

Inaugural Health on the Plains

Convening: Building Thriving Rural Communities

AGENDA

Friday, December 6, 2024

- 10:00 a.m. **Welcome**
Rebecca Andrade, M.A., Educational Programs Manager, Kansas Health Institute
- 10:10 a.m. **Setting the Stage: *The Thrive Rural Framework***
Chris Estes, M.S.W., M.R.P., Co-Executive Director, Community Strategies Group, Aspen Institute
- 10:25 a.m. **First Panel Discussion – Supporting Health Outside of the Hospital**
Moderator: *Wyatt J. Beckman, M.P.H.*, Senior Analyst, Kansas Health Institute
Alva O. Ferdinand, DrPH, J.D., Department Head, Health Policy & Management and Director, Southwest Rural Health Research Center, Texas A&M University School of Public Health
Derik Flerlage, R.T., M.H.A., Director, Bureau of Family Health, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Jennifer Bacani McKenney, M.D., F.A.A.F.P., Associate Dean for Rural Medical Education, KU School of Medicine
- 11:35 a.m. **Break**
- 11:40 a.m. **Second Panel Discussion – Bridging Community Development & Health**
Moderator: *Wyatt J. Beckman, M.P.H.*, Senior Analyst, Kansas Health Institute
Benjamin Anderson, M.B.A., M.H.C.D.S., President & CEO, Hutchinson Regional Health System
Erin Borla, Executive Director & Trustee, Roundhouse Foundation
Chris Estes, M.S.W., M.R.P., Co-Executive Director, Community Strategies Group, Aspen Institute
Trisha Purdon, M.P.A., B.S.W., Director of the Office of Rural Prosperity in the Kansas Department of Commerce
- 12:50 p.m. **Closing**
Wyatt J. Beckman, M.P.H., Senior Analyst, Kansas Health Institute
- 1:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

SETTING THE STAGE: *THE THRIVE RURAL FRAMEWORK*



Chris Estes, M.S.W., M.R.P., is Co-Executive Director of the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group (CSG). He's a national rural development leader focused on equitable, sustainable and holistic approaches to strengthening rural communities. Estes has strong policy expertise and practice experience at the community, state and federal levels on poverty, housing, disaster and community development. He has co-led the creation of CSG's reports on Natural Disaster, Outdoor Recreation, Funding Flexibility Rural Health & Development, as well as numerous case studies all featuring the voices and wisdom of rural development practitioners.

Estes will also be a panelist during the second panel discussion.

FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION – SUPPORTING HEALTH OUTSIDE OF THE HOSPITAL



Wyatt J. Beckman, M.P.H., is a Senior Analyst at the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) and provides research and technical support related to work on population health.

Beckman has a leading role in KHI's activities and projects focused on rural health. He has contributed to KHI studies on social isolation, e-cigarettes, suicide prevention, telehealth, prescription drugs, and the response of local governments to COVID-19. Beckman also provided research support to the Center for Sharing Public Health Services, a national initiative formerly managed by KHI and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which focuses on resource sharing arrangements as a strategy to improve public health effectiveness and efficiency.

Wyatt will be moderating both panel discussions.



Alva O. Ferdinand, DrPH, J.D., is an Associate Professor and heads the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Texas A&M University School of Public Health. She is also the Director of the Southwest Rural Health Research Center. Ferdinand is a member of the Rural Health Panel of the Rural Population Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) at the University of Iowa. Since beginning her academic career, her research activities have been funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Episcopal Health Foundation, among others. Ferdinand's research interests include rural population health, public health law and health policy. She has provided legislative testimony and briefings to policymakers at state and federal levels and continues to inform policy strategies, particularly as they relate to rural populations.

Ferdinand holds a law degree from the Michigan State University College of Law and a doctor of public health degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



Derik Flerlage, R.T., M.H.A., is the Director for the Bureau of Family Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). The bureau contains many different programs that he oversees, including Child Care Licensing, WIC, Palliative Care, and Administration & Policy. Flerlage is a respiratory therapist by trade and completed his undergraduate degrees from Washburn University and his masters in health administration from Wichita State University. He has begun his doctorate in public health in Global Health Leadership through Indiana University. His career has included working clinically in all settings of a local trauma hospital, leading as a director for a long-term care facility, being the Chief of COVID-19 Operations for Shawnee County, and now as a state director and adjunct public health instructor at Washburn University.



Jennifer Bacani McKenney, M.D., F.A.A.F.P., is a family physician in her hometown of Fredonia, Kansas, a community of approximately 2,200 people. She has owned and managed her practice, Fredonia Family Care, alongside her father and other great colleagues since 2009. McKenney was named the 2021 Rural Health Practitioner of the Year by the National Rural Health Association and received the “Early Career Achievement Award” by the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 2021. She earned her medical degree at the KU School of Medicine in Kansas City and Wichita and completed her residency at Via Christi Family Medicine Residency in Wichita. McKenney is currently the Associate Dean for Rural Medical Education for the KU School of Medicine. She serves as the Wilson County Health Officer and is Co-Chair of the statewide Health Officers of Kansas group. McKenney was a member of the USD 484 school board for nine years, serving as the president for two years. She is a past President of the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians and was the resident member of the AAFP Board of Directors. She serves on the board of directors for the Kansas Health Foundation and is on the medical staff at Fredonia Regional Hospital, a 25-bed critical access hospital. She has made numerous appearances on national and local news covering COVID-19 and rural health.

SECOND PANEL DISCUSSION – BRIDGING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH



Benjamin Anderson, M.B.A., M.H.C.D.S., is the President and CEO of Hutchinson Regional Healthcare System (HRHS). During the four years prior to joining HRHS, he served as Vice President for Rural Health and Hospitals at the Colorado Hospital Association, where he provided leadership and direction in the development and execution of the association’s rural strategies, advocated on behalf of rural hospitals and health systems and developed strategic partnerships with organizations that affected the health of rural Coloradans.

Before his move to Colorado, Anderson served as CEO of Kearny County Hospital, a comprehensive rural health care delivery complex in Lakin, Kansas that serves patients of 30 nationalities within a 180-mile radius. During his six and a half years there, he led the organization through a period of rapid growth, expanding access to coordinated primary care and specialty services. He earned a bachelor of arts in English (2004) and a master of business administration (2007) from Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, and a master of health care delivery science degree (2016) from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.



Erin Borla, has worked with and for nonprofit organizations that support rural communities with innovative economic strategies for over 20 years. Her dedication to supporting rural spaces through listening, collaborating and open and honest sharing of ideas helps her elevate community partners throughout her work.

Borla holds a bachelor’s degree in agricultural sciences from Oregon State University and a master of tourism administration degree from The George Washington University. She completed her professional certificate in Tribal relations from Portland State University’s Mark O. Hatfield School of Government in 2022, and is a Fellow for the National Center for Family Philanthropy. Borla is Executive Director and a Trustee of the Sisters, OR based Roundhouse Foundation and the host of *Funding Rural*, a podcast about how philanthropy can better serve rural communities and spark systemic change.



Trisha Purdon, M.P.A., B.S.W., has been the Director of the Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity in the Kansas Department of Commerce, since May 2021. Her background includes a master’s degree in public administration, with a focus on local government management and a bachelor’s degree in social welfare, with a focus on public policy, both from the University of Kansas. Purdon has worked as a rural economic developer in both city- and county-level leadership roles for more than a decade. She grew up in the small town of Kiowa, Kansas, in Barber County.