

# FRONTIER HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

**June 22-23, 2022**  
**DoubleTree Hotel - Billings, MT**



*Join us!*

**The Montana Health Network (MHN) Frontier Healthcare Conference was born from the idea that small healthcare organizations in frontier sized communities experience different situations and struggles than small healthcare organizations in rural defined communities.**

# Overview

## Conference Description

The Montana Health Network (MHN) Frontier Healthcare Conference was born from the idea that small healthcare organizations in frontier sized communities experience different situations and struggles than small healthcare organizations in rural defined communities. Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) are vastly different throughout the nation, and frontier communities' experiences differ from even their rural neighbors.

## Who Should Attend

The conference is intended to provide valuable information, education, and networking opportunities to leaders from CAHs in frontier communities. Networking may also include conversations with representatives from respective Congressional Delegations.

Participation is encouraged for CEOs/Administrators, Board Members, and Staff Leaders from these types of facilities that may be either private facilities (ex. Private non-profits) or government-managed (ex. County-owned). Services might include: inpatient and long-term care; outpatient services for both primary care and ancillary services; home health and visiting nurse services; etc. Please review the attached agenda to determine whether topics included are meaningful to your organization.

## Additional Information

Despite MHN's long tenure as a healthcare education provider in Montana, this is the first time MHN has offered a program of this nature.

Our staff considered input from executive leaders of frontier CAHs in Montana while developing this program. MHN understands that situations vary from community to community and from state to state. Therefore, in an effort to ensure the most beneficial programs to participants, our staff will seek feedback and input for future conferences.

## Frontier Defined

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), frontier is defined as: counties having a population density of six or fewer people per square mile. There are other significant factors to consider as well: (1) Distance from a population center or a specific healthcare service; (2) Travel time to reach a population center or service, especially considering geographic barriers or inclement weather; (3) Functional affiliation with other hospitals; (4) Availability of paved roads; and, (5) Seasonal changes in access to healthcare services.

## Continuing Education

MHN will provide certificates of attendance for each session. While the Montana Board of Nursing Home Administrators did not grant prior approval for CEs from this conference, it will meet all requirements established by the Board for continuing education. Therefore, Montana Nursing Home Administrators should be able to present their conference certificates for the Board when documenting CEs. Participants from states other than Montana are encouraged to contact their Boards of Nursing Home Administrators to identify their requirements for documenting CEs. Additionally, conference sessions will be eligible for CEs with the National Association of Healthcare Executives. All other CE standards should be researched individually for participants' professional organizations.

## Conference Accommodations

The conference is being held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Billings, Montana, on June 22nd and 23rd, 2022. The conference will begin at 12pm on June 22nd with a luncheon. It will conclude by 12:30pm on June 23rd. A block of rooms will be offered at a rate of \$139 per night plus applicable taxes. There will be limited room availability, and reservations under this block will only be available through June 6, 2022. For reservations, call 406-252-7400.

## Registration

Registration to attend the conference in person is \$149 per participant which will include lunch on Day 1 and breakfast on Day 2. Space is limited so interested individuals are encouraged to register early for in-person attendance. Guest room reservations are not included in the registration fee. For those wishing to attend virtually, registration is \$99, and connection instructions will be provided with registration confirmation. **Registration Deadline is May 20, 2022!**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facility:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CE Credit Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(ex. State Board of Nursing Home Administrators; National Association of Healthcare Executives; etc.)

- ☐ **In-person Registration (\$149)**  
☐ **Virtual Registration (\$99)**

**Cost \$149 (Includes: Lunch on Day 1, Breakfast on Day 2, AND CE Certificates)**

*Register early!*

### Options to Register

1. Mail \$149 or \$99 and registration to:  
Rural Health Development  
519 Pleasant Street  
Miles City, MT 59301
2. Call Nadine Elmore at 406-939-1173, or email [nelmore@montanahealthnetwork.com](mailto:nelmore@montanahealthnetwork.com)
3. Registration Deadline is May 20, 2022

Continuing education credits may be available commensurate with the extent of participation in training offered. Each conference session will provide certificates with appropriate CEs granted based on time associated with the training.

# Agenda - Day 1

**12pm                      Networking Luncheon**

**12:30-12:45pm        General Session – Welcome**

**12:45-1:45pm        Opening Keynote**

**The Future of Frontier Hospitals – Policy and Strategy Options** – John Gale, MS, Senior Research Associate and the Director of Policy Engagement at the University of Southern Maine's Maine Rural Health Research Center – Given their location in the most remote and sparsely populated areas of the United States, frontier hospitals face particularly difficult challenges to serving their communities and maintaining their viability. Frontier hospitals serve populations that are older; poorer; and with higher rates of chronic diseases, mental health issue problems, substance use disorders, domestic violence, unintentional injuries, and traffic fatalities. Due to the lack of public transportation and seasonal traffic obstructions, frontier hospitals are often the only accessible source of health care for these vulnerable populations. This presentation will explore policy and strategy options to support frontier hospitals and communities. It will further discuss options for frontier hospitals to improve their service to their communities and enhance their viability. Finally, this presentation will identify the technical assistance and support needs of frontier hospitals to inform state, federal, and philanthropic efforts to sustain frontier hospitals.

**1:45-3:15pm            Interstate Frontier Roundtable**

**What if?** – Montana Health Network (MHN) staff will initiate a Roundtable Discussion about what changes could really make a difference in the viability of frontier healthcare. The discussion will begin with an overview of “waivers” identified by some Montana Frontier Facilities that could potentially benefit frontier healthcare with long-term survivability. Erik Prosser, Wipfli LLP, will assist in facilitating financial discussions with an overview of real world expected impact from approval and implementation of payment waivers. This will include identification of both positive and negative potential outcomes from payment changes and the barriers to accomplishing change. MHN staff will further facilitate a roundtable discussion to identify the real issues facing frontier facilities in their day-to-day operations. Attendees should come prepared to discuss ideas on financial management, clinical and administrative operations, quality initiatives, policy issues, and workforce management.

**3:15-3:30pm            Break**

**3:30-4:30pm            Breakout Sessions (Frontier Healthcare Financial Management)**

1. **Finance for Frontier Hospitals** – Shar Sheaffer, CPA, Dingus, Zarecor & Associates PLLC (DZA) – This presentation will talk about how services at small, mostly swing bed hospitals, can be profitable in the current payment/reimbursement structure. It will focus on common services offered, and how to ensure you are making the most of your cost-based reimbursement.
2. **Planning, Financing, and Optimizing Rural Healthcare Facilities to Address Persistent Workforce Shortages** – Nick Smith, MHA, Principal, and Jason Sieg, Senior Manager, Wipfli LLP – Nick and Jason will explore how rural hospitals are responding to persistent health workforce shortages, with examples of innovative operational, financial and staffing optimization solutions. We will also dive into some of the key takeaways as hospitals undertake large facility and capital projects while staffing and utilization levels remain unsteady and difficult to predict.

**4:30-5:30pm            Meeting(s) with members of Congressional Delegations**

The purpose of these meetings is to give healthcare leaders an opportunity to share items identified during the Frontier Roundtable. Conference attendees from each state are encouraged to contact their Congressional Delegations to highlight key issues facing frontier healthcare and encourage conference attendance. MHN will organize breakouts by state with a final meeting to bring all delegations together. Because of the extreme remote nature of frontier communities, combining issues may provide more critical mass of understanding the issues that really do impact frontier healthcare.

**5:30-6pm                Break (Check-in, etc.)**

**6-7:30pm                Networking, Cocktails, & Dinner (dinner will be on your own)**



# Agenda - Day 2

**7am Breakfast Buffet & Networking**

**7:30-9am Breakout Sessions**

1. **7:30am – Telemedicine Resources and Overview of Technology** – Nichole Perisho, BA, BSN, RN, NRTRC Program Director, and Jordan Berg, TTAC Technology Assessment Specialist – In this presentation the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center (NRTRC) will discuss regional telehealth resources and the National Telehealth Technology Assessment Center (TTAC) will look at both general and specific trends in telemedicine technology and discuss how these changes are impacting how organizations are finding, choosing, and supporting their telemedicine technologies.
2. **8am – The Role of IT in Frontier Healthcare** – HIT professionals from Montana will discuss the challenges associated with ensuring their facilities have adequate technological support while also dealing with constant IT changes and new technology regulatory requirements. More than a decade after HITECH, how are frontier facilities dealing with EHR certifications and changes? Will partnerships and other synergies develop to help or hinder delivery of healthcare and the use of technology? What can frontier facilities do relative to IT on a day-to-day basis to ensure they meet all the requirements and regulations?

**9:00-10:00am Breakout Sessions**

1. **Team-based Care in Frontier Settings** – Ann Abdella, TA consultant with Georgia Health Policy, HRSA TA provider – Ann will initiate a discussion of care coordination and team-based care. This will include success stories from participating frontier facilities. Ann will provide an overview, and staff from frontier facilities will share how they have supported their communities with their team-based care initiatives.
2. **Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) in Frontier Settings** – Liz Davies, LCSW, Montana Health Care Foundation – The Montana Healthcare Foundation believes that everyone in Montana should be able to get all their physical and behavioral health needs met, in one place, in a timely way. That's what integrated care is all about. Through their integrated behavioral health (IBH) initiative, they are increasing access to behavioral health care in frontier communities by supporting rural health clinics to expand their services. This session will provide an overview of the initiative's history, explain the core elements of IBH, and share successes and lessons learned from Montana Health Network's IBH grant.

**10-10:15am Break (Check-out)**

**10:15-11:30pm Policy Issues and Quality Initiatives in Frontier Settings**

This session is a two-part session for learning about both quality and policy initiatives at the national level. First, NRHA will provide information on the state of healthcare in frontier America from a policy standpoint. Participants will hear about the initiatives NRHA is focusing on to impact the provision of frontier health, as well as have an opportunity provide input on future policy directions. Next, representatives from the QIOs will share information about quality initiatives and the Twelfth Scope of Work. They will also consider input and recommendations for feedback to CMS regarding the Thirteenth Scope of Work.

**11:30am-12:30pm Closing Keynote**

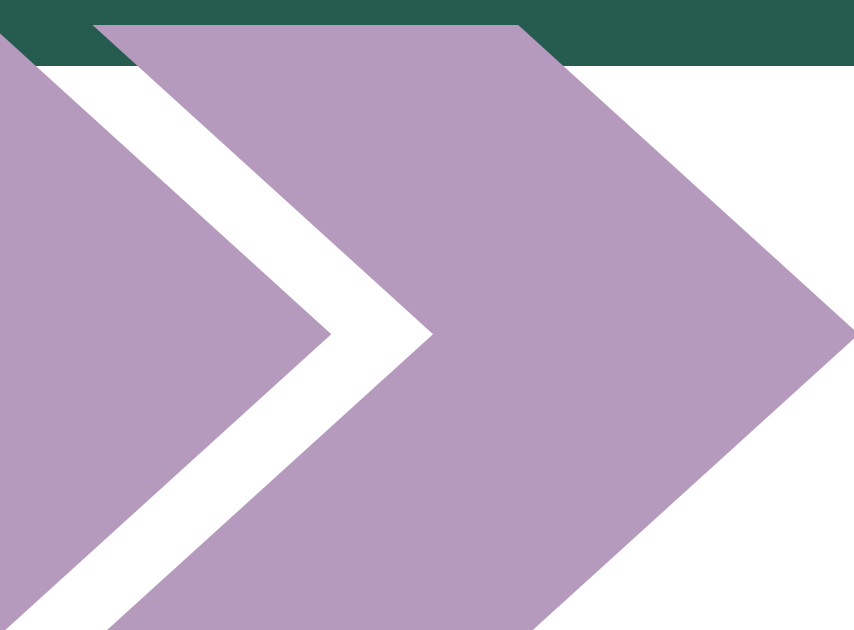
**Choosing to Lead** – Dennis Wagner, MPA, Yes And Leadership – In this highly interactive session, Dennis will share some of the key leadership mindsets and methods that we can choose to use to improve our work in frontier healthcare -- and to grow our own capabilities as leaders in our organizations, communities and families. Come to this session prepared to learn, engage, interact and "try on" the use of powerful and uplifting leadership mindsets and methods. Leadership flows from self-accountability and deliberate choice. Dennis will help Frontier Health Conference participants get onto an upward spiraling leadership pathway by becoming more conscious and intentional about practicing leadership self-accountability in 3 key domains: 1) Being and Intent, 2) Energy and 3) Language. While we often tend to think of leaders as key people with important positions like "Director" or "Chief Executive Officer," it is really about choices that each of us can make. Choices are the essence of leadership. It's not so much a job we have, it's a way of being and a series of choices that we make.

**12:30 Wrap-up & Closing – Evaluations**



*Thank you*

**FOR ATTENDING MHN'S FIRST  
FRONTIER HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE!**



Rural Health Development  
519 Pleasant Street  
Miles City, MT 59301

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