting and conducting scholarly activity, including research in rural medical education. Join us for our annual one-day virtual Scholarly Intensive, taking place in early 2023. Stay tuned for [more information](#).

## Questions or Requests?

If you have items you would like to be included in the next edition of this newsletter, please submit ideas to Dawn Mollica at [mollicd1@ohio.edu](mailto:mollicd1@ohio.edu)



### **Executive Director**

Hana Hinkle : [rttc1@rttcollaborative.net](mailto:rttc1@rttcollaborative.net)

### **Associate Director**

Darin Bell : [rttc2@rttcollaborative.net](mailto:rttc2@rttcollaborative.net)

### **Administrative Director**

Dawn Mollica: [rttc-admin@rttcollaborative.net](mailto:rttc-admin@rttcollaborative.net)

### **The RTT Collaborative Board of Directors**

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Rob Epstein (WA)

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Stu Hannah (WI)

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Keri Bergeson, Secretary-Treasurer (WA)

### **Student and Resident Board Reps**

Victoria Vorwald, Student (CO)

Araminta Ray, Student (TN)

David Nitschmann, Resident (CO)