



**Our Communities Are Better**  
*Working Together*

# FRONTIER HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

**June 12-13, 2024**  
**Northern Hotel - Billings, MT**

**PARTNERING FOR FRONTIER HEALTH**



*Join us!*

The Frontier Healthcare Conference was born from the idea that small healthcare organizations in frontier sized communities experience different situations and struggles than small healthcare organizations in rural defined communities.

# Overview

## Conference Description

The Frontier Healthcare Conference was born from the idea that small healthcare organizations in frontier sized communities experience different situations and struggles than small healthcare organizations in rural defined communities. Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) are vastly different throughout the nation, and frontier communities' experiences differ from even their rural neighbors.

## Who Should Attend

The conference is intended to provide valuable information, education, and networking opportunities to leaders from CAHs in frontier communities. Networking may also include conversations with representatives from respective Congressional Delegations.

Participation is encouraged for CEOs/Administrators, Board Members, and Staff Leaders from these types of facilities that may be either private facilities (ex. Private non-profits) or government-managed (ex. County-owned). Services might include: inpatient and long-term care; outpatient services for both primary care and ancillary services; home health and visiting nurse services; etc. Please review the attached agenda to determine whether topics included are meaningful to your organization.

## Additional Information

Our staff considered input from executive leaders of frontier CAHs in Montana while developing this program and understand that situations vary from community to community and from state to state. Therefore, in an effort to ensure the most beneficial programs to participants, our staff will seek feedback and input for future conferences.

## Frontier Defined

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), frontier is defined as: counties having a population density of six or fewer people per square mile. There are other significant factors to consider as well: (1) Distance from a population center or a specific healthcare service; (2) Travel time to reach a population center or service, especially considering geographic barriers or inclement weather; (3) Functional affiliation with other hospitals; (4) Availability of paved roads; and, (5) Seasonal changes in access to healthcare services.

## Continuing Education

MHN will provide certificates of attendance for each session. While the Montana Board of Nursing Home Administrators did not grant prior approval for CEs from this conference, it will meet all requirements established by the Board for continuing education. Therefore, Montana Nursing Home Administrators should be able to present their conference certificates for the Board when documenting CEs. Participants from states other than Montana are encouraged to contact their Boards of Nursing Home Administrators to identify their requirements for documenting CEs. Additionally, conference sessions will be eligible for CEs with the National Association of Healthcare Executives. All other CE standards should be researched individually for participants' professional organizations.

## Conference Accommodations

We have reserved a blocks of rooms at the Northern Hotel (where the conference is being held). [Click here](#) to obtain a room reservation no later than June 1, 2024.

## Registration

MHN's non-profit, Rural Health Development, is a member of the HIMSS Montana Chapter. Both MHN and HIMSS MT have supported frontier healthcare in Montana for many years. The 2023 Frontier Healthcare Conference will provide a unique opportunity to collaborate in an innovative way to bring valuable information and resources to frontier healthcare leaders throughout the region and in neighboring states. The common themes of supporting healthcare change and sharing information and services is paramount in both MHN's and HIMSS MT's Mission statements. Leaders in both organizations are excited to collaborate on this conference and create a synergistic environment of learning and networking for frontier healthcare facilities.

Registration to attend the Frontier Healthcare Conference is \$150 per participant which will include lunch on Day 1 and breakfast and lunch on Day 2. Space is limited so interested individuals are encouraged to register early to save a seat. Guest room reservations are not included in the registration fee. Please note that some registrations are eligible for discounts. Find more about the conference, hotel room blocks, sponsorship opportunities and vendor registration by clicking here.

**Registration Deadline is May 31, 2024!**

**Use the following links to complete registration and book your hotel.**

1.

**Register Here**

Some registrations are eligible for discounts.

2.

**Book Hotel**

Sponsorship and vendor opportunities also available!

3.

**View Sponsor/Vendor Opportunities**

*Register early!*

**Registration Deadline is May 31, 2024!**

Continuing education credits may be available commensurate with the extent of participation in training offered. Each conference session will provide certificates with appropriate CEs granted based on time associated with the training.

# Agenda - Day 1 | June 12

**9am** **Open for vendors to set up tables/booths**

**9:30am** **General Session – Welcome, Introductions, Conference Overview**

**9:45-11am** **Opening Keynote, On the Frontier of Teamwork: Paving a Path for Patients, Providers and Partners**

*In her TED talk, Joy Doll, OTD, OTR/L, describes the journey of an accidental expert. During her keynote address, she will share important insights into collaboration within frontier healthcare. She will discuss strategies for building a culture of collaboration to include assisting with identifying opportunities and barriers to effective collaboration as well as approaches to supporting the proliferation of a culture of collaboration. In an environment of uncertainty, collaboration plays a critical role in frontier healthcare.*

**11am-12pm** **Digital Health for Rural Settings**

*Dr. Anne Snowdon, Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at the Odette School of Business, University of Windsor in Ontario Canada and the Chief Scientific Research Officer for HIMSS, will provide important information about how technologies can advance care delivery and outcomes. She will explore the connection of technology to support rural and frontier health. Dr. Snowdon will also discuss policies that will impact frontier healthcare such as telehealth, health equity, etc.*

**12-1:15pm** **Networking Luncheon – Opportunity to Visit Vendor Tables and Network**

**1:15-2:15pm** **CMS Policy Update**

*John Hannigan, Administrator, CMS Region 8, Denver, will provide the latest information regarding CMS policies, priorities, and initiatives. This session will not only provide an opportunity to hear what is going on within CMS, but it will also provide an opportunity to ask questions related to and share perspectives about delivering healthcare in our frontier communities.*

**2:15-3:15pm** **Breakout Sessions**

- **Project Firstline's Got Game: Interactive Infection Prevention and Control Training** – Mountain Pacific Quality Health Foundation, Crystal Morse and Jacob Churchill – Post pandemic, it's crucial we minimize the work force burden and maximize training and learning opportunities. Mountain Pacific collaborated with the Wyoming Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to gamify the infographic flyer, "How to Read a Disinfectant Label", creating a 10-minute interactive, micro-learning resource using the Near-Life CREATOR platform. Embarking on critical elements and core concepts of cleaning and disinfection through interactive gaming boosts the learner's skills and knowledge. This interactive training covers key areas that include: contact precautions, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration, expiration dates, storage and disposal, proper personal protective equipment, first aide, directions for use, and contact time. Qualitative results display a positive learning experience through the gaming platform with satisfying feedback, "This was a fun informative way that kept my attention."
- **Survival of the Digitalist at the Frontiers of Medicine – How Consumerism and Technology are Accelerating the Future and What You Must do Today to Stay Afloat** – Edward Marx led digital strategy at the Cleveland Clinic. He found that there was no playbook for digital transformation and that he and his team would have to pioneer something new. Join Edward as he shares his journey which is further described in his second healthcare bestseller, "Healthcare Digital Transformation" (2020). In this session he will break down digital transformation into a handful of components that serve as a practical roadmap for adoption by any organization in search of transformation. This model for healthcare digital transformation can be re-purposed as an end-to-end solution or leveraged in a modular fashion. If you're looking for a good roadmap for comparative analysis or just a sound structure to stimulate new ideas, this best practice model is a tool you can easily adopt and customize. Edward will walk you through each component sharing details and breaking down the meaning and the intent. These theories and practical steps are applicable to organizations small and large. (HIMSS Track)

**3:15-3:30pm** **Break (Check-in)**

**3:30-4:45pm** **Interstate Frontier Roundtable Discussion Followed by Meetings w/ Congressional Delegation**

*Facilitated by staff from Montana Health Network (MHN) and leaders from the HIMSS Montana, the goal is Roundtable Discussion about what could really make a difference in the viability and survivability of frontier healthcare. The discussion will include an overview of initiatives identified by MHN's Frontier Facilities group, progress on previously identified initiatives, and an opportunity to discuss future potential initiatives. Depending on attendance, participants will break into smaller groups and consider the state of frontier healthcare and how to improve in the future. Discussions will include opportunities to discuss across state lines the real issues facing frontier facilities in their day-to-day operations. Attendees should come prepared to discuss ideas on financial management, clinical and administrative operations, quality initiatives, policy issues, and workforce management.*

**4-4:45pm** **Zoom w/ Congressional Delegations (as available)**

*Members of Representative and Senator staffs will join attendees as available for in-person questions and discussions around frontier healthcare policies and legislative issues. This session provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals to meet and connect with members of their congressional delegations.*

**4:45-6:45pm** **Networking & Cocktails**  
**Dinner will be on your own. Opportunity to visit vendor tables.**



# Agenda - Day 2 | June 13

**7am Breakfast Buffet & Networking**

**8-9am Breakout Sessions**

- **The Value Based Conundrum for Rural Healthcare** – Dr. Cara Harrop, MD, Montana Healthcare Network, will discuss how rural facilities face unique population and resource challenges in the deployment of value based contracts. This program will create a discussion around those challenges and explore opportunities to overcome them in the context of the ACO model.
- **Frontier Healthcare Technology – CISA/HHS Cybersecurity Toolkit for Healthcare** – Travis Light, Cybersecurity Advisor, with Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) will share information about several cybersecurity resources and technical services available at no cost to Frontier Healthcare organizations through the federal government. (HIMSS Track)

**9-9:10am Break**

**9:10-10:10am Breakout Sessions**

- **Financial Management, Sustainability: "Small But Mighty"** – Sherri Birkeland, Senior Vice President, Hillary Lyons Associates, will present on how even a small foundation can produce big results in terms of generating philanthropic dollars and creating a fan base in your community.
- **Unleashing the Potential: How you CAN Provide Accessible and Quality Care for Patients with Disabilities** – Machenzie Jones, MPH, Montana DPHHS; Tressa Keller, CPHIMS, Mountain Pacific Quality Health Foundation; and Ben Tyrell, MBA, Big Sky Care Connect, will provide information and resources for how to improve equitable services for people with disabilities. The discussion will explore identifying chronic disease and health disparities among people with disabilities, capturing disability status, using the disability status questions to identify needed supports, finding local disability and inclusion resources, and creating a plan around meeting the accessibility guidelines for your healthcare facility. The session will then consider how technology, e.g., electronic health records, can support and enhance care delivery and gain insights into quality regulatory requirements for healthcare facilities. The overarching goal is to empower all healthcare providers to feel confident in delivering equitable care to patients with disabilities.

**10:10-10:20am Break (Check-out)**

**10:20-11:50am General Session – Digital Health in the Healthcare Delivery System**

The pandemic has accelerated what was already a fast-moving train toward more of healthcare becoming digital. Whether it is the increasing need for telehealth services, the rapidly growing field of artificial intelligence, or advances toward more personalized medicine, the intersection of healthcare and digital technology is here to stay. In addition, digital health has become a healthcare access imperative. Its innovative benefits are of vital interest amid the implementation of most healthcare regulations. This program surveys some of the current uses and organizational deployment of digital health strategies. The discussion includes adoption and innovation across the clinical and patient perspectives. The technical, operational, regulatory, and financial/reimbursement aspects of the development of these programs will also be investigated. The expanding role that digital health holds in daily life and its direction into the future of the healthcare delivery system will be explored. (ACHE 90-minute In-person Education)

**11:50am-12:35pm Lunch – Networking Opportunities Available**

**12:35-1:35pm Frontier Healthcare Sustainability, Medicaid Unwound – Next Steps for Rural and Frontier Communities**

Tiffany Klein, Eastern Montana Navigator, and Tierney Strandberg, MPA, Senior Coordinator, Montana Primary Care Association and Cover Montana will share information about Montana as the state started the Medicaid unwinding process in April of 2023. More than 1 in 10 Montanans has since lost health insurance coverage. This is a staggering loss of coverage that has deep implications for individuals and families, Montana communities, and access to health care services across the state, especially in rural and frontier communities. This session will briefly review Medicaid unwinding, why Montana saw such huge coverage losses, and where do we go next. Participants will get information about tangible next steps they can take to help their communities get covered again.

**1:35-2:45pm Closing Keynote – Social Marketing**

Jean Synodinos, Synodinos Consulting, will share information for Montana healthcare professionals who understand that their work does not survive in a vacuum. We need the support of others—from policymakers to peers to community members and more—in order to grow and expand our work. And, as experts in the region and in frontier health, we may be adept at explaining to others what it is that we do and how we go about doing it. But truly persuasive messages put the focus on why our work matters—not just to us, but to the very people we need to reach. In this session, participants will learn a step-by-step approach to crafting powerful values-based messages that meet our audiences where they are to build trust and drive desired change.

**2:45-3pm Review, Wrap-up & Closing – Evaluations**



*Thank you*

**FOR ATTENDING THE  
FRONTIER HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE!**

**MHN's Mission:**

To support and influence the evolution of healthcare organizations, and enhance the well-being of individuals and communities through: Networking to establish bonds and trustful relationships between healthcare executives; Shared services and shared products to bring value through cost savings and efficiencies; and Research and development of products and services.

**HIMSS Mission:**

Reform the global health ecosystem through the power of information and technology.

**HIMSS Vision:**

Realize the full health potential of every human, everywhere.