



Rural Telehealth and Healthcare System Readiness Committee

Committee Chairs

Marcia Ward, PhD

Director, Rural Telehealth Research Center, University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Dr. Marcia M. Ward, PhD, is a professor in the Health Management and Policy Department and director of the Center for Health Policy and Research in the University of Iowa College of Public Health. Her research experience focuses on telehealth research, health services research, and rural healthcare delivery. She co-chaired the National Quality Forum (NQF) Committee on the Framework for Telehealth Measures. Dr. Ward directs the Rural Telehealth Research Center (RTRC), a consortium of researchers at the University of Iowa, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, and University of Southern Maine. RTRC is a HRSA-funded center to expand the evidence base for telehealth.

William Melms, MD

Chief Medical Officer, Marshfield Clinic Health System
Marshfield, Wisconsin

Dr. Bill Melms currently serves as the chief medical officer for the Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS). In this role, he is responsible for overseeing all facets of patient-care and service delivery, overseeing a broad and diverse team of his fellow physicians and other service line executives. Furthermore, he is a clinical leader of the system's commitment to transitioning from a fee-for-service model to an organization that focuses on value-based care and innovation in care delivery. MCHS's 1,270 providers accommodate 3.5 million patient encounters each year across our nine hospitals and nearly 60 ambulatory clinical sites. MCHS's primary service area encompasses over 80 percent of the rural population of the state of Wisconsin, with over half of its facilities located in communities of less than 2,000 people.

Committee Members

Travis Austin, MA, MD, MPH

Medical Director of Population Health and Palliative Care, Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center
Show Low, Arizona

Dr. Travis W. Austin, MA, MD, MPH is medical director of population health and palliative care and of home health at Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center in Show Low, AZ. While attending medical school, Dr. Austin participated in the Rural Health Professions Program and completed rotations in Snowflake, AZ, and Indian Health Services on the Apache reservation. He did an emergency medicine residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock and dedicated three extra years of training towards a unique combination of palliative care fellowship and preventive medicine residency. He is chair-elect of the Rural Special Interest Group of American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

Susan Caponi, MBA, RN, BSN, CPHQ

Chief Executive Officer, ESRD Programs, IPRO
Lake Success, New York

Susan Caponi, RN, BSN, MBA, CPHQ is CEO of IPRO's End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program, leading four CMS ESRD Networks that monitor the quality and safety of care provided to individuals with ESRD across 13 states. She previously directed the emergency and critical care services of a large hospital and implemented programs to educate employees on the value of a patient-centered approach. Ms. Caponi is a member of the National Kidney Foundation and the Forum of ESRD Networks. She has received numerous awards and accolades, including recognition from state and federal members of Congress, CMS, and the New York Times.

J. Thomas Cross, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACP

New Orleans Telemedicine Med-Peds Physician for Urgent Care, Ochsner Foundation
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dr. J. Thomas (Tommy) Cross is a Med-Peds Infectious Disease physician, currently a contract employee working for Ochsner Foundation in Louisiana. His job duties include providing primary care internal medicine and pediatric telemedicine remotely with patients in New Orleans' inner city and rural Louisiana. He has experience with patients affected by the current COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, many of the patients that he sees are displaced out of their homes due to the devastating hurricanes of 2020.

Joy Doll, OTD, OTR/L, FNAP

Chief, Academic Programs, Nebraska Health Information Initiative; Associate Clinical Professor,
Department of Occupational Therapy, Creighton University
Omaha, Nebraska

Dr. Joy Doll is the chief academic program officer and vice president of academic programs for the Nebraska Health Information Initiative, working specifically with the Nebraska Healthcare Collaborative. She supports cross-sector partnerships to develop population health research that informs healthcare policy and clinical practice. Prior to NEHII, she was the inaugural executive director for Creighton University's Center for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research. She has published a book on grant writing and multiple scholarly publications along with giving a TEDx Talk. Besides her passion for her work, she loves her family, which includes her husband and two children.

Shawn Griffin, MD

Chief Executive Officer, URAC
Washington, Virginia

Dr. Shawn Griffin is the president and CEO at the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC) in Washington, DC. He leads one of the most recognized and trusted independent accrediting organizations in the US and globally. He previously helped lead a successful accountable care organization (ACO) and clinically integrated network (CIN) in Houston. He trained in Rural Family Medicine in Iowa and practiced for over a decade in Iowa and Missouri before his administrative career. Dr. Griffin is a subject matter expert on population health, quality improvement, accreditation, telehealth, network development CINs, ACOs, and physician alignment.

Bruce Hanson

Caregiver and Patient Advocate
Garnaville, Iowa

Rev. Bruce L. Hanson is a caregiver and patient advocate who cared for his wife, a high needs multiple medical issues patient. He worked with numerous hospitals, clinics, insurance companies as well as the Federal Medicare and Medicaid systems. During the past 10 years, Rev. Hanson volunteered as a representative for the National Patient Advocacy Foundation (NPAF), providing a patient voice in improving access to and reimbursement for high quality healthcare through regulatory and legislative reform at the state and federal levels. He served on the Advisory Panel for Patient Engagement at Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). With a special interest in rural healthcare issues, Rev. Hanson has also served as the founder and director of the Great River Patient Engagement Cluster (GRPEC), a foundation which works to develop patient engagement in and through the various clinics and care facilities that are integral to the rural northeast Iowa, rural southwest Minnesota, and rural southwest Wisconsin areas.

Saira Haque, PhD, MHSA, FAMIA

Senior Health Informaticist and Virtual Care Portfolio Leader, RTI international
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Dr. Saira Haque, PhD, MHSA, FAMIA oversees the telehealth research portfolio at RTI International. Dr. Haque has led public and private sector mixed-methods evaluations, policy analyses, and implementation support efforts. Her interest areas include using technology to support healthcare and address public health challenges, health information exchange, and the intersection of technology and organizations. Dr. Haque holds a master of health services administration from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and a PhD in information science and technology from Syracuse University's School of Information Studies. She is a fellow of the American Medical Informatics Association.

Yael Harris, PhD

Vice President, American Institutes for Research
Washington, DC

Dr. Yael Harris, PhD, is vice president for health at the American Institutes for Research, leading projects focused on access to care. Previously she directed projects related to technology-enabled access and quality measurement at Mathematica. She served in leadership roles across HHS, including director of quality under the assistant secretary, director of health IT and quality at HRSA, and director of evaluation at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT. She established and co-chaired the Cross-Federal Telehealth Workgroup and published extensively on the use of telehealth to expand access to care. She served on NQF's Framework for Measuring Telehealth.

Judd Hollander, MD, FACEP

Senior Vice President of Healthcare Delivery Innovation, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dr. Judd E. Hollander, MD, is senior vice president of healthcare delivery innovation and associate dean for strategic health initiatives at Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University. His responsibilities include the JeffConnect Telemedicine Program and Jefferson Urgent Care. He has published over 600 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and editorials. Dr. Hollander was president of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine and was deputy editor for the Annals of Emergency Medicine, and co-chaired the NQF Committee to create a framework to support measure development for telehealth.

B. Tilman Jolly, MD

Chief Medical Officer, Aveshka

McLean, Virginia

Dr. Til Jolly is a practicing emergency physician with a wide range of clinical, government, special event, and private sector experience. He is chief medical officer of Aveshka, Inc., where he directly supports the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response through leadership of the Telemedicine Work Group for COVID-19 response. From 2012-2019, Dr. Jolly served as chief medical officer of SOC Telemed. In that role, he led medical staff management, clinical quality, and clinical operations development. Prior to this position, he held senior positions within the Department of Homeland Security from 2006-2011 in the Office of Health Affairs and FEMA.

Matthew Knott, MS, EFO, CFO, CEMSO

Division Chief, Rockford Fire Department
Rockford, Illinois

Matthew Knott is the division chief of administration and fire prevention for the Rockford Fire Department. He is responsible for planning, administrative functions, fire investigation, code enforcement, and all community risk reduction activities. Matt has a bachelor's and master's degree from Northern Illinois University. He is a certified emergency manager and an Illinois professional emergency manager. He also holds designations as a chief fire officer and chief emergency medical services officer from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He also serves on numerous local, state, and national level committees related to emergency response.

Mei Kwong, JD

Executive Director, Center for Connected Health Policy
West Sacramento, California

Mei Wa Kwong, JD has over two decades of experience in state and federal policy work. She is the executive director for the Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP), the federally designated National Telehealth Policy Resource Center. She is a recognized expert on state and federal telehealth policy and has written numerous policy briefs, crafted state legislation, and led several coalition efforts on a variety of issues and assisted states in their telehealth efforts, particularly in Medicaid and public health. Ms. Kwong is a graduate of the George Washington University Law School and has a BA in International Affairs.

Bridget McCabe, MD, MPH, FAAP

Director, Office of Quality Improvement, Teladoc, Inc.
Purchase, New York

Dr. Bridget K. McCabe is a dual board-certified physician and the medical director of clinical quality and informatics at Teladoc Health, where she is scaling clinical quality across the international network of virtual providers. She also serves as the executive medical director of Teladoc's Patient Safety Organization (PSO)—the first virtual care PSO in the country. Currently, Dr. McCabe, along with international medical colleagues, is supporting the COVID-19 response for Teladoc Health. Dr. McCabe has nearly two decades at the intersection of quality improvement, clinical informatics, and health systems research—including over a decade in public health.

John McDougall, MD, MHS

Physician, Northern Navajo Medical Center
Shiprock, New Mexico

Dr. John McDougall is a clinical rheumatologist and health services researcher working at Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock New Mexico, an Indian Health Service facility. His research focuses on

improving access to subspecialty care through novel clinical care models and telemedicine. Past work includes an analysis of lupus diagnosis and management within the American Indian/Alaska Natives, as well as a published systematic review of telemedicine in rheumatology. As a Yale national clinician scholar, he has presented his academic work at both rheumatology and general medicine meetings, and has authored both perspective articles and editorials on the role of technology in healthcare.

Mark Miller, MS, NRP

Shift Commander/Field Supervisor/Paramedic/Mobile Integrated Health, Brewster Ambulance
Hopkinton, Massachusetts

Mark Miller is former director of emergency medical services and mobile integrated health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and former emergency medical services unit manager for the State of Alaska. Mark has been a paramedic and instructor for 25 years and has gotten the privilege to work in many different types of environments including rural, urban, community paramedicine. He has also done work in neonatal intensive care units and pediatric transports as well as specializing in disasters. Mark has been a strong advocate for a strong emergency medical services (EMS) system and has been teaching many EMS providers the value of careful assessment, legal and clinical concerns, and how best to ensure patients have good outcomes.

Jessica Nadler, PhD

Managing Director, Deloitte Consulting LLP
Arlington, Virginia

Dr. Jessica Nadler focuses on healthcare transformation, enhanced care coordination, and improved outcomes, particularly for rural and underserved populations. Through her leadership of national engagements with the Health & Human Services (HHS) Office of the Secretary (Reimagine HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration, Veterans Affairs, and other organizations, she has greatly influenced the incorporation of disruptive technology, patient-centered data, and virtual healthcare innovations to drive greater access to high value care to those most vulnerable. She has also led rural health disaster recovery efforts, particularly COVID-19 recovery strategy plans for Indian Health Services and other organizations.

Eve-Lynn Nelson, PhD

Director & Professor, University of Kansas Medical Center
Fairway, Kansas

Dr. Eve-Lynn Nelson, PhD, is the statewide director of the Kansas Rural Telebehavioral Health Network and Principal Investigator/director for the federally funded Telehealth ROCKS (Rural Outreach to Children in Kansas) school-based projects, Kansas Rural Disaster Outreach using telehealth, and the Heartland Telehealth Resource Center. She is a Principal Investigator/Co-Investigator on several current NIH telehealth clinical trials, including momHealth, iamhealthy, REDCHIP, and KANSurvive. She has had the privilege to provide rural telebehavioral health services for almost 20 years. She enjoys teaching about telehealth and outreach as a professor in the KU Departments of Pediatrics, Population Health, & Psychiatry, University of Kansas Medical Center.

Steve North, MD, MPH

Founder and Medical Director, Center for Rural Health Innovation
Spruce Pine, North Carolina

Dr. Steve North is a family physician and adolescent medicine specialist practicing at a rural health center and critical access hospital in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. Since 2007, he has

been working to develop, implement, and evaluate telemedicine programs in federally qualified health centers, health systems, and schools. Dr. North has participated in national efforts focused on telehealth, including developing practice guidelines for the American Telemedicine Association, serving on NQF's Telehealth Committee, and consulting for the HRSA-funded Rural Telehealth Research Center. He is the rural telehealth research fellow at the Sheps Center for Health Services Research.

Kerry Palakanis, DNP, FNP-C

Executive Director, Connect Care, Intermountain Healthcare
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dr. Kerry Palakanis is the executive director of Connect Care at Intermountain Healthcare in Utah where she leads direct to consumer telehealth product lines. She is a family nurse practitioner who has worked for over 28 years in family practice, specializing in rural health and telemedicine. Dr. Palakanis has served as a featured speaker at state and national programs on issues related to rural health care delivery and telemedicine, has provided testimony to state and federal legislature on telemedicine bills, has received state and federal grants for telemedicine programs, and has developed/initiated many innovative programs to provide connectivity and telehealth solutions.

Megan Taylor, MSN, CRNA, APRN

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center
Kodiak, Alaska

Megan Taylor has been a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) for 10 years, practicing anesthesia and interventional pain management in multiple rural locations in settings ranging from Critical Access Hospitals and Level 1 academic medical centers to outpatient private practice. Ms. Taylor has served as faculty for the Jack Neary Advanced Pain Management Workshops through the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) and Maverick Medical Education, as well as clinical faculty for the Texas Christian University (TCU) Advanced Pain Management Fellowship. Ms. Taylor has served on numerous state-level association boards and on hospital committees. She helped set up telehealth services at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center's Specialty Clinic to provide pain management services and is passionate about increasing access to specialist services for rural Americans via telehealth.

Michael Uohara, MD

Architect, Federal Healthcare, Microsoft
Reston, Virginia

Dr. Michael Uohara is an architect for federal healthcare at Microsoft Corporation where he advises federal agencies on technology adoption in healthcare. Prior, Dr. Uohara served as a member of the housestaff in the Department of Surgery at the world-renowned University of Maryland Medical Center and R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore. Dr. Uohara and his collaborators' work has been published in scientific peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Uohara holds a degree in management and economics from Babson College and his doctor of medicine from Temple University School of Medicine. He has served on boards/committees on healthcare, innovation, research and development.

Demitria Urosevic, MPH

Senior Quality Performance Consultant, Provider Measurement Program, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Chicago, Illinois

Demi Urosevic is a senior quality performance consultant in the Provider Measurement Program at Blue

Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA). Her passion is to improve and sustain high-value quality care through a population health lens. Previously working in public health epidemiology and infection control, Ms. Urosevic has experience in developing solutions and leading improvement initiatives to improve quality of care using a data driven approach. Currently, she is responsible for leading the development of quality performance measurement-related projects for BCBSA and acts as a subject matter expert on quality measures and methodologies used within provider evaluation.

Emily Warr, MSN, RN

Director of Operations, Medical University of South Carolina Center for Telehealth
Charleston, South Carolina

Emily Warr, MSN, RN, is the interim administrator for the Medical University of South Carolina's Center for Telehealth, a Health Resources and Services Administration-designated Center of Excellence. As one of the foundational team members, she built an innovative, outreach tele-ICU consortium program, which has grown under her leadership to 10 hospitals of varying size and rurality. Additionally, she now manages several programs she developed, including a continuous virtual monitoring program for healthcare worker exposure reduction; four telehealth quality domains and associated metrics for evaluation of service quality; and a risk-stratified, technology-enabled COVID-19 remote patient monitoring program.

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