

South Carolina Office of Rural Health

"Dedicated to improving access to quality health care in rural communities"



Rural Focus

November 2009

SCORH 2010 Conference: Sponsorship Opportunities

Don't forget! Mark your calendar for South Carolina's 14th Annual Rural Health Conference to be held March 17-18, 2010 at the beautiful Wild Dunes Resort on the Isle of Palms, SC. The 2010 Sponsor and Exhibitor Information Packet can now be found online at www.scorh.net under the Events Section.

For more information, please contact Sherri Cox at cox@scorh.net or 803-454-3850, Ext. 2026.

Low Country Healthy Start's Infant Mortality Awareness Luncheon

On September 30th the staff of Low Country Healthy Start hosted the Second Annual Infant Mortality Awareness Luncheon. The luncheon is an annual event to inform the local communities of the problem of babies dying before their first birthday. African American babies are among those at greatest risk.

Keynote speaker was Tonya Lewis Lee, wife of filmmaker, writer and producer Spike Lee. Ms. Lee, an author and award-winning producer, takes the role as lead spokesperson for the Office of Minority Health's "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" campaign. Lee shared her passionate message with the audience. "I am a regular citizen who happens to get called to do something to help. It's just about caring and getting involved," Lee said. The World Health Organization ranks the United States 29th in the world for infant mortality. The leading cause of infant mortality is premature births and low birth weight.



L to R:
Graham Adams, Tonya Lewis Lee,
Virginia Berry White

Dr. Mildred Carson, a pediatrician at the Family Health Center Inc, said "the luncheon provided a good outlet through which more awareness of the infant mortality problem could be spread." Funds raised from the luncheon are used for scholarships to encourage the young mothers to continue their education after high school.

Every baby should have a right to have a "Healthy Start" at birth and through life. The focus of Low Country Healthy Start will continue to be centered around improving birth outcomes and reducing infant mortality in our service areas of Orangeburg, Allendale, Hampton and Bamberg Counties.

For more information on Low Country Healthy Start or their services, please contact Program Director, Virginia Berry White, at 803-793-6000.

SCORH Rural Health Network Gains National Attention

The Coastal Plain Rural Health Network's Latino Perinatal Outreach Project was selected by the American Hospital Association to appear in its Community Connections publication in January 2010.

McLeod Medical Center Dillon – Dillon, SC

Program: Latina Perinatal Outreach Project

What is it? A collaborative initiative between McLeod Medical Center Dillon and the Coastal Plain Rural Health Network, this March of Dimes funded project's goal is to improve birth outcomes of Latina women. Prenatal education classes in Spanish are provided, as well as cultural competency training to staff.

Who is it for? Pregnant Latina patients of the McLeod OB/GYN Dillon practice.

Why do they do it? In South Carolina, Hispanic mothers have had the highest rates of late or no prenatal care compared with other maternal race and ethnicity categories.

Impact: Since fall 2007, 359 pregnant Latina women and their spouses have participated in prenatal classes. All of these women significantly increased their knowledge of the signs/symptoms of preterm labor and how to navigate the American health care system, resulting in the delivery of healthy babies.



Contact: Rachel Turner Gainey, MHA

Associate Administrator, Public Information and Communication

Telephone: 843-841-3338

E-mail: rgainey@mcleodhealth.org

News from Capitol Hill:

Regina Benjamin Confirmed as U.S. Surgeon General

By SEAN REILLY, Washington Bureau



WASHINGTON — Adding another milestone to a path-breaking career, the Senate unanimously confirmed Dr. Regina Benjamin, the nationally noted founder of a Bayou La Batre health clinic, for the job of U.S. surgeon general Thursday evening.

Dr. Regina Benjamin's Bio:

Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA, is Founder and CEO of the Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. She is the Immediate Past-Chair of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, and previously served as Associate Dean for Rural Health at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. In 2002, she became President of the Medical Association State of Alabama, making her the first African American woman to be president of a State Medical Society in the United States. Dr. Benjamin has a BS in chemistry from Xavier University, New Orleans. She was in the 2nd class at Morehouse School of Medicine and received her MD degree from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, as well as an MBA from Tulane University. She completed her residency in

family medicine at the Medical Center of Central Georgia. Dr. Benjamin received the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights in 1998, and was elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees in 1995, making her the first physician under age 40 and the first African-American woman to be elected. Dr. Benjamin was previously named by Time Magazine as one of the "Nation's 50 Future Leaders Age 40 and Under." She was also featured in a New York Times article, "Angel in a White Coat", "Person of the Week" on ABC's World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, and "Woman of the Year" by CBS This Morning. She received the 2000 National Caring Award which was inspired by Mother Teresa, as well as the papal honor Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from Pope Benedict XVI. She is also a recent recipient of the MacArthur Genius Award.

Covering the Uninsured in Rural Areas: Key Elements of Reform

From the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Paper Identifies Reforms Needed to Ensure Rural Residents Get Health Coverage, Regardless of Geography

Rural residents of the United States have a higher uninsured rate than their urban counterparts, and therefore have the most to gain from efforts to reform the U.S. health care system. According to a new issue brief, the differences in health insurance status between those living in rural and urban areas are important to consider in the debate over national reform.

The brief, released by the Rural Policy Research Institute and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, suggests that the challenges that rural people face in obtaining health insurance are partly due to the structure of the rural economy: 64 percent of adults working in rural are employed in jobs where health insurance is provided, compared to 71 percent of their urban counterparts. At the same time, rural workers are far more likely to be self-employed. Rural businesses also pay higher premium costs than urban businesses for similar health insurance plans.

Researchers found that health reform proposals that include (i) a subsidy for individual purchase, (ii) availability of insurance plans to individuals and small groups through exchanges, and (iii) expansion of Medicaid would significantly improve coverage for rural populations. In fact, the total number of uninsured people in rural areas would decrease to 1.9 million from the current 8.1 million – leaving only 4.2 percent of rural Americans without insurance, less than the 5.9 percent projected in urban areas.

Electronic Health Records (EHR) Educational, Training and TA Offerings

Upcoming Workshops:

Thursday, November 19th	Workshop 4: Selecting Your EHR
Tuesday, December 1st	Workshop 5: Successfully Implementing Your EHR
Tuesday, December 15th	Workshop 6: Optimizing Your EHR for Quality Improvement

Space is limited and registration is based on a first come first serve basis. Please direct all inquiries to Mr. Peter A. Leventis (peterl@scphca.org) or Ms. Cynthia R. Frazier, MHA (cynthiaf@scphca.org) by calling 803.788.2778.



New Rural Health Reform Documents

Last week HHS released a report showing that rural areas in the US could be improved with health insurance reforms. The increases in insurance competition and lower healthcare costs would help alleviate problems particularly acute in rural areas. HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius "said that health insurance reform would provide individuals, farmers and small businesses with more choices and better coverage."

For more information go to the HHS Health Reform website at <http://healthreform.gov/reports/ruralamerica/index.html> or <http://healthreform.gov/>.

SCORH PIE-Fellowship Student Finds Career with Low Country Healthy Start



In 2003, Windy Cocklin received her Masters Degree in Health Service Management while working full time at the Dorn Veterans Hospital. In 2007, she heard about the SCORH Palmetto Initiative for Excellence (PIE) program. The PIE program was designed to help create diversity in health care leadership. PIE's goal was to increase the number of African American undergraduate students electing graduate education and a career in health care administration.

Upon completion of her PIE-fellowship, Cocklin was hired by Low Country Healthy Start (LCHS) in September 2007. "This program has educated me about the importance of pre-natal care, folic acid, family planning, pregnancy spacing and diet and nutrition," said Cocklin.

Two years later and she is still excited about how SCORH and Low Country Healthy Start changed her life. "This job is mission work that is life saving," she said. "So many pregnant women depend on our agency to help them through this very critical stage in their life."

For more information on SCORH programs and services, call the SCORH office at 803-454-3850.

Suggestions for Future Issues of Rural Focus?

Contact Sherri Cox at 803-454-3850, Ext. 2026 or email cox@scorh.net

