

# NC Office of Rural Health Operations Team Quarterly Newsletter

This newsletter serves a repository of information relevant to North Carolina State-Designated Rural Health Centers (SDRHCs) and CMS Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). Please share any content suggestions or feedback with Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

## Happy Holidays

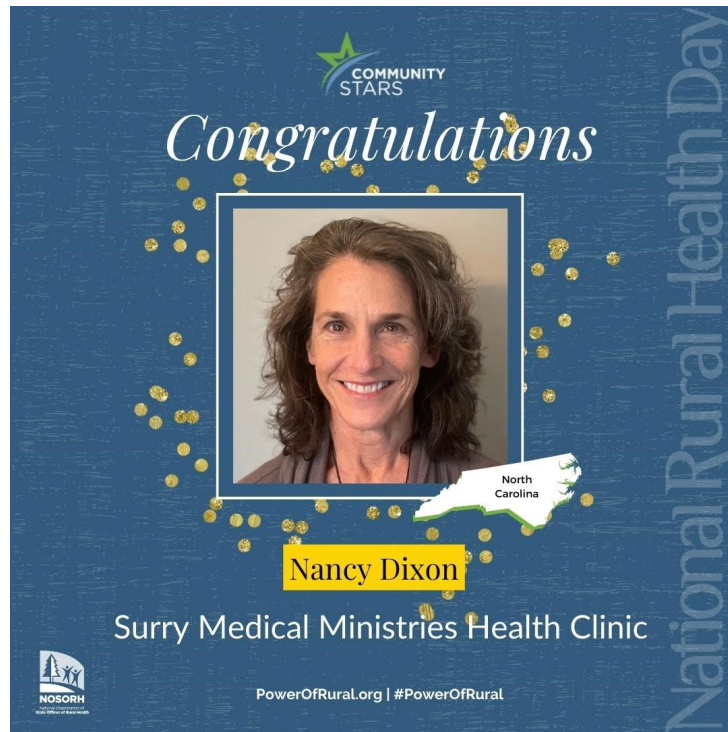


Happy Holidays from the NC Office of Rural Health Operations Team! We hope that you're enjoying the season's festivities. Our team is happy to share news this quarter highlighting folks from across the state who are going the extra mile to care for our rural communities.

## Contents

2022 NC Community Star: Nancy Dixon of Surry Medical Ministries .....	2
Stories from the Frontlines Series: An EKG Machine at Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley.....	3
2022 National Rural Health Day Summary .....	4
Capital Grant: Deadline December 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 at 5:00 pm .....	4
Training Opportunity: What's Your Plan? Emergency Preparedness Series for Rural Health Clinics.....	5
In the News .....	5
Funding Opportunities .....	6
Contact Information.....	6

## 2022 NC Community Star: Nancy Dixon of Surry Medical Ministries



Nancy Dixon, the President of the Board of Directors for Surry Medical Ministries, has been named this year's North Carolina Community Star. Through her efforts, Surry Medical Ministries has grown from a small clinic that was open once a week, to an organization that provides not only primary care services, but also works to address the root causes of the community's healthcare needs.

Under Nancy's leadership, Surry Medical Ministries has expanded its services to include a Community Health Worker program, a Chronic Care Management program, a Behavioral Health program, Transportation services, Food Security services, and more. When asked, Terri Mosely of Surry Medical Ministries had this to say about Nancy, "As a leader in our community and in the state, Nancy Dixon is involved in all aspects of rural health innovation, education, collaboration, and communication." Terri went on to say, "Removing barriers to care (is) a central focus of Nancy's work... Dixon is the "heart" of Surry Medical Ministries."

The North Carolina Office of Rural Health is pleased to recognize and congratulate Nancy for her dedication to rural communities. Nancy was highlighted during this year's National Rural Health Day event.

### MAP Success Story: Richmond County Healthy Carolinians Partnership

Richmond County Healthy Carolinians Partnership is doing something right in their community. At the end of SFY 2023 Q1, their MAP utilization rate was above 60%, far higher than the expected 25% at that point in time. Beth Blaise, the Rural Health Operations Specialist who works alongside Richmond, was ecstatic when asked about their progress. "Richmond has really put the work in within the last year to reach their community and to serve those in need."

Cheryl Speight, the Health Director of the Richmond County Health Department, had this to say about the accomplishment, “Part of our success with getting numbers increased has been our staff looking at each patient we (meet) as a potential MAP patient. We see many patients that have needs and they are not used to getting continuous medical care. Getting them in our clinic helps with continuity and after a while, they feel comfortable with us and start taking better care of themselves and keeping appointments.”

The Operations team would like to congratulate Richmond on their accomplishment and thank them for their dedication to improving the health and well-being of their community and North Carolina.

## Stories from the Frontlines Series: An EKG Machine at Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley



Betty Taylor, the Executive Director of Grace Clinic of Yadkin Valley, was kind enough to share a story involving the clinic and a patient they served in November of 2022.

Last year, Grace Clinic applied for and was awarded Rural Health Clinic Capital Grant funding to purchase an EKG machine. Since that time, the clinic has put the machine to good use and has been able to use it to enhance patient care.

In November of 2022, “Bill” a new patient at Grace Clinic, had complained of shortness of breath followed by chest pain during exertion. The patient dismissed the symptoms to be related to GERD and smoking, but a provider at Grace wanted to perform an EKG to establish a baseline and rule out other issues. Bill’s EKG was severely abnormal and was reviewed by Grace’s PA and Medical Director. The patient was immediately transferred via ambulance to Novant Health in Forsyth County, NC. He was hospitalized for three days until stable and was scheduled to return for placement of stents the following week.

When the patient reported a week later for his pre-op, he had a massive heart attack and was immediately rushed to the catheter lab. Because Bill was inside a hospital when he had his heart attack, his life was saved. However, none of this would have been put into motion without the EKG performed at Grace Clinic. The patient was worried about the potential costs of an ER visit and would have continued to dismiss his symptoms until the massive heart attack occurred. Betty is certain that because of the care Bill received at Grace, his life was saved.

*Note:* We invite all RHCs to share impactful stories of the work they are doing to improve health and well-being across North Carolina. If you would like to share a story to be featured in a future issue of the NC Office of Rural Health Ops Team Newsletter, please send your story to Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

## 2022 National Rural Health Day Summary



On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, The NC Office of Rural Health and partners celebrated National Rural Health Day. The event was hybrid and hosted live at Benson Health while folks from across the state joined both individually and through virtual watch parties.

Highlights of the day included remarks from Governor Cooper, Secretary Kinsley, the reading of the Governor's Proclamation, and highlighting this year's 2022 NC Community Star, Nancy Dixon of Surry Medical Ministries. The celebratory morning session was followed by learning sessions hosted by sites from across the state. These included the Clay County Paramedicine Project, NCCARE 360 Success Story: Life Center of Davidson County, and a Maternal and Perinatal Health Panel.

Next year, The NC Office of Rural Health will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. National Rural Health Day 2023 will be a highly anticipated event. We look forward to joining our partners across the state as we continue to celebrate the power of rural.

## Capital Grant: Deadline December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 5:00 pm

The Rural Health Operations team would like to remind all Office-funded SDRHCs that the Capital Grant application closes on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 5pm.

Capital Grant funding allows for investment in healthcare infrastructure, including the construction, renovation, and expansion of rural healthcare facilities (this includes pre-construction analysis). Capital investments can also be made through the purchase and installation of major equipment and technology.



We have expanded our definition of allowable expenses for capital to include the industry standard definition so that the use of a professional service to provide a cost analysis would be permissible. Capital Grant funding does not support staff salaries, and requests should not duplicate Community Health, Farmworker Health, or SDRHC grant funded operating projects. Two estimates are required, and funds **must be** expended by the end of the fiscal year based on the contract terms.

Applications must be submitted through the online survey tool. Click the link below and provide your contact information to receive a *personalized link* to the application: [https://ncruralhealth.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5ngAqyHY7Y7Sd2B](https://ncruralhealth.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5ngAqyHY7Y7Sd2B)

Please contact Kimberly McNeil with any questions you may have about the Capital Grant application at [kimberly.r.mcneil@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:kimberly.r.mcneil@dhhs.nc.gov)

## Training Opportunity: What's Your Plan? Emergency Preparedness Series for Rural Health Clinics



The Rural Health Operations team is excited to share an upcoming training opportunity around Emergency Preparedness for RHCs. Hear from the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, Health, the NC Healthcare Preparedness Program, and the NC Office of Rural Health about all things Emergency Preparedness including Best Practices, Response Coordination, Preparedness Exercises, and more.

The two-part training series will take place on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 10:30 am – 11:30 am. You can register to attend by reaching out to Justin Kearley at [justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

## In the News

[Flu Vaccination is Still a Public Health Priority](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is making a big push to prevent the spread of influenza. [Most recent data from the 2021-2022 season](#) show 4 million flu-related medical visits, 100,000 flu-related hospitalizations, and 5,000 flu deaths. This year has already seen [several states with the highest levels of respiratory illness](#) that includes fever plus a cough or sore throat. The CDC recommends flu vaccination for everyone aged 6 months and older, and provides a broad range of [communication resources to get the word out](#).

## Funding Opportunities

[National Association of Rural Health Clinics Fellowship Program](#) – Application and all materials are due January 2. The program is designed for mid-career professionals with a commitment to making further impact in rural health practice and policy. Applicants must have experience in either the Rural Health Clinic setting or a rural health care system. The fellowship requires a full-time, in-person commitment for either a 4-week continuous timeframe, or two, 2-week periods in May, June, or July 2023. The selected candidate will reside in Alexandria, Virginia during the fellowship period and work within the NARHC DC Office, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m-6 p.m. Lodging and travel expenses will be fully covered by the program, and a \$8,000 stipend will be provided to the fellow directly.

### [Rural Health Operations Website](#)

For technical assistance or general inquiries, please contact your regional contract monitor.

## Contact Information

Program Manager – Dorothea Brock

Email: [Dorothea.brock@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Dorothea.brock@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 1 & 2 – Justin Kearley

Email: [Justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Justin.kearley@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 3 & 5 – Beth Blaise

Email: [Beth.blaise@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Beth.blaise@dhhs.nc.gov)

Regions 4 & 6 – Kimberly R. McNeil

Email: [Kimberly.r.mnceil@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kimberly.r.mnceil@dhhs.nc.gov)