

Steuben Rural Health Network: Participation Overview

Network Purpose and Background: Health care reforms and population shifts in the 1980s saw the closing of rural hospitals and loss of health providers. To address this, state legislation created the Rural Health Network Demonstration Project in 1986 to band health care systems together and ensure regional coverage. In 1987, the federal government created the Office of Rural Health Policy (OHRP) to “[promote] better health care service in rural America.”¹

Since then, many states have adopted the creation of Rural Health Networks. These “organizations of organizations” assist health care and related human service providers, consumers, local businesses, and government to coordinate of information, services, and planning around local health care needs. Networks build provider capacity to deliver effective, efficient services to rural America.

Network Structure and Participation: The Steuben Rural Health Network serves as the convener and facilitator for health-related initiatives for Steuben County. The network provides planning and communication, program administration and support, data and resource development, and technology services that increase members’ collaborative capacities to address community needs. SRHN performs activities and fosters collaboration on issues identified in its annual Work Plan, approved by the N.Y. State Office of Rural Health. This plan is devised around health service trends defined by local member organizations.

The Network operates under a committee governance structure defined by current Work Plan priorities. Committees oversee the activities listed in the Work Plan, which are accomplished through subcommittees, or “Work Groups” specific to each activity. In some cases, Work Groups are time-limited. In other instances, ongoing Work Groups coordinate and improve services in a particular area of rural health care.

A committee that is in charge of several ongoing activities may have several Work Groups in operation at once. Committee members, however, choose the activities that they and their organizations feel are the best fit to their own talents and missions.

SRHN currently functions through the following established committees:

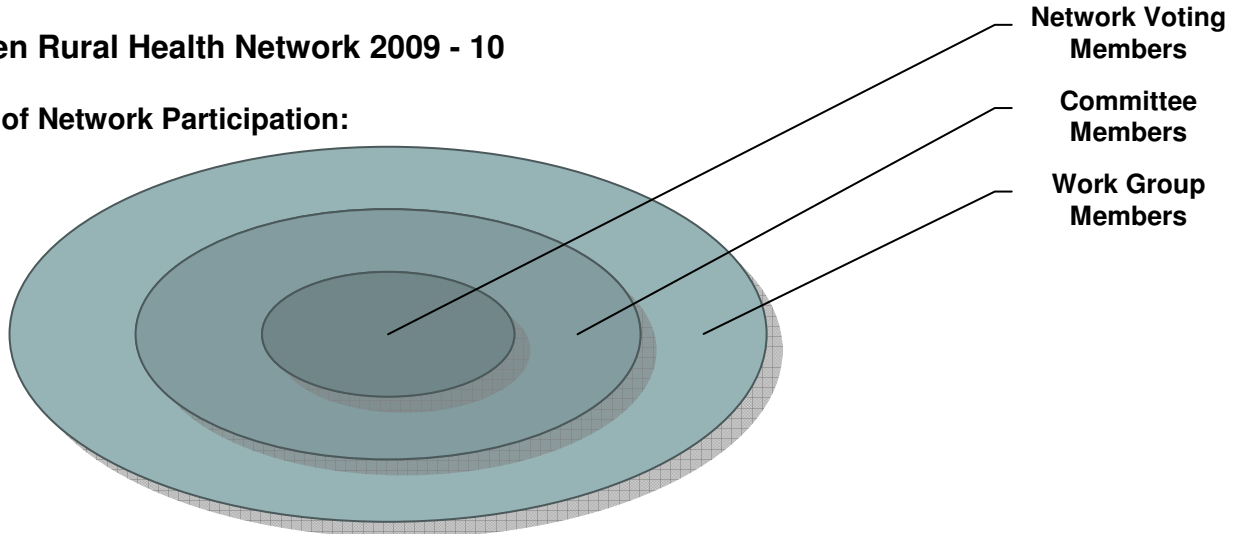
- Community Health and Wellness Committee
- Recruitment, Development and Retention Committee
- Communication & Technology Committee
- Resource Development Committee
- Governance Committee

Network Members will attend at least 50% of scheduled Network meetings (with no fewer than four meetings per year) to remain in good standing. Members will also present critical needs and trends identified by their organization, review work plan initiatives, and suggest new Network activities to address emerging needs. Members in good standing will be eligible to vote and serve as Committee Chairs.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Rural Health Policy. ruralhealth.hrsa.gov(,) as accessed 30 October, 2007.

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Levels of Network Participation:



Overview of Network Membership Levels, Roles, and Expectations		
Prospective workgroup members are encouraged to review the following expectations and discuss them with the SRHN Director or Committee Chair when considering joining		
Network Voting Members	Committee Members	Work Group Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly attend the majority of scheduled Network meetings Participate on at least one Network committee Review committee reports and Director's updates Present critical needs and trends identified by your organization and co-workers Review work plan activities and suggest new Network activities to address emerging needs Suggest people or organizations whose expertise would improve the Network or Network committees and Work Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly attend the majority of scheduled committee meetings Participate on at least one of the committee's activity-based Work Groups Review reports from all committee Work Groups to suggest further strategies Suggest people or organizations whose participation on Work Groups would help achieve committee goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Work Group meetings, as needed, to complete the group's specific activity as outlined in the Work Plan Suggest others whose participation will be critical to achieving the objective of the Work Group activity

New Work Groups will:

- Identify a chair or facilitator and establish a meeting schedule.
- Assess the activity and develop a timeline for accomplishing it, in keeping with 2009-10 work plan.
- Conduct analysis of best practices, assessment of current local services in light of recommended best practices, delineation of specific needs, identification of local resources or gaps.
- Provide the SRHN Director and appropriate Committee Chair with an update on its activities and outcomes monthly until completion.