

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Expanding Support for Rural Older Adults' Mental Health Across New York

NYSARH is excited to announce a \$500,000 grant renewal from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to continue the Older Adult Rural Support (OARS) Program for a second year. OARS is a comprehensive program to support rural older adult mental health and wellness by enhancing community awareness, reducing mental health stigma, and providing mental health training and professional development opportunities.



Mother Cabrini
HEALTH FOUNDATION™

Building on the programming launched in 2025, the second year will focus on older adult mental health advocacy and community education, and mental/behavioral health workforce development. Planned activities include community outreach and engagement, Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training, educational programming for high school and college students, continuing education for health professionals, and new virtual training modules for the OARS online learning platform.

This work is delivered in collaboration with Catskill Hudson AHEC, Central New York AHEC, the Center for Health Impact, Health WorkForce New York, Hudson Mohawk AHEC, Northern AHEC, NY FarmNet, Primeau Fahey & Associates, and Western New York Rural AHEC.

Read the full news release [here](#) and learn more about OARS at nysarh.org/oars.

Upcoming Webinar

Community Paramedicine in Action Webinar

In rural Washington County, getting to the nearest hospitals in Glens Falls, Saratoga, Troy, or even Vermont can take a long time. That's why the Cambridge Valley Rescue Squad (CVRS) started Community Paramedicine, bringing healthcare right to people's homes. Paramedics visit patients for non-emergency needs like checking medications, helping manage ongoing health problems, and following up with people who call 911 often. This means fewer long trips to the hospital.



CHES, Social
Work, OT, PT
Credits Offered!

February 19th, 2026 1pm EST on Zoom

[Register Now!](#)



[Register for Conference](#)

Call for Student Posters

The New York State Association for Rural Health (NYSARH), the New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA), the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), and the New York State Public Health Corps invite students to submit a proposal to present at the 2026 Public Health Partnership Conference.

This year's theme is "Advancing Health Equity Together Through Innovation and Communication."

[Submit A Student Poster](#)

Deadline: February 27 by 5pm

Eligibility

Any full-time student enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program in New York State is eligible to submit an abstract.

NYSARH in the Community

NRHA Rural Health Policy Institute

NYSARH led the New York State Delegation on Capitol Hill during the NRHA Rural Health Policy Institute to advance federal policy priorities impacting rural communities across New York State.

We appreciate our partners for their continued collaboration and shared commitment to strengthening rural health systems. Together, we are elevating rural perspectives in national policy discussions and advancing meaningful progress for rural New Yorkers.



Share Your Story With Us!

We know you're doing amazing things! Do you have an article you want us to post on our website?

Tell us all about the wonderful activities your organization is up to and share photos of you in the community. We're excited to feature you and celebrate your success.

[Submit Here](#)

SAVE THE DATE 2026 RURAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM



SEPT
17

&

SEPT
18

Join us in Clayton, NY at the Thousand Island Harbor Hotel

The NYSARH Annual Symposium is a premier gathering for healthcare, public health, and key stakeholders interested in rural health innovations.

mark your calendar!



NYSARH.ORG

Executive Director's Corner by Jennifer Muthig

Last week, I was honored to attend the 37th Annual National Rural Health Association Rural Health Policy Institute and Capitol Hill Day in Washington, D.C., alongside members of our Board of Directors. Over three days, rural health leaders from across the nation convened to learn, strategize, and elevate the collective voices of our communities directly with policymakers. The agenda featured dynamic sessions with members of Congress, federal agency leaders, and policy experts. Including discussions on the future of rural health, workforce challenges, integrated networks, and legislative priorities that shape access to care for rural populations, workforce shortages, payment policies, and rural health infrastructure.

It was one of the most energizing advocacy experiences of my tenure of twenty-years.

What made this experience especially impactful was the bipartisan engagement we were part of on Capitol Hill Day. NYSARH members joined hundreds of advocates in meetings with our Representatives and Senators to articulate rural health realities, policy solutions, and how great rural is. These conversations reinforced that rural health is not a partisan issue. It is a shared commitment to ensuring equitable care and sustainable systems for our rural communities. I returned home energized by the strengthened relationships, bridges built, and the opportunities ahead to translate advocacy into meaningful action.



CDC Self Paced Trainings on Rural Public Health

[Learn More](#)

CDC launched free, online self-paced trainings designed to strengthen public health resources in rural communities. The topics are specific for rural settings and include an introduction to rural public health, responding to public health emergencies, and partnering with rural communities for public health communications.

Register on CDC TRAIN and start learning today! Free CE's provided

2026 **Let's Talk About Health**
CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS IN RURAL NEW YORK
A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND CAREGIVERS

2026 Rural Health Conference
FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
AND CAREGIVERS

Save the Date!
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026
8:30 AM - 4 PM

Stay tuned to learn about a special gift for early registration!

The conference planning committee is committed to making this event accessible to all participants. ASL services will be made available upon request. Email tsblasio@alz.org for more information. Continuing education credits available.

[Learn More](#)

New York Volunteer Fire Infrastructure & Response Equipment Grant Program



Deadline; February 25, 2026

This program provides funding to volunteer fire departments and districts in New York for the construction, renovation, or purchase of critical facilities that support fire operations. Funds may also be used for the purchase of fire service equipment to upgrade and improve facilities and response capabilities. Priority points are given to projects located in rural areas.

[Learn More](#)