

# Office of Rural Health Policy Update

Southern Rural Access Program and Delta State Network

Grantee Conference ♦ April 24, 2003

*Presented by Rebecca Hines*

# About the Office of Rural Health Policy

- ORHP - created in 1987 by Congress to address the problems that inadvertently arose from the implementation of the inpatient Prospective Payment System (PPS), which led to the closure of an estimated 200 rural hospitals.
- Advises the Secretary and the Department of Health and Human Services on rural issues.
- Administers grant programs, makes policy recommendations, and facilitates research on rural health.

# Key Areas to Update

- Secretary's Rural Initiative
- ORHP in FY 2003
- Helpful Related Resources and Programs

# Secretary's Rural Initiative

## Secretary's Task Force on Rural Health and Human Services

- Made permanent the Task Force in July, 2002; meets quarterly to examine rural concerns regarding HHS' programs, budget, legislation and research.
- Implementing recommendations from the report "One Department: Serving Rural America."



# Secretary's Rural Initiative:

## Secretary's Task Force on Rural Health and Human Services – continued

- Each Agency and Staff Division has identified rural accomplishments for FY 2002
- Setting priorities for FY 2003
  - Examples

# Rural Assistance Center (RAC)

- Central Rural Health and Human Services Information Portal
- Helps rural communities access full range of available programs, funding, and research
- Web-based services
- Customized assistance

# Office Of Rural Health Policy – FY 2003 Budget

- Outreach and Network Grants – \$58.5 million
- Flex Program – \$25 million
- Small Hospital Performance Improvement – \$15 million
- State Offices of Rural Health - \$8.5 million
- Rural Access to Emergency Devices – \$12.5 million
- Policy and Research - \$10.7 million
- Denali Commission – \$27.5 million
- TOTAL: \$157.2 million

# Office of Rural Health Policy: Policy Priorities for FY 2003

- Regulatory
  - Weigh in on CMS Medicare payment updates: inpatient, outpatient, SNF, home health and physician fee schedule
  - Examine rural impact of proposals for Medicare reform
- Research – timely on emerging issues
  - Wage index
  - Physician fee schedule
  - Medicare reform and prescription drugs



# Office of Rural Health Policy: Policy Priorities for FY 2003

- Policy Priorities
  - Technical assistance centers – CAHs, Networks, EMS and SHIP
  - Fostering collaboration among rural providers
  - Addressing rural quality
  - Frontier issues
  - Rural public health
  - Regional Commissions

# Regional Commissions

- Emerging trend
- Delta Regional Authority
- Recognizes that economic, health, and human service problems transcend state lines
- Rational, holistic approach to addressing priority concerns

# Related Resources and Programs

# HRSA's CHC Program Expansion

- President's initiative to expand CHCs
- More service sites in rural areas
- Important to collaborate with new CHC sites to ensure coordination, optimization of existing rural resources



# Telehealth is Key for Rural Communities

- Office for the Advancement of Telehealth  
<http://telehealth.hrsa.gov/>
- Telehealth Funding Guide – great resource  
<http://telehealth.hrsa.gov/grants/funds.htm>
- USDA Rural Utilities Services
  - Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program
- NLM – grants and cooperative agreements

# USDA: Rural Development

- Community Facilities Direct Loan Program
- Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program
- Community Facilities Grant Program
- <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/>

# For Additional Information

Marcia K. Brand, PhD

Director

*Office of Rural Health Policy*

*Health Resources and Services Administration*

*(301) 443-0835*

*mbrand@hrsa.gov*