



TRAILBLAZING INNOVATION, HEALING THE FUTURE

FRONTIER HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

June 18-19, 2025

**DoubleTree by Hilton in
Billings, MT**



Join us!

The 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 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

Our staff considered input from executive leaders of frontier CAHs in Montana while developing this program and understand 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 American College of Healthcare Executives. All other CE standards should be researched individually for participants' professional organizations.

Conference Accommodations

We have reserved a blocks of rooms at the DoubleTree by Hilton (where the conference is being held). [Click here](#) to obtain a room reservation no later than June 2, 2025.

Registration

MHN's non-profit, Rural Health Development, is a member of the HIMSS Montana Chapter. Both MHN and HIMSS MT have supported frontier healthcare in Montana for many years. The 2025 Frontier Healthcare Conference will provide a unique opportunity to collaborate in an innovative way to bring valuable information and resources to frontier healthcare leaders throughout the region and in neighboring states. The common themes of supporting healthcare change and sharing information and services is paramount in both MHN's and HIMSS MT's Mission statements. Leaders in both organizations are excited to collaborate on this conference and create a synergistic environment of learning and networking for frontier healthcare facilities.

Registration to attend the Frontier Healthcare Conference is \$150 per participant which will include lunch on Day 1 and on Day 2. Space is limited so interested individuals are encouraged to register early to save a seat. Guest room reservations are not included in the registration fee. Please note that some registrations are eligible for discounts. Find more about the conference, hotel room blocks, sponsorship opportunities and vendor registration by clicking here.

Registration Deadline is May 31, 2025!

Use the following links to complete registration and book your hotel.

1.

Register Here

Some registrations are eligible for discounts. Sponsors please register here as well! Scroll down for sponsorship form.

2.

Book Hotel

MHN's Mission:

To support and influence the evolution of healthcare organizations, and enhance the well-being of individuals and communities through: Networking to establish bonds and trustful relationships between healthcare executives; Shared services and shared products to bring value through cost savings and efficiencies; and Research and development of products and services.

HIMSS Mission:

Reform the global health ecosystem through the power of information and technology.

HIMSS Vision:

Realize the full health potential of every human, everywhere.

Register early!

Registration Deadline is May 31, 2025!

Continuing education credits may be available commensurate with the extent of participation in training offered. Certificates will be provided with appropriate CEs granted based on time associated with training.

Agenda - Day 1 | Wednesday | June 18

8:30am **Open for vendors to set up tables/booths**

9am **General Session – Welcome, Introductions, Conference Overview**

9:15-10:15am **The Future of Rural Healthcare – Lessons for Frontier Hospitals**

John Gale, Senior Research Associate, Maine Rural Health Research Center, will explore the shortcomings of current policy efforts to address challenges impacting frontier hospitals, rural providers, and systems of care. He will describe new policy opportunities to transform rural delivery systems and support frontier hospitals. Finally, he will present a vision for the future of rural health care to better serve the needs of frontier communities. This vision includes re-orienting rural health systems to emphasize comprehensive primary care, re-imagining the rural hospital, rebuilding the rural health care workforce, re-examining health planning and regulation, and re-engaging rural communities. It will further suggest guidelines to manage the transformation of rural health care.

10:15-10:30am **Break**

10:30-11:30am **Health Information Management Policy Update**

Civitas Networks for Health will provide information and updates about current federal policies and advocacy efforts affecting rural and frontier healthcare information management. Civitas Networks for Health is a national collaborative comprised of member organizations working to use health information exchange, health data, and multi-stakeholder, cross-sector approaches to improve health.

11:30am-12:15pm **Montana Collaboration & Innovation**

Key members of collaborative activities involving the Montana Office of Rural Health, the Montana Hospital Association, the Montana Primary Care Association, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Montana Health Network will share innovative approaches currently underway in Montana. These activities include current activities in the Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) delivery model, ongoing activities to support Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and opportunities to network, and solutions for healthcare communication such as Connect Montana Electronic Referral System.

12:15-1:15pm **Networking Luncheon – Opportunity to Visit Vendor Tables**

1:15-2:15pm **Tele-Diagnostics – What is it and should we do it?**

Kraig Vondran, Chief Strategy Officer, Roshal Health, will start with the “What” – Explain what Tele-Diagnostics is and the use of Tele-Diagnostics in the hospital/clinic setting, where Echo and Ultrasounds can be performed remotely using a Triad team approach. He will go into the “Why” – Briefly discuss the challenges that Rural facilities face versus those in large metropolitan areas – items like inability to hire the certified techs or having limited coverage needed to perform these services. Kraig will then finish with the “How” and discuss utilizing a 3rd party to provide the guide service, explain how the technology and overall process should work – from the equipment set-up, connectivity, staff (operator) training, capturing the images and what happens next.

2:15-2:30pm **Break**

2:30-3:30pm **A View from the Hill: Rural Health Updates from D.C.**

Alexa McKinley Abel, Government Affairs and Policy Director, National Rural Health Association (NRHA), will provide attendees with an update of legislative and regulatory activities from Washington, D.C. Attendees should leave the session with an understanding of: key pieces of legislation being considered in Congress and how they would impact rural healthcare; current proposed regulations and how they would impact rural healthcare; potential opportunities for legislative victories in 2025; and how to use NRHA's advocacy materials and strategies.

3:30-3:45pm **Break**

Members of Representative and Senator staffs will join attendees as available for in-person questions and discussions around frontier healthcare policies and legislative issues. This session provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals to meet and connect with members of their congressional delegations.

3:45-5pm **Interstate Frontier Roundtable Discussion AND Meetings w/ Congressional Delegation**

Facilitated by staff from Montana Health Network (MHN) and leaders from the HIMSS Montana, the goal is Roundtable Discussion about what could really make a difference in the viability and survivability of frontier healthcare. Facilitators will develop discussion formats and topics modeled after the CMMI Rural Healthcare Hackathon. There will be updates from initiatives identified by MHN's Frontier Facilities group, progress on previously identified initiatives, and an opportunity to discuss future potential initiatives. Depending on attendance, participants will break into smaller groups and consider the state of frontier healthcare and how to improve in the future. Discussions will include opportunities to discuss across state lines 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.

5-7pm **Networking & Cocktails**

Dinner will be on your own. Opportunity to visit vendor tables.

Agenda - Day 2 | Thursday | June 19

Breakfast on your own

Morning Breakout Tracks - Frontier Facilities Track, HIMSS Montana Track, and Behavioral Health Track

Frontier Track

8:15-9:15am International Staffing, What You Need to Know

This session will include a panel discussion from Sarah Aamold, Birdwell & Aamold, P.C., and Torie Poser, GoRural, about navigating the complicated world of hiring international staff. They will provide some basic information that every facility should know about using international staff. Attendees will also hear details and experiences that will help others learn what to watch for and how to ensure the best possible recruitment experience for both the facility and their new employees. This interactive session will include questions from frontier facility leaders as well as an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and learn best practices.

9:15-9:30am Break

9:30-10:30am Strengthening Frontier Healthcare: Focusing on Quality, Safety, Experience of Care, and Leadership Development as Strategic Priorities

Dr. Kristine Wolff, Chief Clinical Officer, & Gina Lehman, Senior Consultant, Cadence Clinical Services, Ovation Healthcare. Healthcare is personal, and safety is paramount. How we partner with patients and providers to deliver high quality care is more important than ever. There is an ever-growing body of evidence that demonstrates the connection between positive elements of patient and employee experiences and both processes of care measures and healthcare outcomes. Experience of care measures have become integral and fundamental in the evaluation and improvement of the safe quality care being delivered today. Focusing on leadership development specifically in these areas as a strategic priority can help to strengthen your organization and help address the real challenges faced by rural healthcare today.

10:30-10:45am Break

10:45-11:45am Get Extraordinary Things Done Faster, On Time, Under Budget

Sherry Winn, The Winning Leadership Company. When the clock is running down on a project, emotions are fragile, and the budget is expanding by the second. What does a leader do? Fold or find a way to make it happen? Guaranteed, if you are in this situation, the first challenge is to survive. The next one is to figure out how to thrive. Thriving is what Sherry does. She brings common sense, simple steps, and practicality to the awareness of your team.

HIMSS Track

8:15-9:15am Strategic AI Adoption in Healthcare: Readiness and Integration

Alex Brinkert, RN, BSN, MPH, Senior Analyst, Market Research with MEDITECH – Successful AI adoption in healthcare requires more than implementing technology – it demands strategic preparation around data quality, workflow integration, and user acceptance. Join us as we outline the essential components for integrating AI solutions like ambient listening, generative AI, and machine learning, with a focus on organizational readiness. Learn how healthcare organizations can assess their preparedness, including evaluating data infrastructure, staff training, and process integration. Gain practical strategies for embedding AI solutions like ambient listening, generative AI, and machine learning into clinical workflows to enhance efficiency, decision-making, and patient experience.

9:15-9:30am Break

9:30-10:30am Cybersecurity & CISA Services

Joseph Frolich and Albert Mendoza, Cyber State Coordinator for Montana, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) – Learn from the CISA about current threat info, CISA assessments and technical services, and current resources tailored to the healthcare and public health sector.

10:30-10:45am Break

10:45-11:45am EHR, Claims and QI: Connecting Siloed Data and Analytics to Improve Clinical Decision Making

Dominick Fitzsimmons, MSc, Director of Analytics, Mountain Pacific; Brian Bench, State Director, Point Click Care; and Ray Tupling, MS, Data Scientist Supervisor, Mountain Pacific – In 2024, Mountain Pacific and Point Click Care (PCC) partnered on a pilot project, to electronically connect EHR-based clinical records and Medicare claims data. The goals of this project were to proof new data connections, and to leverage predictive analytic models of patient risk in a provider-facing dashboard. The outcomes of this project allow early alert data indicators to inform intervention approaches for rural healthcare providers, in real-time.



Agenda - Day 2 | Thursday | June 19

Behavioral Health Track

8-9am Overdose Safety Plan Training

Virna Little, PsyD, LCSW-R, MBA, CCM, SAP, Zero Overdose will introduce multidisciplinary participants to overdose safety planning, focusing on both clinical delivery and implementation steps tailored for primary care and behavioral health clinicians and leaders working at community health centers. The session aims to equip healthcare professionals with essential skills and knowledge to identify individuals at risk of overdose and implement effective primary overdose prevention strategies. Clinicians are taught how to assess patients' substance use behaviors, provide education on overdose prevention, and deliver life-saving interventions including overdose safety planning. Additionally, participants will be provided with specific implementation considerations, work stream standards and best practices, including the novel use of technology and evaluation considerations, to assist with integrating overdose safety planning into standard clinical care in community health center settings. By integrating these strategies into routine care, the training will foster safer communities for people who use drugs and improves patient outcomes in an underserved population.

9-9:10am Break

9:10-10:40am Behavioral Healthcare: Approaches to Increase Value for the Organization and Meet Community Needs

Charles Dailey, LCSW, Eastern Montana Mental Health Center/Holy Rosary Hospital; Brenda Kneeland, CEO, Eastern Montana Mental Health Center; and Jordin Curtis, Intermountain Health TeleCrisis. This panel discussion will include three organizations sharing their journey to expand behavioral health resources and patient access in a rural Montana community. Their collaboration began five years ago and continues to evolve to systematically expand services across the continuum - including the physician clinics, ED, acute, post-acute, long-term care and post-discharge settings. Best practices, lessons learned, and specifics on their model - including onsite and virtual approaches - will be shared with attendees. (This session is approved for 90 minutes of face-to-face contact with ACHE)

10:40-10:50am Break

10:50-11:50am Organizational Approaches to Reduce Suicide Attempts and Deaths

Virna Little, PsyD, LCSW-R, MBA, CCMA, SAP, Concert Health – Suicide remains a pressing public health issue, underscoring the critical need for healthcare organizations to implement comprehensive, system-wide approaches to suicide prevention. This session will explore how organizational leaders and clinicians can work collaboratively to create a culture of suicide safer care that reaches patients, staff, and the broader system. Through real-world examples and evidence-informed practices, participants will gain insight into how organizations across the country are identifying and managing suicide risk, tracking outcomes, and integrating effective suicide prevention strategies into everyday operations. The workshop will highlight actionable steps for building internal pathways, supporting clinical and non-clinical staff, and leveraging data and health records to drive change. Attendees will leave with practical tools, including sample workflows, templates, and training strategies, to enhance their organization's ability to respond effectively to individuals at risk and foster a safer, more responsive care environment.

General Sessions

11:50am-1pm Lunch – Networking Opportunities Available

1-2pm A Novel Approach to Education and Real-time Advisement of CAH APPs

Dr. Daniel Davis, MD, CMO, Big Sandy Medical Center and Logan Health Chester, will share information about the unique approach to the education and support of Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) who work in the emergency departments and inpatient setting of critical access hospitals. The clinical, operational, and financial benefits of this program will be shared using data from multiple institutions.

2-2:15pm Break

2:15-3:15pm From Tailspin to Olympian: The Secrets of Resilience

Sherry Winn, The Winning Leadership Company. This interactive and supercharged program is designed to emphasize the importance of resilience as a key characteristic of effective leadership. Learn how to foster the never-say-quit mindset that allows for persistent motivation. Remove the naysayer insider you and all your team members unleashing the power of imagination and innovation. Become the intelligent risk-taker that you always wanted to be, doubling your capacity to lead your teams toward an Olympic mindset and winning ways. Feel the power of knowing that you possess the readership moxie to win any challenge that comes your way.

3:15-3:30pm Review, Wrap-up, & Closing – Evaluations

Thank you for attending!

