



Rural Health Association of Tennessee's 2025 31st Annual Conference

The individuals and organizations below have been selected to present at the 31st annual conference. The speakers, topics, and presentation dates and times are subject to change.

Pre-Conference: Wednesday, November 19th *(All times Eastern)*

Times	Session	Speakers
8am – 11:00am	Coordinated School Health	Melisa Fuhrmeister Taylor Rayfield
8am – 11:00am	Hospitals/Rural Health Clinics	Kate Hill Sarah Hohman
8am – 11:00am	Mental & Behavioral Health	Mary Linden Salter Liesa Jenkins
11:00 - 11:30am	Break - Visit Exhibits; Lunch will start being served at 11:00	

Conference Agenda: Wednesday, November 19th *(All times Eastern)*

Breakout Sessions: 5 Tracks (1-Maternal Health, #2-Clinic/Hospital, #3-Healthy Aging, #4 - Mental/Behavioral Health, #5 -School Health)

November 19 th	Session	Speakers
11:30 - 12:30pm	Opening Welcome and Luncheon-Member Meeting	Anna Hurt, RHA Board President Jacy Warrell, CEO RHA Staff
12:30 - 12:45pm	Break -Visit Exhibits	
12:45 – 1:45pm	Plenary Session – Panel Discussion <i>Innovative Age-friendly Projects in Rural Tennessee presented by Aging Leaders</i>	Moderated by Sidney Enss, CVA, MPA, ACNP, CRS-A/D Director of Volunteer Engagement & Senior Center Liaison, Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging
1:45 – 2:00pm	Break -Visit Exhibits	
2:00 – 3:00pm	Breakout Sessions <i>A1. Breaking Barriers: Maternal Mental Health and Substance Misuse in the Postpartum Period</i> <i>A2. Bridging the Gap -Partnerships to Improve Rural Health Outcomes</i>	1. Rhonda Williams MD, MPH, MSc with East Tennessee State University 2. Sonya Walker-McShan MSHA with Erlanger Health Systems

	<p>A3. <i>A Mobile Approach to Rural Health</i></p> <p>A4. <i>Exploring the Intersection of Human Trafficking and Mental Illness: A Seminar on Healing and Awareness</i></p> <p>A5. <i>Supporting Cross-District Learning and Innovation in School-Based Mental Health Services</i></p>	<p>3. Megan Oslund OTD, OTR/L and Stephanie Blaine, M.Ed with the University of Tennessee School of Nursing</p> <p>4. Melissa Zensen, BS, LMSW, MPA with Volunteer Behavioral Health; Sarah McKinnis founder and CEO of WillowBend Farms</p> <p>5. Sara White with Vanderbilt University; Taylor Rayfield, Division of Coordinated School Health, Tennessee Department of Education</p>
3:00 - 3:15pm	Break - Visit Exhibits	
3:15 – 4:15pm	<p>Breakout Sessions</p> <p>B1. <i>Optimizing the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Workflow with Asana: A Seamless Approach to Application & Reporting</i></p> <p>B2. <i>Denial Management and Prevention: Let's Flip the Script</i></p> <p>B3. <i>SafeSeniorTN / Call Center for Financial Institutions / Silver Alert / TBI Find App</i></p> <p>B4. <i>"The Triple Whammy for Rural Communities" Substance Use Disorder, Behavioral Health, and Stigma</i></p> <p>B5. <i>Dodging the Pitchforks and Torches: Teaching Family Life Education in Rural Tennessee</i></p>	<p>1. Elizabeth King, MS, Mary Ellen "Emmie" Gorman MPH, MS, and Taylor Yates with the Tennessee Department of Health</p> <p>2. Jonathan Hendricks with Blue & Co.</p> <p>3. TBI Panel with Josh DeVine, TBI Assistant Director Shelly Smitherman, ASAC, Criminal Intelligence Unit Andy Corbitt, SAC, Medicaid Fraud Control Division Nick Christian, ASAC, Cybercrime & Digital Evidence Unit</p> <p>4. Robert Merritt MSN, RN and Rebecca Lagan with Myrtle Recovery Centers, Inc</p> <p>5. Adam Pollock and Whitney Salyer B.A. with Centerstone</p>

November 20th	Session	Speakers
7:45 – 8:30am	Breakfast – Ballroom C & D	
8:30 – 9:30 am	Breakout Sessions C1. <i>Interrupting Generational Transmission of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</i> C2. <i>RHC Compliance Made Practical: Turning Requirements into Daily Habits</i> C3. <i>Office of Healthy Aging: An Overview</i> C4. <i>Preliminary Outcomes of a Targeted Initiative to Enhance Mental Health Support for Children and Adolescents in Tennessee</i> C5. <i>Coordinated School Health Partnering to Improve Community Health</i>	1. Sharon Moore DPh and Hope Nelson with ONE Tennessee 2. Kate Hill RN with the Compliance Team 3. Chelesa Ridley MPH, RN with the Office of Healthy Aging, Tennessee Department of Health 4. Kristina McClanahan and Angela Okonji MD MPH CPH with the Tennessee Department of Health 5. Kathryn Atwood, B.S., M.A. with Trousdale County Schools
9:30 - 9:45 am	Break- Visit Exhibits	
9:45 – 10:45 am	Morning Plenary <i>From Capitol Hill to Rural Communities: Policy and Legislative Insights from DC</i>	Sarah Hohman with the National Association of Rural Health Clinics
10:45 – 11:00 am	Break- Visit Exhibits	
11:00 – 12:00 pm	Breakout Sessions D1. <i>A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee - Tennessee Safe Haven Law</i> D2. <i>Introduction to the Tennessee Rural Health Center of Excellence</i> D3. <i>Fueling Healthy Aging: Strengthening Nutrition Support for Older Adults in Rural Areas</i> D4. <i>Not Just Small Adults: Opportunities in the Unique Landscape of Pediatric Behavioral Health in Rural Communities</i>	1. Julie Garner-Scruggs and Dr. Nancy Kemp (Board Member) with A Secret Safe Place for Newborns of Tennessee 2. Wendy Likes, PhD, DNSc, APRN-Bc, FAAN, FAANP with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center 3. Keita Cole CRS-A/D, CVA, DCCC with the Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging 4. Michelle Bowden, MD and Timothy Fuller, MD with

	D5. Telehealth, A Successful Partnership in Rural East Tennessee	University of Tennessee Health Science Center 5. Rosemary Jeffers, BSN; Dr. Terri Keeton; Brent Shoemaker Ed.S; Heather Crouch, BSN with Scott County Schools
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Awards Luncheon	
12:45 – 1:15 pm	Presentation of Poster Contest and Awards	Conference Committee Dr. Rick Wallace
1:15 – 1:30 pm	Break- Visit Exhibits	
1:30 – 2:15 pm	Afternoon Plenary <i>Updates from the Tennessee Department of Health</i>	Dr. John Dunn, Tennessee Department of Health
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Break- Visit Exhibits	
2:30 – 3:30 pm	Breakout Sessions E1. <i>Data to Action: Advancing Maternal Health in Tennessee’s Rural Communities</i> E2. <i>AI The New Landscape</i> E3. <i>Empowering Communities for Longevity: Strategies for Healthier Living</i> E4. <i>We Didn't Raise Them This Way! Empowering clinicians to help families navigate the challenges of addiction.</i> E5. <i>Vaping and Coping Conversations: A Comprehensive Look at Restorative Practices for Student Success</i>	1. Jennifer Owens BSN, RN, CPH, CLC with the Division of Family Health and Wellness, Tennessee Department of Health 2. Kayur Patel MD, MRO, FACP, FACPE, FACHE, FACEP with My Private MD 3. Emma Davis PhD, MPH, CPH with the Tennessee Department of Health 4. Joel Jakubowski LADAC II, ICADC with Core Civic and Bold Steps Behavioral 5. Laura Taliaferro MM, MA, CPLC with ASAP of Anderson
3:30 – 4:30 pm	Afternoon Plenary - Panel Discussion <i>Leading Through Change: Rural Health Leadership in the Era of OBBBA</i>	Moderated by: Bill Auxier PhD with the National Rural Health Association
4:30 pm	End of Silent Auction- Must be present to win.	



November 21st	Session	Speakers
7:45 – 8:30am	Breakfast – Ballroom C & D	
8:30 – 9:30 am	Morning Plenary <i>Insights from Tennessee's Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program</i>	Diane Dubinski MEM, BSN, RN, NHDP-BC – Tennessee Department of Health
9:30 – 9:45 am	Break- Visit Exhibits	
9:45 – 10:45 am	Morning Plenary <i>Transforming Rural Health Through Culture and Leadership</i>	Bill Auxier PhD
11:00 am	Adjourn Conference	

Conference Registration Information:

We look forward to seeing members and friends in Sevierville this November!

Join us at Wilderness at the Smokies Stone Hill Lodge, a newly renovated accommodation that is connected to the convention center! To book your accommodation, please call 1-877-325-9453 and state you are with Rural Health Association of Tennessee Conference at Stone Hill Lodge.

Book online by going to the website [here](#), select your desired dates and Stone Hill Lodge and enter the promo code "RHATN" (this code is case sensitive). Select Book Now.

The room block will close on Oct. 18, 2025, so please be sure to book your reservation by that date to secure the special rate of \$99 per night, plus a \$29.95 resort fee. Each room includes wristbands for access to Wild Water Dome, as well as Lake Wilderness and Salamander Springs (both seasonal waterparks).

Pricing for Conference Registration:

April 1st - August 31st (extended to September 15, 2025): Members \$195; Non-Members \$300

After September 15, 2025: Members \$265; Non-Members \$350

Click Here to Register for Conference