RURAL MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK PROJECT

Southern Illinois University’s Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development has been funded by Illinois Department of Transportation to complete a “gaps analysis” to gain a better understanding of the landscape of rural medical transportation in the southern-most 34 counties of Illinois. A “policy analysis” is also being undertaken to review federal, state, and local procedures, laws, and statutes that prevent and/or limit the coordination of services between and among providers.

If funded, the next phase will include the development of Rural Medical Transportation Networks in two targeted mini-regions. The Rural Medical Transportation Network model uses a community development planning process to develop practical solutions to increase coordination and efficacy of medical transportation services. After the model is pilot tested in the targeted mini-regions, the Rural Medical Transportation Network Model is planned for replication in other rural communities.

This project is a collaborative effort within the SIU system and has spun out into partnerships around the state. SIU’s Office of the President worked with the CRHSSD to formulate the IDOT project proposal, while SIU’s School of Medicine and the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute are partners in developing and implementing the initiative.

The following activities are being completed this year:

- Formation of an advisory steering committee representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders from throughout the region and State of Illinois.
- Key Informant Interviews with key stakeholders around the state.
- Focus Groups with medical providers, transportation providers, social service providers and other non-medical providers.
- Surveys and key informant interviews with consumer groups.
- Development of a ‘network pilot model’ in the Williamson County and South Central Transportation Districts.

Information to identify and locate all medical and transportation providers serving the region is being assimilated via GIS mapping in collaboration with Connect SI and SIUC’s Geography Department. In addition, the frequency of medical runs (origination site and the destination site) is also being tracked and mapped with the TransCAD system. The program allows for the design of a variety of maps that can be used to measure geographic accessibility used for demand models and plan travel forecasting. These maps will offer transportation and medical providers the opportunity to visually see the need for and feasibility of coordinated services.
Kari L. Bruce, MPH, CHES
Tobacco Coordinator

Kari began her employment with the CRHSSD as the Tobacco Coordinator for the Live Free-Tobacco Free Initiative in December 2006. Ms. Bruce will continue as the Southern Illinois Regional Liaison for the Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers and serves on the Public Education & Advocacy Committee. In her former position at Southern Illinois Healthcare, Ms. Bruce coordinated and promoted three school-based health centers in southern Illinois as well as providing technical assistance to two additional school districts planning to open their own school-based health centers.

Kari received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Health Education from SIUC, and her Master of Public Health degree from the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina.

Heather M. Hartung, MPH
Education Coordinator

Heather started her employment at the Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development in January, 2007. Prior to coming to the Center, she served as the program coordinator for the National Rural Health Resource Center. At the Center, Heather works as an Education Coordinator and with the Illinois Delta Network.

Heather has worked in rural health for five years at the local, state, and national level. Her interest areas include access to care, training development, quality improvement, and the social determinants of health. Heather received her bachelor’s degree in School and Community Health Education from Winona State University (Minnesota) and completed a Master’s in Public Health from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.