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**2015 RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting
“Moving Forward in the Face of Chaos”**

Story courtesy of Kimberly Bruksch and UW-Madison Dept. of Family Medicine

An energizing event with expert presenters placed this year's RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting on solid ground. The May 27-29 conference was hosted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Pyle Center, with lakefront views and an easy rooftop glance to both the university campus and State Capitol.

Rural graduate medical education (GME) advocates and educators, content experts, policy leaders and family medicine program directors all gathered from around the nation to engage in meaningful opportunities to network and collaborate at the three-day annual event. The main draw: developing real-world solutions for the critical shortage of rural physicians throughout the United States.

Opening plenary speaker, Dr. John Frey, professor emeritus from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, proposed that a primary step to advancing rural health care might be about employing "the right people." He also added that new infrastructure, technology and curriculum might help, such as initiating a rural massive open online course (MOOC).

During Thursday morning's first session of the RTT Technical Assistance Program, participants raised vital questions regarding federal regulations of GME finance and their application to rural programs. Guest speaker Miechal Lefkowitz, representing the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as Regional Office Rural Health Coordinator, explained CMS rules with clarity and skill. Although CMS implements law enacted by Congress, Lefkowitz established that CMS is a regulatory agency and is not involved in developing or recommending workforce policy.

A final-day visit to St. Clare Hospital in Baraboo, WI, offered a tour of the fully accredited, award-winning rural hospital as well as a speaker panel of graduates from UW-Madison's Baraboo RTT Family Medicine Residency Program. Explaining why they chose to train at Baraboo RTT, followed by why they decided to stay, the graduates demonstrated determining factors of a successful RTT. Forward movement, they say, is inspired by teamwork and values.

For additional information on the RTT Collaborative and access to speaker presentations, please view the [RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting link](#).

Highlights from the 2016 RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting



Michelle Lefkowitz & Lou Sanner fielded questions from the audience

More than 75 people were in attendance at the 2015 RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting. The highlight of Thursday morning's RTT Technical Assistance program was a presentation by Michelle Lefkowitz, CMS, who discussed GME finance. One attendee described the session saying, "I learned the truth about Medicare GME funding." Another commented, "Michelle Lefkowitz and Lou Sanner did a fantastic job answering tough questions and scenarios."

Thursday afternoon was filled with a wide variety of breakout sessions. Conference evaluations provided positive feedback including, "Probably the best conference I have been to this year in most all aspects." The day concluded with a rooftop reception overlooking the lake and multiple dine-out groups for continued networking.

The Baraboo Story



Jill Kruse, DO
Former Baraboo resident
& Medical Director of
Avera's LIGHT Program



Dean Clinic Medical Associates of Baraboo



James Damos, MD,
Retired Program Director
Baraboo RTT

The Baraboo Rural Training Track offers full-spectrum family medicine training in a close-knit community. According to Annual Meeting feedback, the bus trip to Baraboo was well worth the drive. One person commented, "[Dr Damos's presentation about rural training tracks](#) could be used as a visiting motivational speaker to hospital boards considering starting an RTT." Another remarked, "resident breakout sessions were extremely interesting and gave us insight into what we need to look for in our own future residents—we hope to build a similar culture."

Dr. Jill Kruse, former Baraboo resident and featured breakout speaker, discussed physician burnout and the Avera LIGHT program. Dr. Kruse shared her personal experience and what she is doing to improve this nationwide problem. Her honesty and candor were appreciated by those in attendance. Read the physician burnout article in [MED Magazine](#).



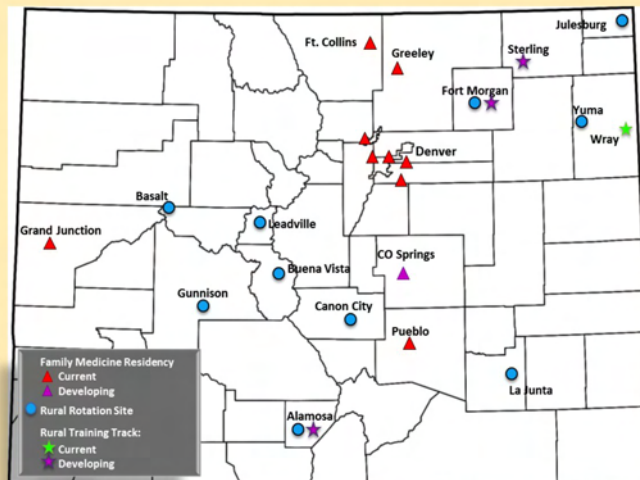
The RTT TA program each year for the past 4 has provided scholarships and has enabled several “rural fellows” to participate in the year-long National Institute for Program Director Development (NIPDD). The scholarship comes with a requirement that the rural fellows also attend the RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting and report on their academic project. The fellows are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses and release time from their home institution or employer. Current RTT program directors, associate or site directors, aspiring program directors, and program directors for developing programs have all participated in the past and are encouraged to apply again this year. For more information please visit <http://www.afmrd.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3752>, and individuals interested in the RTT TA scholarship should contact Randall Longenecker, Senior Project Advisor, at longenec@ohio.edu before June 30.

If you didn't get enough and find yourself wanting more...**Mark your calendars!**

Denver, Colorado is the site of the next RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting in February 2016.

Colorado

Family Medicine Training Sites



The RTT Collaborative has a new look

During the Spring The RTT Collaborative was busy working on a new communications strategy.

Our New Logo: “Growing our own...together”



Three students at Ohio University assisted us in the development of a logo - three trees of varying color, with separate trunks, are rooted in a common purpose. The logo and byline, “Growing our own...together,” were inspired by groups of trees and hedgerows in Kansas. The logo is meant to imply sustainability and rootedness in rural places. The line, in addition to the rural communities in which we are anchored, is meant to represent common ground and the undergirding nature of our peer network.



Photo courtesy of Michael Kennedy MD, Associate Dean of Rural Health Education, KUSOM

- Trees represent strength and resilience
- Green conveys sustainability, vitality, and is reminiscent of rural places
- Shades of green stand for variability, diversity
- Separate trunks— each program can stand on it's own, yet in a grove, stand together
- Rooted in rural communities, and in a community of practice
- Undergirded by common ground and important longitudinal relationships
- Two's only a partnership; Three's a network
- With a slight list to the right, oriented to the future and toward action

Growing our own...together – a convergence of the best in both rural autonomy and collaboration, doing together what we cannot accomplish separately on our own.

Message from the Executive Director



Another RTT Collaborative meeting has passed, the fifth in a series that started in Columbus, Ohio in February of 2011. Omaha, Boise, and Athens followed – now Madison, and next year Denver. The first three meetings were directed by the RTT Technical Assistance demonstration program, a cooperative agreement with the federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) now in its 5th year. The portion of the meeting that the RTT-TA consortium continues to sponsor remains an indispensable part of the conference. However, beginning last year and extending into the future, The RTT Collaborative, the sustainable non-profit board-directed cooperative that has emerged from the RTT-TA grant-funded initiative, will continue to sponsor these meetings every year.

Next year's meeting is planned for Denver, Colorado, in collaboration with one of our sponsors, the Colorado Institute of Family Medicine, and with Dr. Mark Deutchman, from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, who will be hosting the annual Rural Medical Educators Conclave as well. Our intention is to hold these two meetings either concurrently or with a slight overlap, and to have one day of joint programming. Stay tuned for a "Save the Date" in the next month or so.

This year's meeting reminded me again in several ways how important it is that we remain engaged with each other, with our communities, and with our governments, state and federal. The presentations by Miechal Lefkowitz, from CMS, and Lou Sanner, RPS consultant were filled with candor, thoughtful responses, and important clarifications. As one participant noted, Miechal "put a friendly face on CMS" and for that, I want to thank her! The stories from plenary speakers as well as breakouts highlighted important relationships, critical conversations, and "catching the fever" for rural medical education and service to rural communities.

After last week's experience and the positive feedback Dawn and I have received so far, I was thinking, "What do I want for the future of this organization?" And I thought, "What I want for the future is more of what we already have!" The sense of connectedness, mutual encouragement and hope that came out of last week's meeting was great, in spite of the hard facts from CMS! The primary value of participation in this Collaborative is just that – collaboration – and this meeting further validated the Board's endorsement of the byline, "Growing our own...together."

Thanks to all who participated! The folks in Wisconsin were great hosts, and our Administrative Director Dawn Mollica and the local host committee were great planners! And as always, the meeting participants – speakers and audience – provided the secret sauce! See all of you and more next year!

Randall Longenecker MD
Executive Director

2015-2016 Participating Program fees now due!

Participating Program invoices have been distributed for the 2015-16 academic year.

If you did not receive one or would like to become a participating program, please click [here](#) or contact Dawn Mollica at mollicd1@ohio.edu

Upcoming Meetings & Events

National Conference

July 30-August 1, 2015, Kansas City, MO

Recent Articles

Bazemore, Andrew, MD,, MPH; Petterson, Stephen, PhD; Petersobn, Lars, MD, PhD; Phillips, Robert, MD, MSPH (2015). More Comprehensive Care Among Family Physicians is Associated with Lower Costs and Fewer Hospitalizations. Annals of Family Medicine. <http://annfammed.org/content/13/3/206.full>

Kruse, Jill, DO (2015). Physician Burnout: The Other "Healthcare Crisis." MED Magazine. <http://www.midwestmedicaledition.com/2015/03/28/66395/physician-burnout-the-other-healthcare-crisis>

Help to Sustain the Work of this Organization

The Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) corporation, and we invite you to seriously consider making a charitable donation . Contributions can be made by clicking on the link below and using PayPal online, or by forwarding a check written to "The RTT Collaborative" to Dawn Mollica, Administrative Director, The RTT Collaborative, Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Irvine Hall #126, 1 Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701.

[Donate](#)



If you have something you would like to be included in the upcoming edition of the newsletter, please submit ideas by September 1, 2015 to Dawn Mollica at mollicd1@ohio.edu