



NATIONAL  
RURAL HEALTH  
RESOURCE CENTER

## HEALTH SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE GROUP

**Introductory Conference Call                  June 8, 2011**

**Participants:** Tracy Morton – Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC), Edwina Ducker – Maine Office of Rural Health and Primary Care, Carol Bischoff – Montana Flex Program, John Packham – Nevada Office of Rural Health,

### **Action Items**

- TASC to send a group participation list including contact information to group members
- If you are interested in participating in additional Virtual Knowledge Groups, please contact Nicole Clement at [nclement@ruralcenter.org](mailto:nclement@ruralcenter.org)
- If you are interested in being the vice-chair, please contact Kami Norland at [knorland@ruralcenter.org](mailto:knorland@ruralcenter.org)
- TASC to take issue areas identified and develop into a ranking survey for group members to prioritize importance. Survey results will be used to guide group interest in issues to pursue. Results will be shared with the group and discussed in person at the National Flex Conference.
- Participate in Introductory Webinar on Flex Program Forum scheduled for Friday, June 17, 2011 at 2:00pm Central Time. Webinar will be recorded. More information to come via email.
- TASC to add questions on the survey that will ask over the past two years of the Flex grant, what health system development and community engagement activities participants in the group have conducted

### **Minutes**

#### **Welcome and introduction of call participants**

#### **Review of Virtual Knowledge Group Purpose**

- Provide a vehicle for discussion of Flex-related topics
- Build knowledge through shared experiences and lessons learned
- Contribute to a collection of Flex information, resources, and models
- Serve as key information group to provide input to TASC, the federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP), Flex Monitoring Team and policy makers
- Not meant to be redundant with previously established national groups
- Groups should focus on topics in the context of the Flex Program

## **Participants**

- Voluntary participation with active engagement and participant contribution
- Limited to State Office of Rural Health Directors, Flex Coordinators, other key State Flex Program personnel, staff from ORHP, TASC, Flex Monitoring Team, TASC Advisory Committee and other federal grantee partners

## **Function of the Virtual Knowledge Groups**

- Driven by activities and communication from group participants, with support from TASC staff
- Chaired by State Flex Program volunteer. John Packham has volunteered to chair the group. Looking for a vice-chair. If you are interested, please email Tracy Morton at [tmorton@ruralcenter.org](mailto:tmorton@ruralcenter.org)
- Kami Norland, Community Specialist, will be the lead staff at TASC to support this group.
- Group will make decisions collectively about work or issues to address and will decide collectively about methods to communicate
  - o TASC can provide support for quarterly conference calls, if desired
  - o Group can also communicate via email and the Flex Program Forum
- Flex Program Forum is a web-based discussion forum, accessible to the same audience as the Virtual Knowledge Groups, where Flex Programs can log in and discuss topics and issues, post and share documents and continue the discussions of the Virtual Knowledge Groups
  - o TASC will host an introductory webinar on the Flex Program Forum on Friday, June 17, 2011 at 2:00pm Central Time. Please look for more information to come via email
- Group will also meet face-to-face at the National Flex Conference on July 12, 2011 in Portland, Maine
- Topics of this group may overlap with the Emergency Medical Services Virtual Knowledge Group, or other Virtual Knowledge Group. TASC will assist in ensuring applicable groups are aware of discussions and comments. The Flex Program Forum will also assist in sharing information between topic areas. Topics addressed in this Virtual Knowledge Group should focus more on the health system development and community engagement aspects of the Flex grant apart from emergency medical services.

## **Important Issues in the area of Health System Development and Community Engagement in the Flex Program. Suggestions from call participants included:**

- Meeting the IRS requirement for community health assessments by nonprofit hospitals
- Tailoring health access programs from urban models to rural models

- Financial feasibility assessments including other community stakeholders aside from the hospital (such as Community Health Centers) to assess new service lines
- Regionalization of public health services to provide needed health care services
- Public health workforce development
- Public health and hospital collaboration in community health assessments
- Creating engagement and motivation to meet the IRS requirements for community health assessments by nonprofit hospitals
- Strategies for supporting community health assessments with Flex Program funding
- Developing cooperative relationships between critical access hospitals and community health centers, success models
- Developing an action plan from the outcomes of the hospital community health assessment to meet the community need
- TASC will compile into a survey for the group to complete via email on ranking the importance of the issues. Survey results will be used to guide group interest in issues to pursue. Results will be shared with the group and discussed in person at the National Flex Conference.