



Rural Practitioners *of* Texas CONFERENCE

ADVANCING RURAL PRACTICE:
Challenges, Opportunities, and Impact

PRESENTED BY



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
College of Medicine

MARCH 28-29 ²⁰/₂₅
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

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STAY CONNECTED THIS WEEKEND:

Altstadt Brewery
6120 East US-290, Fredericksburg, TX 78624
WiFi username: ALTGUEST
Password: Brewhaha

Tag us in conference photos using #RuralPractitionersTX

 @tamumedicine
 Texas A&M University School of Medicine
 @TAMU Medicine

WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the second Rural Practitioners of Texas Conference, hosted by the Texas A&M University College of Medicine. I look forward to the next few days of education, collaboration, and conversation about how we can advance rural healthcare together.

As providers, you are no stranger to the challenges facing rural healthcare across the state. At the Texas A&M University College of Medicine, we know that when rural Texans thrive, Texas thrives, and we envision a future where every rural community has access to quality healthcare. We are committed to ushering change for a healthier future through our Rural Medicine Program and other initiatives intended to inspire the next generation of rural medicine.

Throughout the next few days together, we hope you will have the opportunity to network with fellow rural healthcare professionals; gain insights into the latest advancements in rural healthcare; engage with the next generation of rural healthcare providers; and feel refreshed and inspired to continue the important work that you do to improve access, enhance quality, and reduce disparities in healthcare across rural Texas.

Thank you again for joining us this weekend. If there is anything we can do to improve your experience throughout the conference, please let us know.



Sincerely,

KIA PARSI, MD

Executive Director, Rural Medicine, Texas A&M University College of Medicine
Executive Director, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI)

CLAIM CME CREDIT FOR THIS CONFERENCE



For CME Credit



Certificate of Attendance

Non-physicians can use this certificate of attendance to self-report CME earned at this conference to the state licensure board

ACCREDITATION

Texas A&M University College of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

DESIGNATION

Texas A&M University College of Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 6.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

DISCLOSURES

The faculty and planners for this educational activity have no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

*Note: This course will not be available until the conclusion of the LIVE activity.
Preferred browsers: Use Firefox, Safari, or Edge to complete the survey. There have been reported issues when using Chrome.*



JOIN OUR TEAM

The Texas A&M University College of Medicine
Department of Primary Care and Rural Medicine is
currently recruiting for the following positions:

RESIDENCY FACULTY:

- Family Medicine (FM) in Madisonville and San Angelo
- Family Medicine-Obstetrics (FM-OB) in Bryan-College Station

CONCIERGE PRACTICE PHYSICIANS IN BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION:

- Family Medicine (FM)
- Internal Medicine (IM)

Contact med-pcrn@tamu.edu for more information.

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE
DEPARTMENT &
APPLY TODAY**



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Department of Primary Care
& Rural Medicine

SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

All conference events will take place at the Altstadt Brewery - 6120 East US-290, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	Exhibitor move-in
11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.	Student welcome & lunch Rathskellar Room <i>Unexpected Challenges in Rural Emergency Medicine - Dr. Huda Naeem</i>
12-12:50 p.m.	Check-in & registration
12:50-1 p.m.	Opening remarks <i>Dr. Kia Parsi and Cassie Shelton</i>
1-4 p.m.	General sessions Grand Hall <i>Bridging the Gaps Between Rural Providers and Clinical Learners - Dr. Gabe Neal and Mikki Hand</i> <i>Training Tomorrow's Rural Providers: Academic Initiatives and How You Can Get Involved - Dr. Adrian Billings, Dr. Maria Crompton, Dr. Kim Hudson-Gallogly, Dr. Kia Parsi, and Brian Sullivan, moderated by Curtis Donaldson</i> <i>Finding the Right Fit: Choosing the Best Employment Environment in Rural Healthcare - Dr. Roxana Cruz, Dr. Jack Franklin, Clinton Kotal, and Adam Willmann, moderated by Dr. Kia Parsi</i>
5:30-7:30 p.m.	Welcome reception & networking <i>Heavy hors d'oeuvres, networking, optional wine tasting with professional sommelier, live entertainment by Ruby Dice</i>

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
8-9 a.m.	Breakfast
8:50-9:10 a.m.	Welcome <i>from Dr. Kia Parsi</i> Opening remarks <i>from Dr. Amy Waer</i>
9:10-10 a.m.	Keynote address <i>From Horse and Buggy to ChatGPT: Surely There is a Rural Solution in There - Dr. Nancy Dickey</i>
10:15 a.m.-12 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS	
	<div>SESSION A: CLINICAL TRACK Rathskellar Room</div> <div>SESSION B: RURAL PRACTICE TRACK Grand Hall</div>
10:15-11 a.m.	<div>Clinical Pearls: GLP-1s and Psychiatric Mental Health <i>Dr. Kia Parsi & Dr. Nicole Kroll</i></div> <div>Reading Between the Lines: Contracts & Careers in Rural Medicine <i>Dr. Jack Franklin, Amanda Hill, JD, Dr. Elizabeth Ellis, & Dr. Randy Lee, moderated by Dr. Kristy Edwards</i></div>
11:15 a.m.-12 p.m.	<div>OB Care for the Non-Obstetrical Practitioner: What Rural Providers Should Know <i>Dr. Jacquelyn Alvarado & Dr. Shivum Agarwal</i></div> <div>Properly Documenting and Reporting Evaluation and Management Services <i>John Burns</i></div>
12-1 p.m.	Lunch & networking

Continued on page 8

TIME	ACTIVITY
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1-3 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS
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	SESSION A: CLINICAL TRACK	SESSION B: RURAL PRACTICE TRACK
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	Rathskellar Room	Grand Hall
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1-1:45 p.m.	Managing Pain in Rural Practice: Balancing Access, Safety, & Effectiveness <i>Dr. Clare Hawkins</i>	Risky Business: Avoiding Legal Landmines in Rural Healthcare <i>Amanda Hill, JD</i>
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2-2:45 p.m.	Prescribing Wellness: The Power of Lifestyle Medicine <i>Mark Faries, Ph.D.</i>	Artificial Intelligence in Rural Healthcare: Innovations, Impact, & Implementation <i>Dr. Josiah Ward</i>
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3-3:45 p.m.	Closing session Grand Hall <i>Changes and Challenges: A Career Perspective on Rural Healthcare - Billy Philips, Ph.D.</i>
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3:45-4 p.m.	Farewell remarks & announcements
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4-5:30 p.m.	Exhibitor move-out
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5:30-8:30 p.m.	Closing dinner & networking <i>Family-style seated dinner, optional brewery tours, networking, and live entertainment by Deuce Bennett and the Tight Five</i>
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TEXAS A&M HEALTH

A&M Rural and Community Health Institute



The Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI) was established in 2003 as a health services organization for rural hospitals and clinics. RCHI is a key partner with the Texas A&M Health Rural Engagement Program—each committed to supporting rural healthcare institutions, so they can serve a diverse group of residents, many of whom have limited access to quality healthcare.

RCHI provides simple, affordable solutions to help rural healthcare facilities sustain operations and services and improve quality and safety. Programs include:

- Customized health care consultations;
- Patient safety initiatives;
- Peer review with case-based learning, benchmarking, assessment services; and
- Database management and analysis.

RCHI serves as a bridge for rural healthcare professionals and their constituents with access to academic centers, policy makers, and researchers.

LEARN MORE AT ARCHITEXAS.ORG



TROLLEY SCHEDULE

Trolley transportation will be provided to and from conference hotels and Altstadt Brewery during our evening socials.

DATES & TIMES:

- **Friday, March 28:** 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- **Saturday, March 29:** 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

ROUTE & STOPS (IN ORDER):

- **Albert Hotel**
242 E Main St, Fredericksburg, TX 78624
- **Fredericksburg Inn & Suites**
201 S Washington St, Fredericksburg, TX 78624
- **Holiday Inn Express & Suites Fredericksburg**
500 S Washington St, Fredericksburg, TX 78624
- **Altstadt Brewery**
6120 East US-290, Fredericksburg, TX 78624

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

- **Round Trip Duration:** Approximately 24 minutes per full loop.
- **Frequency:** The trolleys will run continuously during the scheduled times.
- **On-Demand Pickups:** Once the event starts, attendees can call the driver directly for a pickup rather than waiting for the full loop.

SPEAKERS



JACQUELYN E. ALVARADO, DNP, APRN, CNM, C-EFM

Director of Rural Maternal Health, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute

Jacquelyn E. Alvarado, DNP, APRN, CNM, C-EFM, leads RCHI Maternal Health Initiatives and is responsible for developing programs to address rural maternal care challenges in Texas. Dr. Alvarado oversees the research and implementation of various rural maternal health programs, such as obstetrical simulation training, telehealth prenatal care, and prenatal education. Dr. Alvarado earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Baylor University and her B.S. in nursing from the University of Texas at Arlington. She is a board-certified nurse midwife with over 15 years of experience specializing in maternal health and education. She has welcomed over a thousand babies into the world and provided midwifery services to women in underserved areas. She brings her experiences as a leader, clinician, and educator to her role at RCHI. Dr. Alvarado's dedication to addressing healthcare disparities in underserved communities underscores her commitment to improving maternal health outcomes and ensuring equitable access to quality care.



DR. SHIVUM ARGARWAL

***Assistant Professor, UT Southwestern Medical School,
Family Medicine Physician, Global Family Practice***

Shivum Argarwal, MD, is a family medicine provider and assistant professor at UT Southwestern Medical School. Dr. Argarwal completed residency in family medicine at John Peter Smith Hospital after attending medical school at UT Southwestern.



DR. ADRIAN BILLINGS

***Chief Medical Officer, Preventative Care Health Services FQHC,
Associate Academic Dean of Rural and Community Engagement,
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center***

Adrian Billings, MD, PhD, FAAFP, FACU, of Alpine, Texas, is a National Health Service Corps Scholar alumnus, the chief medical officer of Preventative Care Health Services FQHC in the rural Big Bend of Texas, professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Associate Academic Dean of Rural and Community Engagement, and senior fellow of the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Additionally, he serves as senior fellow of health equity with the Atlantic Institute. Adrian has been a career-long community physician along the rural Texas-Mexico border of west Texas. He is an

elected school board trustee for rural Alpine Independent School District, serves as an officer in the Texas Academy of Family Physicians, and works on the board of the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved. He is passionate about rural healthcare workforce development and enabling rural-born and educated students opportunities to enroll in healthcare training programs.



JOHN BURNS, CPC, CMPA, CEMC, CH-CBS, RH-CBS

Vice President of Audit & Compliance Services, ArchProCoding

John Burns, CPC, CMPA, CEMC, CH-CBS, RH-CBS, has dedicated over 25 years to the healthcare industry, focusing on auditing clinical documentation and ensuring compliance with coding and billing practices at ArchProCoding. He provides professional audit services, tailored training, and strategic guidance to clients nationwide. John also volunteers with the US Department of Defense, contributing his expertise in compliance and auditing. John began his career in 1995 with an Atlanta-based consulting firm and later served as President and CEO of Modern Conventions in Compliance, Inc. from 2004 to 2013. He then joined DoctorsManagement, LLC as Senior Consultant until May 2016, when he joined ArchProCoding full-time. John is a prominent instructor, teaching evaluation and management documentation and coding as well as rural health and community health coding and billing bootcamps, both virtually and on-site. Based in northern Georgia, John serves as Vice President of Audit & Compliance Services for ArchProCoding. His insights have been published in leading medical journals including Coding Alert, BC Advantage, and Part B News. John's extensive travel has allowed him to assist clients in all 50 states and other locations abroad.



DR. MARIA CROMPTON

Director, Rural Medical Education, University of North Texas Health Science Center - Ft. Worth

Maria Crompton, DO, FAAFP, DipABLM, is a family medicine physician and assistant professor at The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth. She has led the center's Rural Osteopathic Medical Education of Texas (ROME) program since 2023.



DR. ROXANA CRUZ

Chief Innovation Officer, Texas Association of Community Health Centers

Roxana Cruz, MD, provides clinical leadership to TACHC programs, education, member support, and advocacy efforts. Dr. Cruz earned her bachelor's degree in bacteriology and public health at Washington State University before receiving her MD at New York Medical College in 1995. She has been committed to working for and with underserved and vulnerable populations throughout her career, both in the U.S. and internationally. Board-certified in internal medicine, she is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and also holds a certificate in clinical

tropical medicine and travelers' health. Her career started as physician and medical director at Los Barrios Unidos in Dallas, moving to work in New York City with homeless populations and then at Ryan-NENA CHC, where her work focused on patients diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Prior to joining TACHC, Dr. Cruz served as medical director for a hospital-owned 501a, practicing and supervising three rural health centers in Greenville, Texas.



DR. NANCY DICKEY

Interim Head, Texas A&M University Department of Medical Humanities;
President Emerita, Texas A&M University Health Science Center;
Professor Emerita, Texas A&M University Primary Care and Rural Medicine

Nancy W. Dickey, MD, has worked with the Texas A&M University College of Medicine in a variety of positions since 1996 when she joined the university as founding director of the Family Medicine Residency of the Brazos Valley (now Texas A&M Family Medicine Residency). Dr. Dickey has a keen interest in rural health and served as executive director of the Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI) from 2012-2023. Dr. Dickey was the first woman to serve as president of the American Medical Association and has received numerous awards, including six honorary doctorate degrees in both science and law; election to the prestigious Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine); and the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.



CURTIS DONALDSON

Director, Rural Medicine Outreach, Texas A&M University College of Medicine; Director, Community Engagement for Rural Texas,
Texas A&M University Office of the President

A rural Texan by birth, Curtis Donaldson grew up in Valley Mills and graduated from Texas A&M University in 1981 with a BBA in management. While at A&M, he was an active member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band, serving as B Company Commander, a Bugle Rank member, and a Ross Volunteer. After graduation, Curtis served as 2nd Lt. at Ft. Sill, followed by 10 years in the Texas Army National Guard while working for Conoco in various locations. He later founded CleanFUEL USA, a Georgetown-based company that developed propane vehicle technology, serving major clients like UPS, TxDOT, General Motors, and Freightliner. After 25 years, he sold the business and moved to Mason, Texas, where he became deeply involved in community development, including leading the \$5.2 million courthouse restoration campaign. Curtis played a key role in piloting the Texas A&M College of Medicine's Rural Medicine Initiative in Mason County, which expanded to surrounding counties and is now being implemented statewide. He currently serves as director of community engagement for rural Texas in the Texas A&M Office of the President, and director of rural medicine outreach for the Texas A&M College of Medicine, working to transform healthcare access in rural communities across Texas.



DR. KRISTY EDWARDS

Director, Shannon Family Medicine Residency Program

Kristy Edwards, MD, has served as a rural family medicine provider in southwest Texas for 15+ years. Now, as director of the Shannon Family Medicine Residency Program, she oversees the community-based primary health care practice and fosters a high-quality learning environment, training the next generation of physicians the art and science of patient-centered, quality rural family medicine. Dr. Edwards received her undergraduate degree from Angelo State University and her medical degree from Texas Tech University Health Science Center in Lubbock and El Paso. She trained at Valley Baptist Family Medicine Residency Program in Harlingen and then went on to teach in a combined military-civilian family medicine residency program for eight years at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. In 2022, she completed a Leading Physician Wellbeing Program through the AAFP and now serves as a physician champion for physician wellbeing at Shannon Medical Center.



ELIZABETH ELLIS, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CRHCP

Assistant Director for Clinical and Outreach Affairs, Texas A&M University College of Nursing

Elizabeth Ellis, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CRHCP is a family nurse practitioner with experience working in rural health, family practice and large hospital systems as a clinician, consultant, and leader in rural health. She joined the Texas A&M University College of Nursing in 2019 as an adjunct faculty member and has served as the assistant director for clinical and outreach affairs for the college since 2023.



MARK D. FARIES, PH.D.

Associate Professor & Extension Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Mark D. Faries, Ph.D., is a state extension health specialist in behavioral medicine for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He has a doctorate in behavioral health and a master's in exercise physiology. Throughout his career, Mark has developed lifestyle medicine curriculum and advocacy programs, served on the board of directors of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, and founded Lone Star Lifestyle Medicine for Texas and FitnessPudding.com.



DR. JACK FRANKLIN

Owner, Hill Country Direct Care

Jack Franklin, MD, is a highly experienced, board-certified family medicine physician based in Llano, Texas. With over 20 years of dedicated service, Dr. Franklin earned his medical degree from UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas in 1995 and completed his residency at John Peter Smith

Hospital in Fort Worth. He is known for providing compassionate and comprehensive healthcare to patients in Llano and the surrounding areas. In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Franklin is actively involved in medical education as a clinical associate adjunct faculty member for Texas A&M University College of Medicine. He is committed to mentoring the next generation of healthcare professionals and staying up-to-date with the latest advancements in family medicine. Outside of medicine, Dr. Franklin is an avid outdoorsman, enjoying activities like hunting, fishing, and sports. He is deeply rooted in his community, actively participating in area youth sports as a coach and contributing to local organizations.



MIKKI HAND, APRN, FNP-C

Executive Director, Frontera Healthcare Network

Mikki Hand, APRN, FNP-C, has served as the executive director of Frontera Healthcare Network since 2022 and also practices part-time as a nurse practitioner. Prior to her current role, she was the COO of Frontera Healthcare Network, overseeing financial and operational performance, compliance, and strategic priorities. Mikki's background includes military service as a human resource specialist in the Texas Army National Guard; nursing educator at Angelo State University; and roles in critical care and program management at Odessa Regional Medical Center, where she achieved Chest Pain Accreditation and maintained Stroke Certification. She holds a Master of Science in nursing from Angelo State University and is a board-certified family nurse practitioner. Mikki is actively involved in many boards and committees, including the Heartland Healthcenter Control Network and the Texas Association of Community Health Centers' Clinical Advisory Committee. Aside from her professional work and service, she is active in community organizations as a coach and youth group leader, a member of the Menard Industrial Development Board and the Community Resource Coordination Group.



DR. CLARE HAWKINS

Chief Medical Officer, Main Street Rural Health

Clare Hawkins, MD, FAAFP, practices family medicine in Houston, Texas, where he splits his time between a private practice and Main Street Rural Health where he is CMO for Texas. He is board certified in Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Care. He is a recent past president of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians (AFP). He has been a member of the AAFP's Commission on Health of the Public and Science and Commission on Continuing Professional Development. With 30 years of experience as a family medicine educator and more than 15 years as faculty for the AAFP, Dr. Hawkins has presented on a variety of medical topics.



AMANDA HILL, JD

Founder, Hill Health Law

Amanda Hill, JD, is a healthcare attorney with over 23 years of experience and a passion for representing and helping doctors. As an attorney, she edits contracts, helps physicians buy and sell practices, provides advice and counsel on compliance and risk, and acts as general counsel to many groups. Amanda authored the Fraud and Abuse Manual and Build Your Compliance Plan for the Texas Medical Association. In addition to her law practice, Amanda owns Guard My Practice, which provides on-demand training videos for doctors across the U.S. to help them stay out of trouble, better negotiate contracts, and have richer relationships with patients and staff.



KIM HUDSON-GALLOGLY, PH.D., WHNP-BC, CNE

Clinical Associate Professor, Director of Rural Health Initiative & MSN-Nursing Education Program Coordinator, Texas A&M University College of Nursing

Kim Hudson-Gallogly, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, CNE, is a highly experienced and dedicated nursing educator who has excelled in both academia and nursing program management and leadership. She currently serves as a clinical associate professor, director of rural health initiative and MSN-nursing education program coordinator for the Texas A&M University College of Nursing.



CLINTON D. KOTAL

Chief Health Integration Officer, Hill Country Memorial Hospital

Clinton D. Kotal has served as Chief Operating Officer for HCM Medical Group and HCM Surgery Center since 2017. Prior to joining Hill Country Memorial, Mr. Kotal served as the Vice President for Ambulatory Services and Network of Care for the The Children's Hospital of San Antonio. Mr. Kotal has also served in various leadership and consulting roles with large healthcare organizations across the country. Kotal received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance from Texas Tech University and his Master of Healthcare Administration degree from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX.



NICOLE KROLL, PH.D., APRN, ANP-C, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner & Clinical Associate Professor, Texas A&M University Health Services; Associate Dean for Clinical & Outreach Affairs, Texas A&M University College of Nursing

Nicole Kroll, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-C, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, has been a nurse for 23 years and nurse practitioner since 2006, she is dedicated to excellence and integrity in psychiatric nursing. Triple board certified, including as a

psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, Dr. Kroll's leadership and selfless service are evident in her clinical and academic work delivering care where it is needed the most. She is committed to fostering respect and loyalty through strong academic-practice partnerships, enhancing clinical training, and improving mental health care access for all. She has been delivering mental health care for students at Texas A&M since 2023.



DR. RANDY LEE

Chief of Staff, Family Practice Rural Health Clinic, Hamilton Healthcare System; Clinical Associate Faculty Member, Texas A&M University College of Medicine

Randy Lee, MD, brings over two decades of experience in family medicine and healthcare leadership to his role as clinical associate faculty member with the Texas A&M University College of Medicine. He earned his bachelor's in biomedical science from Texas A&M in 1990, followed by his MD from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in 1994. Dr. Lee completed residency in family medicine at John Peter Smith Hospital in the Tarrant County Hospital District from 1995 to 1997 and has been board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine since 1997. Throughout his career, Dr. Lee has received numerous accolades, including the John Peter Smith Intern of the Year and Outstanding Resident awards. He has served as active staff at Hamilton Healthcare System, chief of medical staff at Hamilton General Hospital, as well as trauma program director, playing a pivotal role in healthcare program development and administration. Dr. Lee's commitment to medical education is evident through his roles as a preceptor for various healthcare programs and his contributions to public health initiatives and community organizations.



DR. HUDA NAEEM

Emergency Medicine Physician, Seton Healthcare Family & Medical Director, BCS Free Health Clinic

Huda Naeem, DO, MS, is an emergency medicine physician with the Seton Healthcare Family and serves as medical director of the BCS Free Health Clinic. She has been recognized as a recipient of the 2024 Clinical Medical Director Award, 2023 Top Texas Doctor, and 2023 Marquis Who's Who American Physicians, in addition to serving as director of the advisory board for Muslim Women in Emergency Medicine. Dr. Naeem is committed to advancing healthcare, mentoring future providers, and improving access to care through innovative and community-driven initiatives.



DR. GABRIEL NEAL

Clinical Professor & Department Head, Department of Primary Care & Rural Medicine, Texas A&M University College of Medicine

Gabriel Neal, MD, MA, FAAFP, is a clinical professor in the Department of Primary Care & Rural Medicine at the Texas A&M University College of Medicine. He first joined the college as an adjunct faculty member in 2008,

joining as full-time faculty in the Texas A&M Family Medicine Residency Program in 2016. Dr. Neal has taught numerous pre-clinical and clinical courses and has served in numerous leadership roles, including clerkship director for family medicine and chief clinical officer for the college. Additionally, he has served as chair of the Department of Family Medicine for the St. Joseph Hospitals. His teaching illuminates applied, evidence-based medical care and ethics. He was recognized as Clinical Faculty Preceptor of the Year in 2011 and Outstanding Faculty in Family Medicine in 2019. He has authored several chapters in Swanson's Family Medicine Review and his work has been published in many peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Neal received his MD from the University of Oklahoma in 2001, completed his family medicine residency at Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio, followed by a FM-OB fellowship in Spokane, Washington. He received a master's in bioethics from Trinity International University in 2012.



DR. KIA PARSI

Executive Director, Rural Medicine, Texas A&M University College of Medicine & **Executive Director**, Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI)

Kia Parsi, MD, serves as executive director of RCHI and associate professor and executive director for rural medicine with the Texas A&M University College of Medicine. Before joining RCHI, Dr. Parsi served as chief medical officer for St. Joseph Health, an integrated healthcare system that is part of CommonSpirit Health. With nearly three decades of experience in rural settings, including a full clinical practice of outpatient, inpatient, post-acute, and hospice care, in addition to his administrative experience, Dr. Parsi understands the unique challenges facing rural healthcare providers across the state.



BILLY PHILIPS, PH.D., MPH

Executive Vice President, F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health, Texas Tech University

Billy U. Philips, Jr., Ph.D., MPH, is the executive vice president of the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health at Texas Tech University. Dr. Philips holds a Ph.D. and MPH in human ecology (epidemiology) from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. He is recognized nationally for his expertise in cancer control education.



CASSIE SHELTON, BSN, RN

Director of Operations, Rural Medicine Program, Texas A&M University College of Medicine

Cassie Shelton, BSN, RN, grew up in rural Texas, where she developed a deep appreciation for small-town communities and the people who make them thrive. She serves as the director of operations for Rural Medicine at the Texas A&M University College of Medicine, leading efforts to expand rural clinical rotations and strengthen rural healthcare initiatives. Before

her work in rural medicine, Cassie served 13 years in the U.S. Navy, rising to Chief Petty Officer and leading high-profile missions as a Persian Farsi language analyst during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. She earned her nursing degree from the Medical College of Georgia and briefly worked as a Burn ICU nurse before being recalled to active duty. While Cassie has held many roles, her greatest joy is being a mom. In her current work, she finds inspiration in meeting rural Texans and collaborating with dedicated community leaders. She is also passionate about mentoring medical students in the Rural Medicine Distinction Program, helping to shape the next generation of rural healthcare providers.

BRIAN SULLIVAN

Clinical Education Specialist, UTMB Health

Brian Sullivan is the clinical education specialist at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). In his role, Brian recruits preceptors and schedules students with School of Medicine third and fourth year courses and electives that require community-based teaching physicians; coordinates the rural health scholarly concentration; oversees the WOS faculty appointment process and preceptor access to the Moody Medical Library; as well as maintaining the OCE website.



DR. AMY WAER

Dean, Texas A&M University College of Medicine

Amy Waer, MD, FACS, was appointed dean of the Texas A&M University College of Medicine in 2021 after serving as interim dean since September 2019 in addition to leading medical education planning and delivery for the college. Before coming to Texas A&M, Dr. Waer accumulated decades of surgical and medical education experience, from a private group general surgery practice in Virginia and 14 years at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center and College of Medicine in Tucson. For five years, she oversaw the Rural Health Professions Program at the University of Arizona. Her research and clinical interests have focused on surgery, surgical education, and breast surgery, with a research focus on breast cancer prevention and early detection. Dr. Waer received her undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Arizona.



DR. JOSIAH WARD

Chief Medical Officer, La Esperanza Clinic

Josiah Ward, DO, FAAP, was appointed chief medical officer at La Esperanza Clinic in San Angelo, Texas, in January 2025. Dr. Ward is a board-certified pediatrician and served seven years as a physician with the United States Air Force where he was also medical director of Goodfellow Air Force Base's Child Development Center. After the Air Force, Dr. Ward worked as a pediatrician at Community Medical Associates and Shannon Medical Center. He is known as a leading provider of virtual medicine in the Concho Valley with a passion for reducing barriers for patients to access healthcare services.



ADAM WILLMANN

CEO and President, *Goodall-Witcher Hospital Authority*

Adam Willmann joined Goodall-Witcher Hospital Authority as CEO in 2012. He oversees a 25-bed critical access hospital, a 40-bed nursing facility, two rural health clinics, a home health agency, and a wellness center. Willmann was vital in developing a rural collaboration with neighboring hospitals to bring new surgical services to his community. Willmann piloted a program that successfully recruited surgeons to the area. The collaboration has improved lives and health outcomes along with reduced travel burdens. Willmann serves on THA's council of policy and development, leadership development council and the HOSPAC board of directors. He is also the current chair of the board at the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals and is active in the Clifton Chamber of Commerce.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS!

PLATINUM SPONSORS:



TEXAS A&M HEALTH

Rural & Community
Health Institute



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Department of Primary Care
& Rural Medicine

BE SURE TO VISIT CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS DURING YOUR BREAKS!

EXHIBITORS

- Alliance ACO
- Alzheimer's Association
- Beam Healthcare
- C3HIE
- Concord Medical Group
- Discovery Analysts and Consultants
- DSHS - Texas Primary Care Office
- Hunter Pharmacy Services
- Jammin Canna LLC
- MindHealthy
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- Texas A&M Health Rural & Community Health Institute (RCHI)
- Texas A&M University Libraries
- Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute
- Texas Health Services Authority

CME PROGRAM

AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™: 6.75 hours live activity

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

1-1:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN RURAL PROVIDERS AND CLINICAL LEARNERS

Gabe Neal, MD & Mikki Hand, APRN, FNP-C

In rural healthcare settings, clinical education presents unique challenges and opportunities. This session, led by Gabriel Neal and Mikki Hand, will explore the critical gaps that impact student learning and provider engagement in rural clinical environments. Participants will gain insight into the educational, generational, communication, and technological barriers that can hinder effective teaching and mentorship in the clinical workplace. Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, this session will provide practical strategies for fostering a positive and effective learning environment, improving formative feedback, and avoiding common pitfalls that can prevent students from achieving their full potential. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to enhance clinical education in rural settings, strengthening the bridge between providers and the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants, will be able to:

1. Describe strategies that lead to a positive and effective learning environment in the clinical workplace.
2. Employ strategies to achieve effective formative feedback for clinical learners.
3. Recognize pitfalls and common practices that detract students from achieving their goals.

2-2:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

TRAINING TOMORROW'S RURAL PROVIDERS: ACADEMIC INITIATIVES AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Adrian Billings, MD, Ph.D., Maria Crompton, DO, FAAFP, DipABLM, Kim Hudson-Gallogly, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, CNE, Kia Parsi, MD, & Brian Sullivan, moderated by Curtis Donaldson

Texas universities play a critical role in training the next generation of rural healthcare providers. This panel will highlight academic initiatives that expose students to rural medicine through clinical rotations, mentorship programs, and innovative curriculum strategies. Speakers from top institutions will share their approaches to rural education and discuss how local providers can collaborate with schools to host students, serve as preceptors, and help shape the future of rural healthcare in Texas. Attendees will leave with actionable steps on how to engage with academic programs and contribute to building a stronger rural workforce.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand rural training initiatives – Learn about innovative programs at Texas universities designed to increase rural healthcare exposure for medical, nursing, and allied health students.
2. Explore collaboration opportunities – Discover ways healthcare providers and rural facilities can partner with academic institutions to support student training, mentorship, and workforce development.
3. Shape the future of rural healthcare – Gain insights on how local providers can engage with educational programs to influence rural healthcare training and recruit future professionals to their communities.

3-3:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT: CHOOSING THE BEST EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT IN RURAL HEALTHCARE

Roxana Cruz, MD, Jack Franklin, MD, Clinton Kotal, & Adam Willmann, moderated by Kia Parsi, MD
Rural healthcare professionals have a variety of employment opportunities, each with unique benefits and challenges. This session is designed for physicians, PAs, and NPs who are considering different practice settings in rural Texas. Panelists—including providers from a rural healthcare system, an independent hospital, and an FQHC—will share their experiences and insights on choosing the right fit. A healthcare attorney will also provide guidance on contract considerations and employment negotiations. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of what to look for in an employer and how to make informed career decisions in rural medicine.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Compare different rural employment models – Understand the benefits and challenges of working in a rural healthcare system, independent hospital, FQHC, or private practice.
2. Identify key factors in choosing an employer – Explore how practice autonomy, community engagement, administrative support, and resource availability impact job satisfaction in rural settings.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

9:10-10 a.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

FROM HORSE AND BUGGY TO CHATGPT: SURELY THERE IS A RURAL SOLUTION IN THERE

Nancy Dickey, MD

Rural healthcare has come a long way—from house calls by horse and buggy to the rise of telemedicine, AI, and digital health tools. But despite these advancements, rural communities continue to face significant challenges in accessing quality care. In this keynote, we'll explore the evolving role of technology in rural healthcare and how it can bridge gaps in access. Attendees will learn three practical ways technology is already transforming rural care, from remote patient monitoring to AI-driven clinical support. We'll also address key obstacles to implementation, including infrastructure limitations, digital literacy, and provider adoption. By the end of this session, participants will gain a clearer understanding of the potential—and the hurdles—of integrating technology into rural healthcare. The future is here, but is it truly reaching rural America? Let's find out.

Learning Objectives

1. Be able to describe three ways technology can improve access to healthcare in rural communities.
2. Gain awareness of the key obstacles to implementing technology in rural care settings.

10:15-11 a.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

CLINICAL PEARLS: GLP-1S AND PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH

Kia Parsi, MD, & Nicole Kroll, Ph.D., APRN, ANP-C, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

As the landscape of medicine rapidly evolves, staying current on emerging treatments is essential—especially for rural providers who often manage a broad range of conditions with limited specialty support. This session will deliver clinical pearls on two timely topics:

- Dr. Kia Parsi will discuss the latest research and clinical applications of GLP-1 receptor agonists, exploring their expanding role beyond diabetes treatment.
- Dr. Nicole Kroll will provide insights into psychiatric mental health, covering current best practices and challenges in delivering care to rural populations.

Attendees will gain practical, evidence-based takeaways to apply in their clinical practice, helping them navigate these critical areas of patient care in rural settings.

Learning Objectives

By attending this session, participants will:

1. Understand the latest research on GLP-1 receptor antagonists and their clinical relevance for rural healthcare providers.
2. Gain insights into current psychiatric mental health trends, including best practices for managing mental health conditions in rural settings.
3. Learn practical applications of emerging treatments that can improve patient outcomes in resource-limited environments.

10:15-11 a.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

READING BETWEEN THE LINES: CONTRACTS & CAREERS IN RURAL MEDICINE

Elizabeth Ellis, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CRHCP, Randy Lee, MD, Jack Franklin, MD, & Amanda Hill, JD, moderated by Kristy Edwards, MD

Choosing the right employment model is one of the most important career decisions in healthcare. This panel will feature professionals from diverse career paths, including concierge medicine, academia, and hospital systems, along with a healthcare attorney to discuss contract navigation. Panelists will share their experiences, challenges, and advice on how different employment structures impact job satisfaction, autonomy, and financial stability. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of career options and practical strategies for making informed employment decisions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand different employment models – Compare various career paths in healthcare, including concierge medicine, academia, hospital employment, and independent practice.
2. Navigate contract negotiations – Gain insights from a healthcare attorney on key contract considerations, negotiation strategies, and legal pitfalls to avoid.
3. Evaluate career fit and work-life balance – Explore how different employment structures impact autonomy, income, professional development, and long-term career satisfaction.

11:15 a.m.-12 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

OB CARE FOR THE NON-OBSTETRICAL PRACTITIONER: WHAT RURAL PROVIDERS SHOULD KNOW

Jacquelyn Alvarado, DNP, APRN, CNM, C-EFM & Shivum Agarwal, MD

For many rural providers, caring for pregnant patients isn't part of their daily practice—but when those patients seek care, having practical, applicable knowledge is essential. This session, led by Dr. Alvarado and Dr. Agrawal, will equip non-specialists with the fundamentals of prenatal care, helping them confidently support pregnant patients in rural settings. Attendees will learn how to conduct basic prenatal assessments, recognize common pregnancy concerns, and identify when specialist referrals are needed. The session will also cover patient education, risk stratification, and strategies for managing prenatal care within resource-limited environments. With a focus on real-world, actionable takeaways, this session will ensure rural providers are prepared to offer safe, effective prenatal support—whether it's during a routine visit or an unexpected patient encounter.

Learning Objectives

By attending this session, participants will:

1. Identify common prenatal and postpartum conditions that rural, non-obstetrical providers may encounter and describe appropriate first-line management and referral indications.
2. Recognize and respond to obstetric emergencies in non-OB settings, including appropriate triage, stabilization, and transfer protocols for pregnant and postpartum patients.
3. Review safe medication practices in pregnancy and lactation, including prescribing considerations, teratogenic risks, and key resources for medication safety.

4. Discuss critical screening and prevention measures for pregnant and postpartum individuals, including management of infections, substance use, domestic violence, and mental health concerns such as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.
5. Describe postpartum complications that non-OB providers may encounter, including preeclampsia, hemorrhage, infections, VTE, and breastfeeding challenges, with an emphasis on early recognition and management.
6. Highlight social determinants of health and preventive care considerations that impact maternal health outcomes in rural settings, including access to care, intimate partner violence, and health literacy.
7. Outline practical strategies for preparing a rural healthcare setting to respond effectively to obstetric presentations and emergencies, including necessary supplies, staff training, and collaboration with referral centers.

11:15 a.m.-12 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

PROPERLY DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

John Burns

Navigating Medicare regulations can be challenging for Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). This session will provide a deep dive into key Medicare policies, including Chapters 13 and 9 of the Medicare manuals, E&M coding guidelines, and telehealth regulations. Learn how to confidently select the correct service levels, optimize billing practices, and stay compliant with evolving Medicare requirements.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand RHC and FQHC regulations - Summarize key provisions from Chapter 13 of the Medicare Benefits Policy Manual and Chapter 9 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual. Identify reimbursement guidelines and compliance requirements specific to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).
2. Accurately select E&M service level - Apply Medical Decision Making (MDM) and time-based coding principles to select appropriate Evaluation & Management (E&M) service levels. Recognize common documentation errors and best practices to improve coding accuracy and compliance.
3. Navigate telehealth regulations for RHCs and FQHCs - Define the current Medicare and Medicaid telehealth policies as they apply to RHCs and FQHCs. Implement best practices for billing and documentation of telehealth services in compliance with federal guidelines.

1-1:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

MANAGING PAIN IN RURAL PRACTICE: BALANCING ACCESS, SAFETY, AND EFFECTIVENESS

Clare Hawkins, MD

Pain management presents unique challenges in rural settings, where providers often serve as the primary source of pain care with limited access to specialists, behavioral health services, and physical therapy resources. This session will equip rural healthcare professionals with practical, evidence-based strategies to assess and treat pain while minimizing risks associated with opioid therapy. Attendees will explore real-world pain management approaches, including non-opioid treatment options, opioid risk mitigation, and best practices for long-term pain management in underserved communities. Special attention will be given to telehealth solutions, interdisciplinary collaboration, and local resource utilization to enhance patient outcomes. This session will provide practical, adaptable solutions for rural providers, ensuring they leave with actionable tools to enhance pain management in their communities.

Learning Objectives

By attending this session, participants will be able to:

1. Assess and treat pain in resource-limited settings - Perform comprehensive pain assessments and develop safe, effective treatment plans using available rural healthcare resources.

2. Utilize evidence-based non-opioid pain management strategies - Identify and implement accessible, cost-effective non-opioid treatments suited for rural patient populations.
3. Navigate opioid therapy in rural practice - Evaluate the risks and benefits of opioid therapy, manage long-term opioid use, and recognize signs of opioid use disorder in areas with limited addiction services.
4. Integrate rural-specific pain management approaches - Leverage telehealth, community resources, and interdisciplinary collaboration to improve chronic pain management in underserved areas.

1-1:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

RISKY BUSINESS: AVOIDING LEGAL LANDMINES IN RURAL HEALTHCARE

Amanda Hill, JD

Navigating the legal and regulatory risks in healthcare can feel like walking through a minefield. From fraud and abuse concerns to problematic contracts and compliance pitfalls, even small missteps can lead to major consequences, including government audits, financial penalties, and reputational damage. This session will break down key risk areas that healthcare providers, administrators, and rural clinics must watch out for. Attendees will gain practical insights on identifying compliance red flags, crafting airtight contracts, documenting effectively, and managing challenging patient interactions — all to reduce liability and protect their practice. With real-world examples and expert guidance, this session will equip you with the tools to stay compliant, prevent audits, and avoid legal headaches before they happen.

Learning Objectives

By attending this session, participants will:

1. Identify common fraud and abuse risks in healthcare and how to avoid them.
2. Recognize problematic contract terms that could create compliance issues.
3. Learn how to develop and implement an effective compliance plan.
4. Understand best practices for documentation that support legal and clinical success.
5. Gain strategies for preventing government audits and handling them if they occur.
6. Learn approaches for managing difficult patients while staying within legal and ethical guidelines.

2-2:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

LIFESTYLE MEDICINE IN RURAL HEALTHCARE

Mark Faries, Ph.D.

Lifestyle medicine is an evidence-based approach that focuses on preventing, treating, and reversing chronic diseases through lifestyle interventions, such as nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management, social connections, and substance avoidance. This session will explore how rural practitioners can integrate lifestyle medicine into patient care to improve outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and address the unique challenges of rural communities. Dr. Mark Faries will discuss the role of behavioral change in chronic disease management, practical strategies for implementing lifestyle medicine in rural clinical settings, and how to empower patients to make sustainable health improvements. The session will also cover barriers to lifestyle interventions in rural healthcare and strategies to overcome them.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define lifestyle medicine and explain its role in preventing and managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.
2. Recognize the behavioral and environmental barriers that impact patient adherence to lifestyle changes, particularly in rural communities.
3. Implement practical strategies for incorporating lifestyle medicine principles into primary care practice, even with limited resources.

2-2:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN RURAL HEALTHCARE: INNOVATIONS, IMPACT, AND IMPLEMENTATION

Josiah Ward, DO, FAAP

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming healthcare, offering new opportunities to enhance patient care, improve efficiency, and bridge gaps in rural health services. But how can rural providers harness AI effectively, and what challenges must be addressed? This session will provide a comprehensive introduction to AI in healthcare, exploring different types of AI algorithms and their real-world applications in rural settings. Attendees will learn how AI-powered tools can enhance telemedicine, remote patient monitoring, diagnostic support, and chronic disease management, improving both access and accuracy in care delivery. While AI offers promising solutions, barriers to implementation remain—including digital infrastructure limitations, provider training needs, and data security concerns. This session will tackle these challenges head-on, equipping rural healthcare professionals with actionable insights on integrating AI responsibly and effectively into their practice.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Understand the fundamentals of AI in healthcare, including key algorithms and their clinical applications.
2. Explore AI-driven innovations that enhance rural healthcare, such as telemedicine support, remote patient monitoring, and diagnostic imaging analysis.
3. Identify ways AI improves efficiency through administrative automation, transcription, and predictive analytics.
4. Discuss the benefits of AI in improving diagnostic accuracy, care access, and chronic disease management in rural settings.
5. Recognize the key challenges to AI adoption in rural healthcare, including infrastructure, cost, privacy, and provider training.
6. Gain insight into strategies for overcoming barriers and effectively implementing AI in rural clinical practice.

3-3:45 p.m. • 0.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES: A CAREER PERSPECTIVE ON RURAL HEALTH CARE

Billy Philips, Ph.D., MPH, FACE, FASAHP

Rural healthcare is constantly evolving, shaped by transformative changes, emerging challenges, and the vital role of rural practitioners in training the next generation. Drawing on decades of experience, Dr. Billy Philips will provide a thoughtful, career-spanning perspective on how rural healthcare has changed—and where it's headed. This keynote will explore three major shifts that have redefined rural healthcare delivery, from advancements in technology to policy changes impacting access and reimbursement. Attendees will also gain insight into three pressing challenges that rural communities face, including workforce shortages, financial sustainability, and healthcare disparities. Finally, Dr. Philips will discuss how rural practitioners play a crucial role in mentoring and educating future providers, ensuring that the next generation is equipped to meet the unique demands of rural medicine. This session will offer a big-picture perspective on the past, present, and future of rural healthcare—helping providers navigate an ever-changing landscape.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Describe three transformative changes in rural healthcare.
2. Identify three future challenges that will shape the future of rural health.
3. Examine the evolving role of rural practitioners in educating and mentoring future healthcare providers.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

STAY ENGAGED WITH THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY RURAL MEDICINE PROGRAM:

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