

## APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

### Promoting Rural Mental Health & Wellbeing: Evidence-Based Interventions & Local-Level Data Tools to Drive Decision-Making

Amanda Horner MPH, CHES®, and Joshua Grove, PhD Candidate, present an engaging breakout session at the upcoming Public Health Partnership Conference, April 22-24 at Lake Placid, New York. During their session on April 23rd, they will present a set of companion reports and data tools building on the results of the [Statewide Aggregate Rural Health Needs Assessment \(SARHNA\)](#).



**Amanda Horner,**  
**MPH, CHES®**

Project Coordinator  
(NYSARH)

Amanda and Joshua will showcase examples drawn from the current landscape of rural-tested, evidence-based interventions to address the unique behavioral health care access challenges faced by rural communities. They will also preview NYSARH's innovative Diversity Dashboard, a powerful tool designed to help public health professionals and community leaders assess and analyze local-level demographic data alongside mental health trends. This dashboard enables users to better understand the intersection of diversity factors and mental health outcomes, facilitating more informed decision-making and intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of rural populations.

This presentation is part of a larger Behavioral Health breakout session coordinated by NYSARH and NYSPHA, where a panel of rural Directors of Community Services will join NYSARH to explore practical strategies for advancing key mental and behavioral health priorities in rural communities. Attendees of this breakout session will gain valuable insights into effective mental health practices in rural settings, as well as practical skills in utilizing data-driven tools to enhance public health initiatives. This session promises to be an important contribution to the conference's focus on strengthening partnerships and improving health equity across diverse communities.



**Joshua Grove**

PhD Candidate  
(Syracuse University)

Scan the QR code to read the SARHNA





## Rural Health Cocktail Party

**\$50 for Cocktail Party**

You're invited to join us for a cocktail party on Thursday, April 23. Great networking. No speeches. All are welcome.

[Scan QR Code to Register](#)



## 2025 Annual Report

The NYSARH 2025 Annual Impact Report is now available! Discover how we've worked to improve the health and well-being of rural New Yorkers over the past year. Read the full report to learn more about our progress, partnerships, and ongoing initiatives.

[Scan QR Code to Read Report](#)





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!

## Let's Talk About Health

Access to healthcare is vital for healthy aging, but older adults in rural areas often face unique barriers. These challenges are rarely addressed in health professions education. This free conference aims to identify and overcome obstacles to rural healthcare by sharing knowledge on population health data, treatment strategies, and available supports, helping build resilience among rural caregivers and providers.

[Register Now!](#)

## Executive Director's Corner by Jennifer Muthig

Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to Peru and spend time in rural communities far removed from the pace and infrastructure many of us take for granted. What stood out most was not how different these communities were, but how much we have in common.

In conversations with local residents, I heard familiar themes: long distances to care, limited transportation options, workforce shortages, and challenges navigating fragmented systems. These are the same barriers we continue to address across rural New York. Yet alongside those challenges was something equally familiar, a deep commitment to community, a culture of neighbors supporting one another, and a shared determination to build stronger, healthier futures despite limited resources. That experience was a powerful reminder that rural communities, regardless of geography, are united by both their challenges and their strengths.

Here at home, we find ourselves in a pivotal moment. As we await final action on the state budget, critical opportunities remain to advance policies that better support those living in rural areas. At the same time, we are preparing for the implementation of the Rural Health Transformation Program, an effort with significant potential to strengthen systems of care, if designed and executed with rural realities in mind.

There is important work ahead. Ensuring that rural providers, community-based organizations, and local partners are positioned to participate fully in these efforts will be key to achieving meaningful, lasting impact.

My time in Peru reinforced what we already know: when we invest in rural communities and work collaboratively, progress is possible. That principle continues to guide our work every day.



## JOIN NYSARH MEMBERSHIP!

# 20% OFF

APRIL 15TH-MAY 31ST



### MEMBER BENEFITS

- State and federal Policy Resources, including legislative trainings, policy briefs, monthly meetings, advocacy toolkits, and more.
- Networking opportunities.
- Discounts on NYSARH conference and partner events like the NYSARH Fall Rural Health Symposium and Public Health Partnership conferences.
- CHES credits discounts for Rural educational webinars.
- RaP Fellowship Opportunities.

JOIN TODAY!



USE CODE  
SPRING2026

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

**NYSARH will be hosting a Membership Drive from April 15th through May 31st**

During this time, NYSARH is offering a **20% discount on all memberships.**

This is a great opportunity to get involved and be a part of NYSARH.

**Why NYSARH membership matters:**

**Members gain access to:**

- Discounts on conferences and partnership events
- Educational rural health webinars
- Updates on grant opportunities
- The Research and Policy Fellowship Program
- State and federal legislative updates
- A statewide network of rural health advocates and professionals

## AmeriCorps VISTA: Holly Wagner

We're proud to spotlight Holly Wagner, our Outreach Specialist AmeriCorps VISTA Member. Holly's dedication to rural health has enriched our team and we're grateful for her commitment to improving health outcomes for rural New Yorkers!

Holly shared "It's an honor to support rural health organizations across New York State. Working with Jennifer and the NYSARH team has deepened my understanding of rural health policy and inspired me to pursue a Master of Public Health at the University at Albany."



## Join NYSARH in Recognizing Mental Health Awareness Month & Older Americans Month

In May, NYSARH will observe Mental Health Awareness Month and Older Americans Month with a campaign centered on older adult mental health and wellbeing in rural communities.

Later this month, we'll share on the OARS website a free media toolkit for this campaign focused on strengths-based messaging, stigma reduction, community awareness, and promising practices that help older adults stay connected and supported.



**Join us this May in promoting the importance of mental health as a vital component of healthy aging in rural communities.**

### Free Self-Paced, On-Demand Online Learning Platform

NYSARH's Older Adult Rural Support (OARS) Program offers a free, self-paced, on-demand online learning platform to provide students and health professionals with training modules on rural older adult mental and behavioral health topics. Current topics available on the platform include social drivers of health, motivational interviewing, rural resilience, trauma-informed care, Bridges Out of Poverty, and caregiving—with more topics to come this year. Earn certificates of completion, with continuing education units (CEUs) available for select professions. Learn more and register at <https://nysarh.org/oars/trainings/>

## 2026 Rural Health Symposium



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**2026 RURAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM**

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

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

**SEPT 17 & SEPT 18**

**Keynote Speaker**  
  
Diane M. Hall, PhD, MSEd  
Director, Office of Rural Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

  
**Karen Madden**, Director, Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development at New York State Department of Health will be speaking on how the **Rural Health Transformation Program** went for the first year.