



# NYSARH 2024 Annual Report



NYS ASSOCIATION FOR  
**RURAL HEALTH**

Advocate • Support • Grow

[nysarh.org](https://nysarh.org)

# Presidents Message

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Dear friends of the NYS Association for Rural Health,

When I say this year NYSARH turned over a new leaf, I'm not only referring to our fresh logo and tagline but to all that our new brand represents:

- our commitment to continue to **advocate** for policies and resources that benefit rural health
- the practical **support** that our association provides to members and the rural communities they serve, through educational programming and resource sharing
- our dedication to helping rural communities to **grow** in capacity and capabilities to expand the reach and impact of health initiatives

I love this new branding because it orients us toward salutogenesis – the focus on conditions that support health and well-being rather than those that cause disease (pathogenesis). I believe that ensuring healthy, thriving rural communities begins with understanding rural assets, then using those strengths to support fit-for-place solutions and locally responsive, innovative practices.

In the following pages of this report, you will see highlights from each of our committees and several NYSARH-led initiatives that illustrate our many accomplishments from this year. This work has largely been accomplished by dedicated volunteers: our board members and committee members donate time, energy and expertise to bring NYSARH's vision to bear. We are fortunate to be supported by a small but mighty team of staff and partners: Sara Wall Bollinger, our Director for Strategic Development; Janiya Donson, Communications Specialist; Bea Murray at Bowers, Outsourced Controller; and Primeau • Fahey and Associates, Marketing and Public Relations Specialists. Thanks to the combined efforts of all these collaborators, NYSARH has continued to advance rural health policy goals through advocacy and education and has set the stage for greater engagement and collaboration with members and stakeholders in forthcoming grant-funded initiatives.

*Volunteerism, generosity, dedication, and collaboration are the key conditions that support a strong and healthy NYSARH into the future, so that we may continue to advocate, support, and grow with you.*

Thank you for being a strength and an asset in NYSARH's community. Together we can ensure a healthy and thriving rural New York.



Ali Coates, President





## EMBRACING GROWTH AND VITALITY: UNVEILING OUR NEW LOGO

We are excited to announce a fresh, new visual identity for the New York State Association for Rural Health! This change comes at a transformative time for our organization, reflecting our ongoing commitment to growth, energy, and the new dynamic leadership guiding us forward. Our new logo symbolizes our mission to enhance rural health with a design that combines human connectivity and natural vitality.



The design features the words “Rural Health” prominently, underscoring our dedicated focus on the unique challenges and opportunities within rural healthcare environments. At the heart of our logo is a versatile symbol that may be perceived as a human figure with arms outstretched in an embracing gesture or as an organic arrangement of leaves, representing life and growth. This innovative approach moves away from the clichéd rural images and state outlines commonly used by other organizations, setting a distinct and memorable visual standard for our association.

### WELCOME PRIMEAU FAHEY

Primeau • Fahey & Associates is a boutique consultancy specializing in research-driven marketing, public relations, and community engagement for startups, social causes, and nonprofits. Led by Kelly Primeau-Fahey, the agency ensures senior-level expertise at affordable rates. They also provide public health consulting, focusing on harm reduction and state and county health initiatives, delivering strategic, timely, and cost-effective results.



<https://primeaufahey.com>

## Outstanding Rural Health Program of the Year



## FOOD & HEALTH NETWORK OF SCNY



FaHN has made a significant impact on rural communities through initiatives like Farm to School, Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE), and the Produce Prescription (PRx) program. By connecting local farms, schools, healthcare providers, and families, FaHN is helping to expand access to fresh, healthy foods, reduce food insecurity, and promote better nutrition and health outcomes across rural New York.

**EYAL KEDAR, MD**



## Dr. Gary Ogden Rural Health Practitioner of the Year

Dr. Kedar has provided much-needed specialized care to hundreds of patients. His dedication to rural healthcare is evident in his efforts to expand access to advanced treatments and clinical trials, bringing cutting-edge care to communities that often face shortages in specialty services. Dr. Kedar's leadership and compassion have made a profound difference in the lives of rural residents.

## Senator Patricia McGee Award

As Director of the New York State Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH), based in Cooperstown and affiliated with Bassett Healthcare Network, Dr. Sorensen has led innovative programs in occupational health, intervention development, social marketing, and rural health research. Her commitment to improving the safety, well-being, and healthcare access of New York's rural populations has created lasting change and strengthened rural health systems across the state.

## JULIE SORENSEN, PHD



## NEXT GENERATIONS

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**ABBY SCOTT**



**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY**  
DIVERSITY DATA ANALYSIS

**NAMITA KULKAMI**



**CORNELL UNIVERSITY**  
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

**VUONG HOANG**



**COLGATE UNIVERSITY**  
ACCESS TO MATERNITY CARE

## RESEARCH & POLICY FELLOWSHIP

**NATALIE TORO**



**TUORO COLLEGE OF  
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE**  
RURAL PHYSICIAN DIVERSITY

**MITCHELL BROOKS**



**BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY**  
ACCESS TO PREP IN RURAL  
COMMUNITIES

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

We recognize the exceptional service of Helen Evans, Claire Parde and Jack Salo whose third terms ended in 2024 and welcome new board members Anna Meyerhoff, April Miles, Aidan O'Connor, Anna Wells, and Christine Paul.



**Anna Meyerhoff**

*New York Center for Agricultural  
Medicine & Health*



**April Miles**

*East Hill Medical  
Center*



**Aidan O'Connor**

*Greenport Rescue  
Squad*



**Anna Wells**

*Seven Valley Health  
Coalition*



**Christine Paul**

*Madison County Rural  
Health Association*

Michael Pease completed his term as Board President when Alison Coates was elected at the Annual Meeting in September. Ann Abdella was elected Vice-President. Nancy McGraw and Melissa Wendland continue as Treasurer and Secretary.



*Shari Weiss*

Shari Weiss, Chair



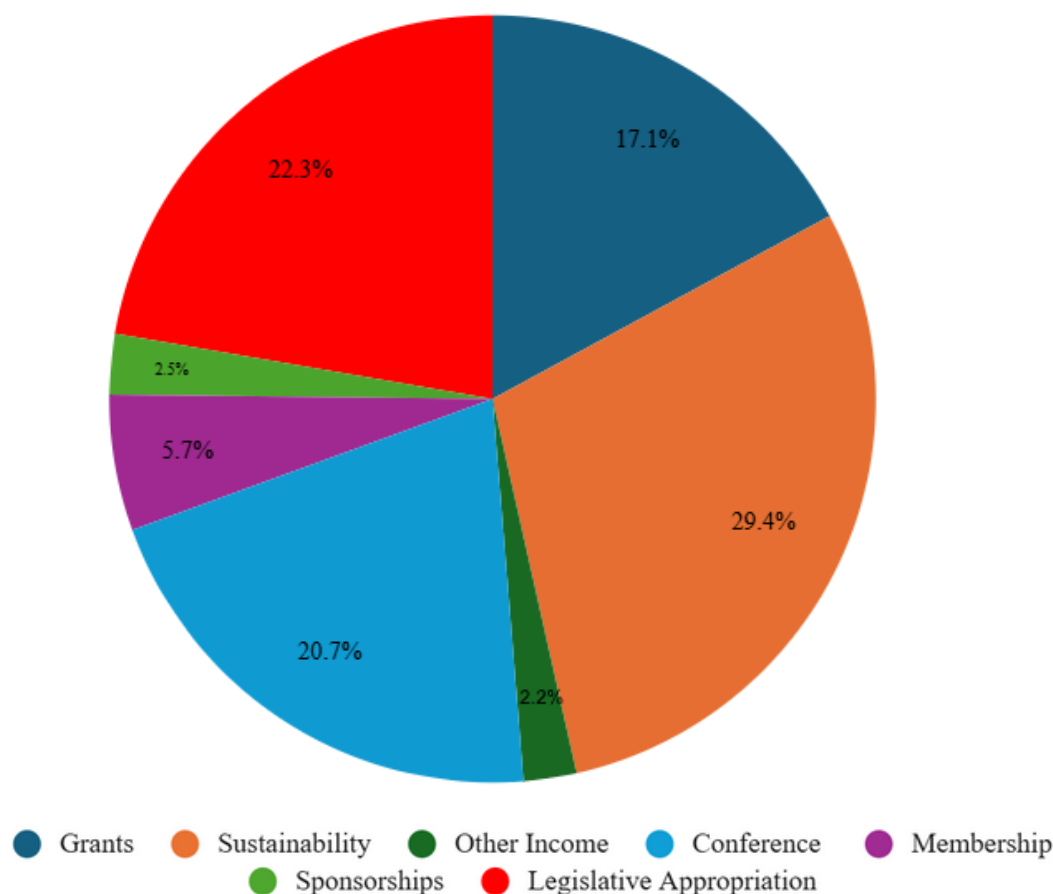


# FINANCE COMMITTEE

The NYSARH Audit was completed by Bysiek CPAs which provided a clean opinion. Thanks to Bowers & Co. CPA for providing accounting services for NYSARH all year round. NYSARH appreciates the professionalism and flexibility of the team at Bowers that provide day-to-day accounting support



2024 Revenue \$510,346



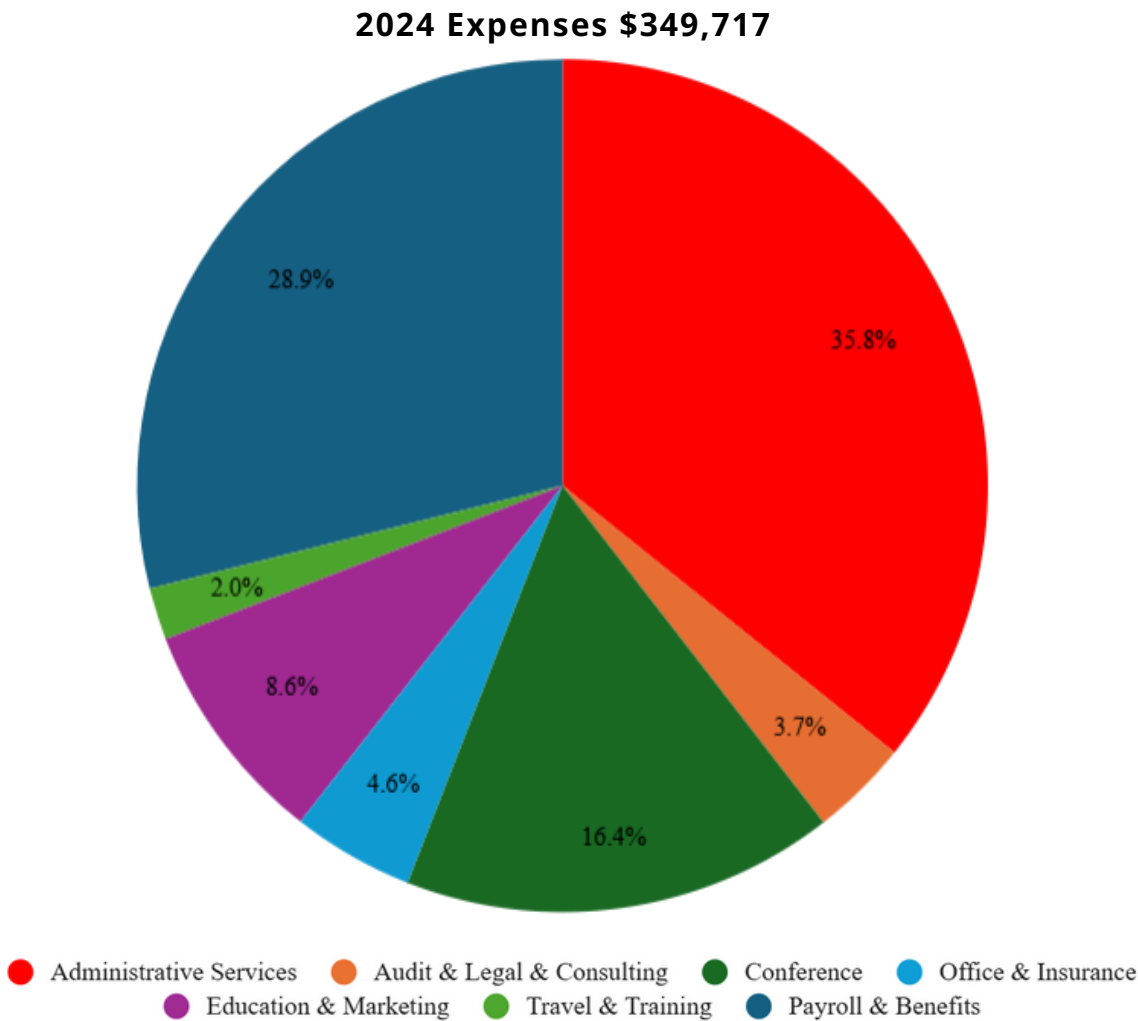
NYSARH thanks the following organizations for providing grant funding during 2024:

- National Rural Health Association
- Health Foundation of Western & Central New York
- Community Foundation for South Central New York
- Fors Marsh
- New York Funders Alliance

# FINANCE COMMITTEE

During 2024 NYSARH received \$1,213,729 from NYS DOH as a Legislative Appropriation. Of this, \$677,337 was passed on to hospitals enrolled in the Rural Healthcare Access Development program to reimburse them for approved expenses, \$422,721 was reimbursed to Rural Health Networks and \$113,671 was retained by NYSARH for administering the program.

Most of this funding was from the 2023-24 appropriation and was distributed in the first quarter of 2024. NYSARH received an appropriation of \$1.1 million for 2024-25 which was distributed during the first quarter of 2025.



*Nancy McGraw*  
Nancy McGraw, Treasurer





# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



Rural Health Policy, Advocacy & Education

Fellowships & Internships

Volunteer Opportunities

Job Postings (New)

Rural Diversity Data Dashboard (New)

In-Person Events & Networking

NYSARH/New England Rural Health  
Association Monthly Rural Health  
Webinars & CEUs

Quarterly Digital Newsletter  
& E-Mail Updates

The NYSARH Membership Committee is a dedicated, forward-thinking group of engaged volunteers! This year, we updated our charter, collaborated with a consultant to develop a toolkit of NYSARH marketing materials, and refined our brand message to ensure it's easy for anyone to share.

Our focus has been on strengthening our value proposition and membership benefits, which include:

- An inclusive community of rural health stakeholders providing support in policy, advocacy, and education
- Fellowship and internship opportunities
- Job postings
- A new rural health diversity data dashboard
- A monthly digital newsletter and networking events

Looking ahead, we're committed to launching a membership drive in 2025, expanding our social media presence, and continuously monitoring key performance indicators to track our progress.



Melissa Wendland

Melissa Wendland, Chair

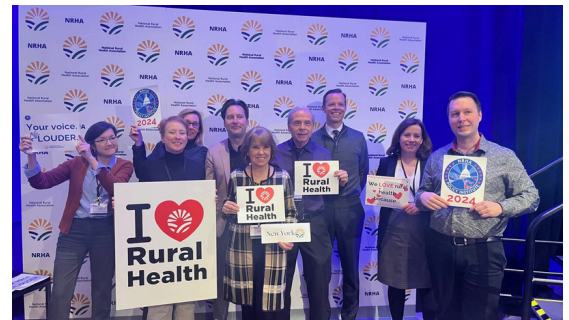


## POLICY COMMITTEE



NYSARH participated in the Rural Resources Fair in the well of the Legislative Office Building in March hosted by the Joint Commission on Rural Resources.

The Health Foundation of Western and Central New York provided stipends to enable three NYSARH board members to join them at the NRHA Policy Institute in Washington, DC.



NYSARH partnered with the NYS Children's Alliance to successfully advocate for funding for victims services and child advocacy centers. NYSARH continued to advocate for rural EMS and supported the End Medical Debt coalition during the 2024 NYS legislative session.

*Mandy Qualls*

Mandy Qualls, Chair



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NYSARH was pleased to partner with the New England Rural Health Association again this year to offer rural health webinars on a variety of topics. Thanks to the Community Foundation for South Central New York for sponsoring the series.

The Public Health Partnership Conference was held May 1-3 in Saratoga Springs in partnership with the NYS Public Health Association and NYS Association of County Health Officials. There were over 500 attendees.

The Rural Health Symposium was held in collaboration with the Public Health Department of the Binghamton University Decker School of Nursing and Health Sciences on the bank of the Chenango River in Binghamton. Plenary Speakers were Alana Knudson, PhD Director NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, and Brian Justice, DC shared fascinating data on rural health and wellness. Karen Madden NYS Director, Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health and Director, Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development, Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management gave welcome remarks.

Month	Topic	Speaker
Jan	Rural LGBTQ+ Health, Well-Being, and Access to Care	Carrie Henning-Smith, PhD, MPH, MSW Hannah MacDougall, PhD, MSW, LICSW
Feb	Confidentiality and Rural Healthcare: A Bioethics Continuing Education Session	Paul Cummins, PhD Jane Oppenlander, PhD
Mar	Understanding Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Issues in Rural New York	Robert Martiniano, DrPH, MPA
Apr	Oral Health Navigator: A Creative Interprofessional Workforce Solution for Maine's School Oral Health Program	Kate Christiansen RDH, IPDH, BA Nicole Breton, MPH
May	Quaboag Connector: A Sustainable Model for Rural Transportation & MOVE Sullivan	Jen Healy, MPA Laura Quigley
Jun	Comprehensive Sexual Health for Transgender and Gender Diverse Individuals	Erica A. Bostick, MD
Jul	Oral Educational Opportunities for Rural Oral Health Equity	Elizabeth Flannery, MPH
Oct	Eliminating Hepatitis C in Rural Communities	Colleen Flanigan, RN, MS
Nov	What is Rural, anyway?	Kevin J. Bennett, PhD,



Karin Pantel, Chair





## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) provides NYSARH with our base funding of \$10,000 each year along with a stipend to send a representative to their Leadership Training in July. NYSARH used the NRHA funding to support the Communication Development Specialist position. We were thrilled that Janiya Donson was able to support NYSARH in this role for all of 2024. She produced most of our communication materials including website, social media, newsletters and the Annual Report.

Through a partnership with the Hartford Foundation NRHA offered grants to state associations to implement a project for older adults. NYSARH received one of these grants to share resources and produce a Rural Summit on Aging to help rural communities implement the New York Master Plan for Aging. The Summit will take place in Ithaca on April 29th.

Similarly, NYSARH secured an NRHA MacKenzie Scott grant to continue work on Rural Diversity. Focus Groups are planned for 2025 to complete this project. In the fall, NYSARH was included in a cooperative agreement with HHS managed by ForsMarsh with partners from all over the country to increase awareness and utilization of vaccines for respiratory viruses called Risk Less. Do More.



**National Rural  
Health Association**



*Tina Barber*

Tina Barber, Chair



# Watch for Exciting New Developments in 2025

- Older Adult Rural Support (OARS)
- Rural Summit on Aging
- Public Health Partnership Conference
- Statewide Aggregate Rural Health Needs Analysis
- Rural Health Symposium
- and More!

<https://nysarh.org>

If you are interested in joining any of these Committees to deepen your engagement with NYSARH and its Mission, please let us know. There is a Volunteer link on the NYSARH website. We welcome new perspectives at any time of year.

<https://nysarh.org/current-members/request-to-volunteer/>

*Follow us!*

CONTACT US !

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