



Upcoming Conference Brings Together Farmers, Researchers and Health Care Providers

Nearly every farm family can tell their own story of an illness, injury or near miss related to their farming operation. While individuals and families often suffer the consequences, the solutions to prevent and treat these illnesses and injuries require input from rural residents coupled with solid research and effective policy. This cooperation is especially important now, as both agriculture and healthcare experience major changes.

A conference this fall, entitled “Transforming Safety and Health in the Heartland,” invites partners from many perspectives to consider ways to work together for healthier rural people. The conference will be held on November 19-20, 2014, at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny, Iowa. A key theme will be how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) affects farmers and rural communities. Current research on rural health, injuries and solutions will also be presented.

Each year for the past 13 years, the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health and Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health have co-sponsored the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH) Conference to bring farmers, practitioners and researchers together. In addition, the Iowa Rural Health Association holds a fall meeting for rural health professionals around the state. “Transforming Safety and Health in the Heartland” combines these two efforts this year. Appropriately, the conference is taking place during National Rural Health Week.

In a recent survey of farmers by the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health at the University of Iowa, farmers expressed questions about Affordable Care Act and the Health

Marketplace. Likewise, rural health professionals, from public health planners to clinicians, are trying to determine how health policy changes will affect rural clinics and emergency services. How do researchers, rural residents and policy makers work together most effectively? What are the best ways for farmers, health professionals and researchers to communicate?

The conference will begin to address these questions by "Thinking Bigger About Smaller Places," the title of Wednesday's keynote given by Charles Fluharty, President and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Center (RUPRI). In addition to being an internationally recognized expert on rural policy, Fluharty was born and raised on a fifth generation farm.

Also on Wednesday, participants will explore a case study on collaboration for ATV safety featuring emergency medicine physician Dr. Charles Jennissen, Iowa Senator Joe Bolckcom, and Katrina Altenhofen who is head of EMS for Children for the Iowa Department of Public Health. The afternoon will feature a wide variety of breakout sessions covering topics ranging from emergency services to hearing protection to rural roadway safety, among others. Presenters on these topics come not only from Iowa, but also Nebraska, Minnesota, Colorado and Indiana.

A poster reception on Wednesday evening will showcase additional research projects and allow participants to network with each other. One of the featured topics will be Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health Youth Grant projects. The reception is an excellent opportunity for farmers to talk one on one with researchers and health professionals about current research or farmers' concerns.

Thursday's keynote will be Stephene Moore, Region VII Director of the US. Department of Health & Human Services with an update on Healthcare and Rural Communities. Region VII includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. Following a presentation on the Iowa Marketplace, all conference attendees will be able to participate in a small group discussion on a specific topic of their choice.

Detailed information on the schedule and registration can be found on the conference website at <http://cph.uiowa.edu/Icash/events/MRASH-IRHA/2014/> or <http://tinyurl.com/mrash-irha>.

The conference is an event where farmers have a chance to talk to public health and health care professionals, researchers and educators about their concerns. Participants may elect to attend the entire conference or select one day. Producers, Students and Iowa Rural Health Association Members can attend at a reduced rate of \$110 for the full conference, or \$60 per day. Nursing and general CEU credits are available.

Submitted by Gayle Olson, Assistant to the Director, Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health. Olson grew up on a small farm in NE Iowa and currently operates a diversified family farm with her husband in SE Iowa.

For Possible Sidebar:

Conference Agenda for Nov 19

- Fluharty Keynote: Thinking Bigger About Smaller Places
- Panel Discussion: Working Together to Make a Difference
- Breakout Sessions
- Poster Reception

Conference Agenda for Nov 20

- Moore Keynote: Update on Healthcare and Rural Communities
- Primer on health/wellness plans and insurance marketplace
- Small Table Discussion of community-level concerns and collaborations.
- Celebration of National Rural Health Day and Awards
- Promising Practices on new farmers, dental programs and women's health.