



2026 Rural Health Clinic Conference

May 29th, 2026

Virtual

MISSISSIPPI
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION



Event Agenda

10:00 AM State and Federal Legislative Update

Zil Joyce Dixon Romero

Stay informed on the latest state and federal legislative developments impacting rural healthcare, including key bills, policy trends, and regulatory priorities. This session will provide a clear overview of current activity and what it means for providers, organizations, and communities across the rural health landscape.

10:45 AM RHC Survey Tips and Strategies

Kate Hill

Prepare for successful RHC surveys with a focused review of the most common deficiencies and areas of risk identified during the survey process. This session will provide practical strategies and proactive steps to strengthen compliance, improve documentation, and ensure survey readiness.

11:30 AM RHC Hot Topics and New Updates

Patty Harper

Stay current on the most pressing issues impacting Rural Health Clinics in this timely session covering regulatory updates, reimbursement changes, and operational trends. Participants will gain practical insights and strategies to navigate evolving policies while strengthening compliance, efficiency, and patient care delivery in the RHC setting.

12:15 PM Developing a Cyber Security Strategy in the RHC

Patrick J. Massey, MS, MA, CEM, CISM, CRISC, CPP

This session will focus on the development of Cyber Incident Response Plans tailored for smaller and rural healthcare organizations, where resources and technical capacity may be limited. With the expansion of telehealth, remote patient monitoring, and other technology-driven care models through Rural Health Transformation Grants, strengthening cybersecurity preparedness is more critical than ever.

1:00 PM AI in Rural Healthcare: Why Rural Can Leapfrog, Not Lag

Amar Kendale, MS

This session explores how rural healthcare systems can strategically adopt AI to reduce administrative burden, streamline workflows, and enhance care delivery despite limited infrastructure. Attendees will learn why rural providers are uniquely positioned to leapfrog traditional barriers and accelerate innovation rather than fall behind.

1:45 PM Open Discussion

This facilitated open discussion invites participants to share questions, insights, and real-world experiences related to the Rural Health Transformation Fund and recent CMS changes. Attendees will engage in collaborative dialogue to explore practical strategies for helping RHCs adapt, grow, and thrive in an evolving healthcare landscape.

2:15 PM Adjourn

Speakers



Zil Joyce Dixon Romero

Zil joined NRHA staff in 2020. He assists in analyzing rural health trends at the state level, identifying model legislation, developing and executing effective strategies to engage with state government officials and stakeholders, and building relationships with the state level advocates to promote policies around rural health. He previously served on the program services team where he assisted with activities related to State Rural Health Associations, the National Rural Oral Health Initiative, and the All of Us Research Program. He joined NRHA after working as an intern on Capitol Hill for multiple members of congress. Zil has a bachelor's degree in communication, legal institutions, economics, and government from American University's School of Public Affairs.



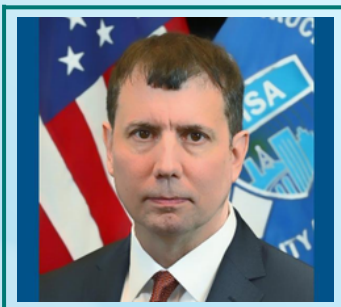
Kate Hill, RN

Kate Hill, RN is a graduate of Albert Einstein Medical Center School of Nursing in Philadelphia, PA. As an Army Nurse, Kate served in Viet Nam (27th Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai) where she was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service. Kate has worked with orthopedic patients in several capacities including Head Nurse of Orthopedics in Newark, NJ., followed by Biomet working in various capacities. Kate joined The Compliance Team (TCT) in early 2012 to direct TCT's rural health clinic accreditation program and has fallen in love with Rural. As VP of Clinical Services, she has spearheaded the TCT Rural Health Clinic Accreditation program combining her clinical expertise, business acumen, and passion for delivery of the best care possible to every patient. She presently serves on the Board of the National Association of Rural Health Clinics. Kate also works with clinics in TCT's PCMH program and is ensuring that a PCMH accreditation is being increasingly rewarded by payers.



Patty Harper

Patty Harper is CEO of InQuiseek Consulting, a healthcare consulting company based in Louisiana. She has over 24 years of healthcare experience in the areas of healthcare finance & reimbursement, health information management, compliance, and practice management. She began her healthcare career as a hospital controller and reimbursement analyst. Patty holds a B.S. in Health Information Administration (cum laude) from Louisiana Tech University. She is credentialed through AHIMA as a RHIA, CHTS-IM, and CHTS-PW. She is also Certified in Healthcare Compliance (CHC®) through the Compliance Certification Board. Patty is a frequent speaker and contributor for national, state, and regional rural healthcare associations. She has held memberships in regional, state, and national organizations throughout her healthcare career including NARHC, NRHA, AHIMA, MGMA, and HFMA. Patty has served two terms on the Board of the National Association of Rural Health Clinics.



Patrick J. Massey, MS, MA, CEM, CISM, CRISC, CPP

Massey is the Regional Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in Seattle, overseeing security and resilience for critical infrastructure in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Before joining CISA in 2016, he spent 20 years at FEMA in various roles, including Director of the National Preparedness Division. He also has experience as a Hazard Mitigation Specialist and served in operational assignments during disasters. Previously, he was the Assistant State Hazard Mitigation Officer in Illinois. A trained Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Officer in the Army, Mr. Massey served in Germany and during the First Gulf War. He is a member of the Senior Executive Service and holds multiple certifications along with degrees in Electrical Engineering Technology, Environmental Planning, Security Studies, and Strategic Studies.



Amar Kendale, MS

Amar Kendale, MS, is a healthcare and technology professional focused on the practical application of artificial intelligence in rural health systems. He works at the intersection of healthcare operations and emerging technology, helping providers and administrators understand how AI can reduce administrative burden, streamline workflows, and support more efficient, effective care delivery in resource-limited settings. His work emphasizes scalable, practical solutions that strengthen rural health infrastructure without adding unnecessary complexity. He brings a systems-level perspective to digital health innovation, with a focus on improving operational efficiency while maintaining strong patient-centered care.

Sponsors

Diamond Level



THE MISSISSIPPI CENTER
FOR RURAL HEALTH AND
POPULATION STUDIES

Silver Level



magnolia health.

Bronze Level



Virtual Exhibitors



Thank you for joining us

We appreciate your time and engagement today.

MISSISSIPPI
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION



MISSISSIPPI
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

