

New York State Association For Rural Health

Rural Health Symposium 2025



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Mantosh Dewan MD

17 September, 2025 - 18 September, 2025

Lakefront Hotel, Geneva NY



NYS ASSOCIATION FOR
RURAL HEALTH

Welcome

Welcome to the 2025 NYSARH Rural Health Symposium

Welcome, distinguished guests, respected speakers, and dedicated participants, to the 2025 New York State Association for Rural Health's Annual Symposium — recognized statewide as a premier gathering for professionals in healthcare, public health, human services, mental health, workforce development, community organizations, rural health networks, and all key stakeholders advancing the future of rural health innovation.

We are delighted to host this event on the serene shores of Seneca Lake in beautiful Geneva, New York. This year's symposium promises exceptional energy and engagement, featuring the annual NYSARH meeting, acclaimed speakers, and ample time for meaningful networking.

It is our honor to welcome:

- Mantosh Dewan, MD – Keynote Speaker, President of Upstate University
- Kaushal Nanavati, MD – Plenary Speaker, author, and renowned wellness educator

This assembly reflects our shared commitment to tackling challenges and celebrating innovations in rural health delivery throughout New York State. Thank you to our organizers, sponsors, and volunteers, whose dedicated efforts make this gathering possible.

Let us seize this opportunity to learn, connect, and champion the health and well-being of rural communities together. Enjoy the symposium!



Michele Foster, Chair



Douglas Wildermuth, Chair

Agenda

Wednesday 17 September 2025



10:00am - 12:00pm

Registration
Lobby



11:30pm - 1:00pm

Lunch
Restaurant



1:00pm - 2:00pm

Welcome & Plenary Speaker
Ballroom



2:15pm - 3:15pm

Policy Panel
Ballroom



3:15pm - 3:45pm

Exhibitor Break & Strategic Plan
Lobby/Promenade



3:45pm - 4:45pm

Breakout Sessions
Ballroom & Breakout Rooms



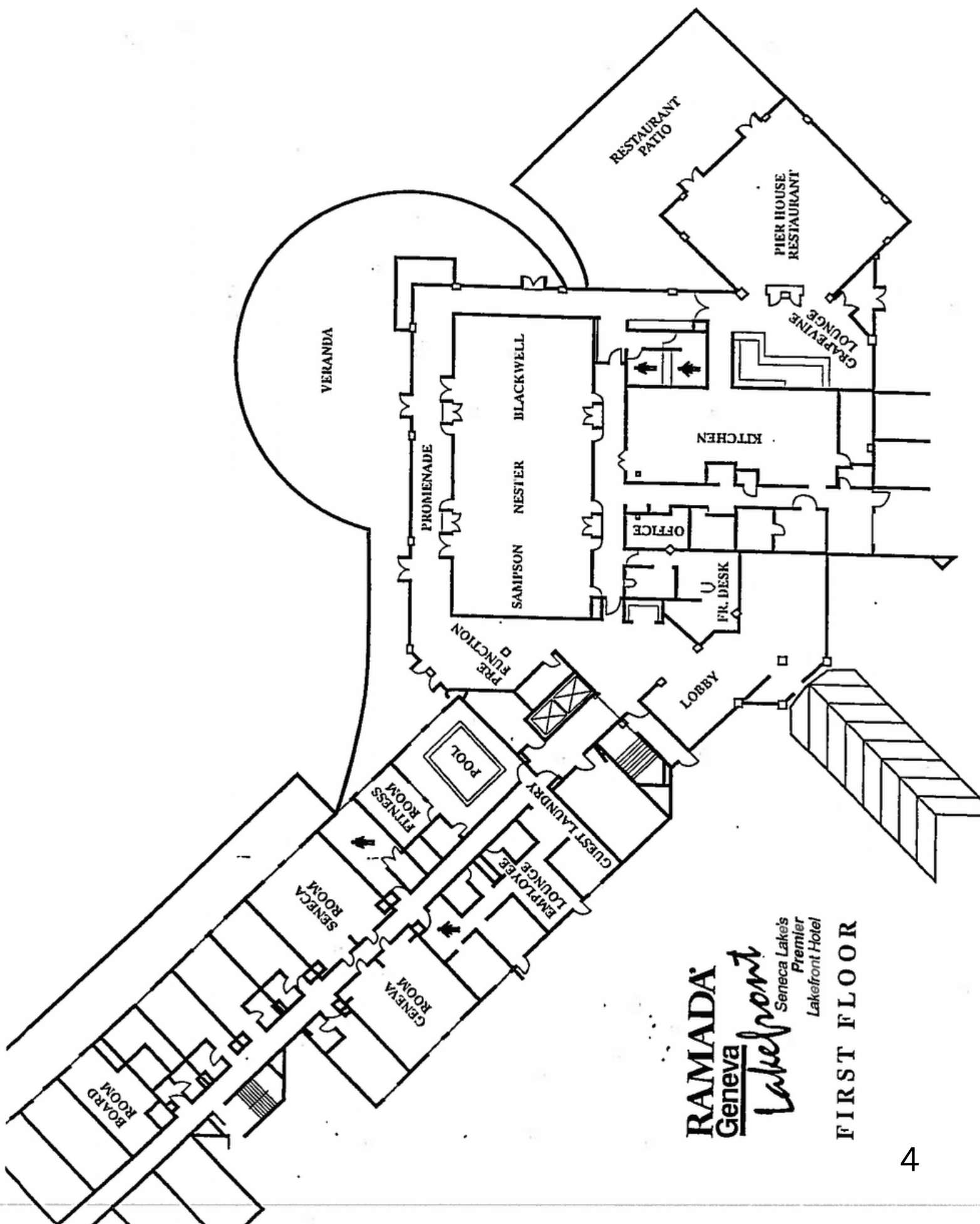
5:00pm - 6:30pm

Networking Reception & Posters
Tent



6:30pm

Dinner On Your Own
See back for list of locations



RAMADA
Geneva
Lakefront
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Agenda

Thursday 18 September 2025



7:00am - 7:30am

Group Walk
Adjacent Park



7:30am - 8:30am

Breakfast
Restaurant



8:30am - 9:30am

Breakout Sessions
Ballroom & Breakout Rooms



9:30am - 10:00am

Exhibitor Break & Strategic Plan
Lobby/Promenade



10:00am - 11:00am

Announcements & Keynote
Ballroom



11:00am - 12:00pm

Annual Meeting
Ballroom



12:00pm - 12:30pm

Wrap-Up & Social Time
Ballroom



12:30pm-12:45pm

Board Photo
Ballroom

Keynote Speaker; Mantosh Dewan MD

How To Make Rural Healthy

The rural health system is not broken; it was designed with incomplete and irrational parts. Diagnosing the fundamental pathology enables a more rational-if still difficult-discussion on making it healthy.

Dr. Mantosh J. Dewan is a distinguished leader in academic medicine and psychiatry, currently serving as President and SUNY Distinguished Service Professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University. A graduate of the University of Bombay, he completed his residency and served as Chief Resident in Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical Center. Dr. Dewan has held numerous leadership positions throughout his career, including Chair of the Department of Psychiatry from 1999 to 2011, and has been instrumental in medical education as the Director of the medical student clerkship and the residency training program.



Plenary Speaker: Kaushal Nanavati MD

Mental Health: Celebrating a thousand births

When it comes to mental health for the elderly, for our friends and family, our co-workers, and ourselves, there are some fundamental hacks rooted in deep philosophy and practical science that can help us to celebrate and offer closure to the thousand lives we've all lived. Want to know more? Come join me for this keynote filled with stories, song, and guidance to help you and your loved ones heal from within.

Dr. Kaushal B. Nanavati was born in India and grew up in Rochester, New York. He has been a Rural Family Physician and has practiced in Central New York for over 29 years. He is currently the Assistant Dean of Wellness, Chair of Faculty Council, and Director of Integrative Medicine and Cancer Survivorship at SUNY Upstate Medical University. He has written a book series on Wellness titled, "CORE 4 of Wellness" and enjoys educating people on wellness, self-care, and achieving contentment and peace in life using humor, stories, and real, tangible examples.



Policy Panel



Dr. Anna Kelles
Assembly District 125

Dr. Anna Kelles represents the 125th District, including Tompkins County and the majority of Cortland County. Assemblymember Kelles serves Assembly Committees on Environmental Conservation, Agriculture, Housing, Correction, Health, and Higher Education. She is the Chair of both the Commission on Rural Resources and the Subcommittee on Agricultural Production & Technology. She is a member of the Legislative Women's Caucus, the Task Force on Women's Issues and the Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition Policy.

Since taking office in 2021, Assemblymember Kelles has sponsored and passed legislation to protect public health, critical natural lands and underrepresented communities. She brought international attention to the environmental concerns of consolidated cryptocurrency mining using proof-of-work validation methods.



Dr. Rachel May
Senate District 48

Senator Rachel May represents Central New York's 48th District, including Syracuse and parts of Onondaga and Cayuga Counties. She chairs the Consumer Protection Committee and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources.

Senator May has championed significant legislation, including election reforms, tenant-centered housing reforms, criminal justice reform, and ambitious climate initiatives. As Consumer Protection Committee chair, she advocates for the rights of consumers against corporate abuse and fraud.

Senator May had a successful career in higher education before running for public office, initially as a professor of Russian at Stony Brook University. After moving to Syracuse in 2001, she retrained in ecology, becoming the director of sustainability education at Syracuse University. She holds a master's from Oxford and a Ph.D. from Stanford, along with a master's from SUNY-ESF. She is currently serving her fourth term.

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create rural
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Wednesday Breakout Session Presenters



Renae Rokicki, Upstate Medical University **The Importance of Organizational Culture and Generations in the Workforce**

Renae Rokicki, M.Ed., is the Senior Leadership and Development Coordinator within Professional Development and Learning at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY. As such, she specializes in providing learning opportunities and coaching services to the workforce and leadership on professional development, employee engagement, teambuilding, organizational effectiveness and leadership. With extensive experience in the non-profit, health and higher education environment, Renae has a professional and personal passion for the value of positive organizational culture.



Shari Weiss, Cayuga Community Health Network **The Importance of Organizational Culture and Generations in the Workforce**

Shari Weiss is the current Executive Director of Cayuga Community Health Network. Weiss has almost two decades of public and behavioral health experience along with a Ph.D. in Public Health and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Her background includes working in the field of Substance Use treatment, HIV Prevention and Housing. Shari is also a college professor, an educator, a public speaker, an actor, and a peer reviewer for the National Journal of American Medicine. Recently she was accepted into Cohort 10 of the Health Leadership Fellows.



Melissa Wendland, Common Ground Health **Rural Health Reimagined: Policy Support & Change for Rural Aging in New York**

Melissa Wendland facilitates multi-stakeholder commissions that address systemic challenges in the health care workforce, long-term care, and health inequities among the rural poor. She is a legislative advocate highlighting opportunities at the NYS Department of Health, Department of Education and Assembly. Past successes include coordinating a community-wide grant submission that awarded \$26.6M to the Finger Lakes region from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation as part of the Affordable Care Act Center for Innovation, facilitating a \$3.2M community-wide award to improve care transitions for high-risk Medicare beneficiaries, and designing a neighborhood-based health screening and education clinic.



Paul Fahey, Primeau Fahey & Associates **Rural Health Reimagined: Policy Support & Change for Rural Aging in New York**

Paul Fahey is Vice President of Primeau • Fahey & Associates, a strategic communications and public affairs firm with deep experience in public health, rural health, and advocacy. He has facilitated statewide policy discussions, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning initiatives for the New York State Department of Health, NYSARH, and numerous health and human services organizations. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience, Paul helps organizations align messaging, policy priorities, and coalition-building to achieve measurable impact.

Wednesday Breakout Session Presenters



Ann Marie Cook, Lifespan of Greater Rochester **NYS Master Plan on Aging**

Ann Marie Cook, MPA is President/CEO for Lifespan of Greater Rochester. She has been at Lifespan over 29 years. She is the chair of the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse, serves on several community boards and serves on US Senator Gillibrand's Working Group on Aging. Ann Marie also was on the Governor's



Miesha Marzell, SUNY Binghamton **Beyond the Buzzword: Empowering Students to Advance Harm Reduction in Rural Communities**

Miesha advances public health through research, education, and community engagement that addresses substance use, health disparities, and wellness across diverse populations. Her harm reduction work focuses on reducing risks, promoting evidence-based strategies, and empowering individuals and communities to improve health and quality of life.



Susan Goldstien, SUNY Binghamton **Beyond the Buzzword: Empowering Students to Advance Harm Reduction in Rural Communities**

Susan Glodstein is a board-certified adult psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner, board-certified adult psychiatric-mental health clinical nurse specialist and coordinator of the family psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program at Binghamton University's Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Before joining the faculty at Binghamton, she was on the faculty at The George Washington University and Stony Brook University School of Nursing, where she served as director of the psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner program and nursing continuing professional development.



Amanda Horner, NYSARH **Reducing Stigma around Older Adult Mental Health in Rural NYS**

As NYSARH's Project Coordinator, Amanda Horner, MPH, CHES® oversees the implementation of a grant portfolio focused on rural mental health initiatives to ensure project deliverables are met on-time and within budget. She is a Certified Health Education Specialist with an MPH in Public Health Practice and has experience in a range of nonprofit and community based organizations in the health and human services, technology, and library sectors.

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Thursday Breakout Session Presenters



Amanda Horner, NYSARH

Collaborating Opportunity to Support Rural Mental Health in New York State

As NYSARH's Project Coordinator, Amanda Horner, MPH, CHES® oversees the implementation of a grant portfolio focused on rural mental health initiatives to ensure project deliverables are met on-time and within budget. She is a Certified Health Education Specialist with an MPH in Public Health Practice and has experience in a range of nonprofit and community based organizations in the health and human services, technology, and library sectors.



Joshua Grove, Syracuse University

Collaborating Opportunity to Support Rural Mental Health in New York State

Joshua is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at Syracuse University where he studies population health and inequality. He was a pastor for nearly 20 years where he worked with fellow members of the LGBTQ+ community. Josh is interested in working toward improving rural access to substance use and mental health treatment.



Augusta Williams, SUNY Upstate Medical

Protecting Rural Worker Safety and Health against Climate Exposure

Augusta Williams, ScD, MPH is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University in the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. She serves as the Assistant Director of Upstate's Public Health Program, as well as the Assistant Director of the Central New York Children's Environmental Health Center. Dr. Williams examines the impacts of extreme weather and environmental hazards on public health and safety, specifically on workers and children.



Susan Harris, Activist

Climate Action Now

Dr. Susan Harris is Climate Chair for the NYS Public Health Association (NYSPHA) which has been awarded "Excellence in Climate Leadership" by the American Public Health Association (APHA). She is a founding member of Third Act Upstate NY, steering committee member of the Climate Resilience and Education Task Force (CRETf), ambassador for Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, and member of NYRenews, all organizations pushing the climate agenda.

Thursday Breakout Session Presenters



Alex Moore, Human Services Coalition

Community Health & Resource Network: A Coordinated Approach to Healthcare and Human Services

As the Community Integration Manager, Alex Moore serves as the social care lead for the Community Health & Resource Network. She is responsible for the community based organization recruitment and support and collaborates with the health system and other stakeholders to help develop the integrated network. Alex previously served as the Chief of Staff for a healthcare technology organization specializing in operations and program implementation.



Nicole Zulu, Human Services Coalition

Community Health & Resource Network: A Coordinated Approach to Healthcare and Human Services

In her role as Director of Health Planning, Nicole Zulu has experience convening stakeholders across multiple sectors and providing a neutral forum to exchange ideas, promote collaboration, and supporting the alignment of resources as the Director of the Tompkins County Health Planning Council. In an effort to expand collaboration and coordination efforts, Nicole is part of the project team for the Community Health & Resource Network. She has led Medicare counseling efforts as the Coordinator of the Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance Program for Tompkins County and has research experience in health behavior and health policy.



Lucas Sienk, Common Ground Health

Diversity Dashboard, Project AFAR

Lucas Sienk plans, designs and executes analytic approaches and resulting reports and presentations for a variety of stakeholders and staff. Skilled in data analysis, project management and performance improvement, he also interprets results and prepares reports.

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Upcoming Webinars

LGBTQ+ Education: The Complexities of Identities

Presenter:
Scott Fearing

When: Oct 16, 2025
Where: Zoom

[Register Here](#)



Comptroller Report On Rural Health Workforce Shortages

Presenters:
Erin Fraher &
Joshua Simons

When: Oct 30, 2025
Where: Zoom

[Register Here](#)



View from the Hill: Updates on Rural Health Policy

Presenter:
Carrie
Cochran-McClain

When: Nov 20, 2025
Where: Zoom

[Register Here](#)



Collaborating Opportunity to Support Rural Mental Health in New York State

Presenters:
Joshua Grove &
Amanda Horner

When: Dec 11, 2025
Where: Zoom

[Register Here](#)



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Poster Presentations

MARY HANDLEY



College Inclusion in Rural New York State: Lived experiences of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

ERICA LACEY



College Inclusion in Rural New York State: Lived experiences of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

JEFFREY ALLEN



The Direct and Indirect Effects of Food Insecurity and Variable US Feeding Program Support During the COVID Pandemic on Members of a Low-income, Rural Obesogenic County.

SUZANNE SOLTYSIK



The Direct and Indirect Effects of Food Insecurity and Variable US Feeding Program Support During the COVID Pandemic on Members of a Low-income, Rural Obesogenic County.

SUZANNE MARASCO



The BRIGHT Project: Increasing the Availability of Behavioral Health Professionals in Western NY

DARLA KENT



The BRIGHT Project: Increasing the Availability of Behavioral Health Professionals in Western NY

KRISTEN SEYFRIED



Bridging the Gap: FF Thompson Hospital Emergency Food Pantry

AMANDA REYNOLDS



Bridging the Gap: FF Thompson Hospital Emergency Food Pantry

KRISTIN PULLYBLANK



Community-Driven Successes in Improving Quality of Life For Older Rural Adults: A Comparative Case Study

KIMBERLY WITKOWSKI



Community-Driven Successes in Improving Quality of Life For Older Rural Adults: A Comparative Case Study

HARRY WHITNEY



Survival of Rural Medicine: Past, Present, and Future

GRACE GUGERTY



Rewriting the Birth Plan: The Role of the Emergency Department and EMS After Rural Hospital Obstetric Unit Closures

IDEN LI



Examining Pike County Residents' Attitudes on Physical Activity Based on Built Environments

SAMANTHA BALLAS



Prehospital Stroke Care: Policy and Clinical Recommendations for Rural New York

ABIGAIL DUVALL



Increasing Access to Opioid Treatment Through Mobile Medication Units (MMUs) in Rural New York

FRANK CERNY



A Model To Reduce Rural Health Inequities

DONNY YBARBA



The 4-Town Connector Public Transit Project

CHRISTINE CHEMMACHERIL



Ergonomic workplace injuries as predictors of opioid-related outcomes in New York State: An ecological study

SABRINA SOTO



Critical Role of Medicaid Reimbursement for Doulas in Rural New York

Strategic Planning Activity

The NYSARH Board of Directors last adopted a Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. A lot has happened during these five years! It is time to look forward to 2026-2028.

There is an interactive activity in the lobby near the Registration Table. Please stop back several times during the two-day Symposium as the prompts will change.

- What are your goals for NYSARH in the coming months?
- How can NYSARH serve the needs of members more effectively?
- Who are some people who may be able to help NYSARH achieve our mission?
- Why do you belong to NYSARH?

We want to hear from you!

Keep your eyes out for a member survey that will be distributed after the Symposium.



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*Find free or low cost medical services

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Restaurants In Geneva

Torrey Park

Address: 89 Avenue E Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 7 minute walk

Torrey Park is a modern American restaurant and bar offering a seasonal menu and an extensive wine list. It's known for its inviting atmosphere and unique culinary creations.

Ports Cafe

Address: 4432 West Lake Rd, Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 8 minute drive

Ports Cafe is a Mediterranean-inspired bistro with a focus on fresh seafood, steaks, and pasta dishes. The restaurant is located on a quiet street and is known for its intimate dining experience.

F2T Restaurant and Bar

Address: 41 Lakefront Drive , Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 1 minute walk

F2T (Farm to Table) offers a fine dining experience with a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients. It features a sophisticated menu and an extensive wine selection, often with views of Seneca Lake.

Eddie O'Briens

Address: 92 Seneca St, Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 9 minute walk

Eddie O'Briens is a classic pub and grill, offering a relaxed environment to enjoy traditional pub fare, burgers, and a wide selection of beers. It is a go-to spot for both locals and visitors.

Kindred Fare

Address: 512 Hamilton St, Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 5 minute walk

This restaurant focuses on new American cuisine with a menu inspired by seasonal, local ingredients from the Finger Lakes region. It's praised for its cozy, rustic-chic decor and craft cocktails.

The Rusty Pig

Address: 60 Seneca Street Geneva, NY

Distance: Approximately 9 minute walk

The Rusty Pig is a local favorite offering casual American fare, including pulled pork, ribs, and other barbecue specialties. It's a no-frills spot perfect for a relaxed meal.

The Elephant

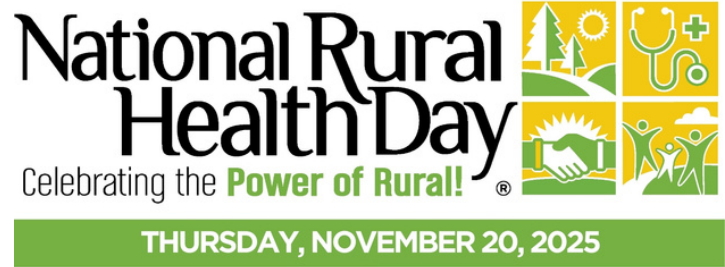
Address: 1 Franklin Square, Geneva, NY, but moving soon

Distance: Approximately 7 minute walk

The Elephant is a unique culinary destination specializing in Thai-inspired dishes. It is praised for its authentic flavors and charming atmosphere.



HONOR GOOD WORK IN RURAL HEALTH & SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS TODAY!



DEADLINE Oct. 17, 2025 Submit OR Apply at: nysarh.org/awards

Senator Patricia M. McGee Award

The Senator Patricia M. McGee Rural Health Worker Award is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution of major significance to improve the health of rural populations. The Award was renamed for Senator McGee in recognition of the late Senator's unyielding commitment to improving rural residents' quality of life through legislation which will have a positive impact for many years to come.

Dr. Gary Ogden Rural Health Practitioner of the Year Award

The Rural Health Practitioner award recognizes a rural clinical Practitioner of any level or specialty. Candidates for this award should exhibit the same qualities we witnessed in Dr. Gary Ogden; a passion for life, selfless dedication to their community, organization, and especially, their patients; a strong sense of truth, and the conviction, belief, and action to make dreams a reality.

Outstanding Rural Health Program

This award recognizes a community-wide, regional or statewide rural health program involving one or more health care professionals, or entities that promote or facilitate the development of the rural health care delivery system.

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See more details at below.

The New York State Association for Rural Health is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, grassroots membership organization working to preserve and improve health and human services in rural New York State. NYSARH is a member of the National Rural Health Association.



WHAT WE DO

- Work to maintain a diverse membership that is representative of geographic locale, culture, gender, economic status and racial or ethnic background.
- Embrace a holistic or whole person approach to health, which recognizes the inter-relationship that exists among social, physical and emotional well-being.
- Recognize the benefit of partnering with other organizations and associations with similar interests in a collegial and collaborative manner.
- Respect the autonomy and supporting the self-determination of local communities in identifying and resolving their unique health care needs.
- Empower members to effect positive change in rural health through grassroots efforts.

ENJOY THE BENEFITS!

- Job postings Post your available positions or look for a new job on NYSARH's website
- Rural Diversity Data Dashboard to assist with identifying social determinant of health challenges, successes and trends. Compare data between urban and rural areas, by ZIP Code, County, or Census Tract
- Networking opportunities
- NYSARH Rural News and Grant Opportunity Updates
- Discounts on NYSARH conference and partner events like the NYSARH Fall Rural Health Symposium and Public Health Partnership conferences
- Rural educational webinar discounts: Monthly rural health educational webinars are available free to members
- Monthly Newsletters
- State and federal legislative and regulatory policy updates and advocacy on issues affecting rural health and wellness
- Fellowships and internships for students interested in rural health and health policy in New York State
- Connections to rural health resources

Thank You to Our Symposium Committee

Michele Foster,

Executive Director
Pivotal Public Health Partnership

Douglas Wildermuth

Emergency Medical Service Director
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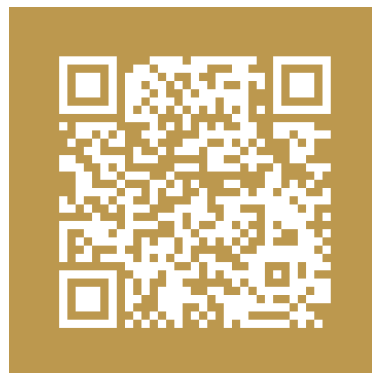
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