Minnesota Rural Health
Policy Summit

Get to Know the Speakers!

Rural Health Check-in through a National and State Lens:

Jennifer Lundblad serves as President and CEO of Stratis Health, a non-profit organization which leads collaboration and innovation to improve health. Dr. Lundblad has an extensive background in leadership, organization development, and program management in both non-profit and education settings. Her doctoral dissertation research was Teamwork and Safety Climates in Small Rural Hospitals, and she has published articles in peer reviewed journals on topics related to health quality and organizational change. She has expertise in change management, dissemination of innovation, process and workflow analysis and redesign, rural-specific quality measurement, and organizational culture improvement across the continuum of care. Dr. Lundblad is a member of the national RUPRI (Rural Policy Research Institute) Health Panel, the University of Minnesota's Rural Health Research Center Expert Workgroup, the NRHA Rural Age-Friendly Interest Group, the Partnership for Quality Measurement Pre-Rulemaking Measure Review (PRMR) Hospital Committee, and serves on various other national and local boards and in committee leadership positions. She has an adjunct assistant professor appointment at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

Vibrant Rural Minnesota:

Neil Linscheid is an Extension Professor and Extension State Specialist in Entrepreneurship at the University of Minnesota, where he helps communities strengthen their local economies by supporting entrepreneurs. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Factors and Ergonomics from the University of Minnesota College of Design, along with a master's degree in Public Policy and a bachelor's degree in Political Science, both from the University of Minnesota. His research examines why entrepreneurs often don't use the help already available to them, and how to make that help easier to find and use. He leads research and programs that give communities useful data and practical strategies, and he works with partners across sectors to build local support for entrepreneurs.

Over his career, his Extension work has covered tourism, downtown retail, internet adoption, resident recruitment and retention strategies for small towns, economic impact studies, market analysis, regional economics, and community economic development. Before joining Extension, he worked in regional economic development, where he saw firsthand the challenges and opportunities rural communities face. He is board chair of the Sauk Centre Advisory Board, part of the CentraCare Health System, and past chair of the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation. He also serves on the board of the Community Development Society and is involved in national and regional efforts that connect research, practice, and policy in community and economic development.

3 Talks - Catalysts of change for MN Wellness:

Chad Peterson is Senior Vice President of Health Information Exchange Services for MNSHINE (Minnesota Statewide Health Information Network and Exchange), formerly MN Community Measurement. The former CEO of The Koble Group and Koble-MN Health Information Exchange, Chad brings deep experience in health information exchange, interoperability, and rural health care operations, beginning with his early career supporting rural health facilities in North Dakota.

Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, Principal Planner/Mobility Manager with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. Beverly facilities the Arrowhead Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) in northeast Minnesota. As part of her work under the RTCC, Beverly engages with health care entities and NEMT providers in the Arrowhead region in efforts to improve access health care and more towards a better supported medical transportation system in Minnesota. Before joining ARDC, Beverly worked in health care and victim services. She holds a Master of Science in Sustainability from the University of Wisconsin–Superior.

Erin Foss is a nationally recognized expert in addiction medicine and correctional healthcare, known for her practical, systems-level approach to supporting law enforcement, correctional agencies, and rural healthcare organizations. Her nursing career began in the operating room and advanced into leadership as Surgical Services Manager at a rural critical access hospital, where she oversaw

surgical services, endoscopy, oncology, and specialty clinics, gaining firsthand insight into the unique challenges faced by rural hospitals and clinics. Driven by a passion for improving care for underserved populations, Erin transitioned to Addiction Medicine, contributing to the development of a nationally recognized program through research, policy development, community engagement, and mentorship. She later served as Assistant Director of Nursing for a large correctional health organization, providing clinical and operational oversight to 49 county jails across the rural Upper Midwest during the height of the COVID-19 crisis. Her dual role as a leader and frontline nurse gave her a deep understanding of staffing shortages, workflow inefficiencies, and the urgent need for sustainable solutions in high-pressure environments. Today, Erin provides education, mentorship, and strategic guidance to rural healthcare teams and correctional facilities throughout Minnesota. She has consulted nationally with the Bureau of Justice Assistance to implement Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) programs in jails. She has led the development of MOUD planning and implementation tools for the Minnesota Sheriff's Association and the Minnesota Office of Addiction and Recovery. Erin also served as an appointed member on the Minnesota Governor's Advisory Workgroup for MOUD in Jails, supports opioid initiatives through the Department of Human Services, including the Opioid Prescribing Improvement Program (OPIP), and co-facilitates one of the largest addiction medicine ECHO programs in North America. Her volunteer work at Terebinth Refuge, a shelter for sexually exploited women, underscores her commitment to justice-involved and vulnerable populations.

Democracy as a structural determinant of health:

Catherine Harrison is a public health practitioner working at the intersection of democracy and health. Throughout her career she has explored and applied principles of this intersection to areas including global maternal-child health, occupational health, community organizing, climate change, health equity, and emergency preparedness. She holds a Bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and a Masters in public health from the University of California, Berkeley.

Renee Frauendienst holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the College of St. Benedict and a Certificate in Performance Improvement from the University of

Minnesota School of Public Health. With over 38 years of leadership experience in Public Health, she is recognized for her expertise in innovation, policy development, performance improvement, governance, and emergency preparedness. Her contributions to public health have been recognized with several professional honors, including the Jim Parker Leadership Award and the Barbara O'Grady Award. As a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Nurse Leader Fellow, Renee developed a deep passion for advancing civic and community engagement as a means of creating meaningful and lasting change. She is the owner and CEO of RnC Consulting, where she provides strategic leadership and support to public health organizations, strengthening public health and community systems through collaborative partnerships, effective governance, and data-informed strategies that empower communities to shape their own futures. She currently serves as the chair for the St. Cloud Hospital Advisory Board as well as on the CentraCare System Board and the Minnesota Rural Health Association Board.

Stories from Rural Minnesota; Optimism and Hope in Rural Communities:

Julie Tesch is a nonprofit executive dedicated to advancing agriculture, education, and rural development. As President and CEO of the Center for Rural Policy & Development (CRPD), she leads Minnesota's premier rural research organization, guiding strategy, partnerships, and policy-focused initiatives that strengthen rural communities. Previously, Julie held national leadership roles with the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, the National FFA Alumni Association, and the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council. She has also taught agricultural policy and international agriculture at the University of Minnesota.
A Waldorf, Minnesota native, Julie holds degrees in Education and Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota and was a Hubert H. Humphrey Policy Fellow. She remains active in community and advocacy work, including service with the Minnesota FFA Foundation and national nonprofit organizations.