

Rural Residents Lack Access To Quality Health Care

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

In comparison to their urban neighbors, rural residents of the U.S. have a greater need for, but reduced access to healthcare, especially behavioral health services. By behavioral health services I mean counseling, prescription of psychotropic medications, addictions treatments and any other professional services aimed at helping people deal with emotional turmoil.

In the Fall 2012 issue of The Register Report (Available at: www.NationalRegister.org), Dr. Jackson Rainer of Valdosta State University in Georgia, makes the following assessment: "Rural residents have higher levels of depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, incest, and child maltreatment than residents of urban areas." Rainer cites a host of references to back his claims.

In an article in the American Journal of Public Health (June 2006 issue, pages 954-955), Dr. Ramin Mojtabai analyzed the annual National Health Interview Survey data for the years 1997-2002. He found that the prevalence of significant psychological distress was higher in nonmetropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas. This finding varied from earlier research, which reported few differences between urban and rural rates of psychological distress.

Even though their need for professional services was higher, Mojtabai reported that rural survey participants were less likely than their urban counterparts to seek mental health care. Rural residents also were less able to afford medications and professional behavioral health services. Lack of professional behavioral healthcare providers contributes to the problem of limited access for rural residents. Data (Available at: www.raconline.org and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health) used to calculate health professional shortage areas indicate the number of psychiatrists and psychologists per 100,000 residents in rural areas is half that of these same providers in urban and suburban areas.

Recent surveys, such as the annual National Health Interview Survey, consistently indicate rural residents also tend to be older, poorer, lesser educated and to have more transportation difficulties than their urban counterparts.

Rural residents are more likely to lack health insurance. Writing for the Daily Yonder (<http://www.dailyyonder.com/uninsured-rural-america/2012/10/22/4597>), Bill Bishop reported rural and exurban counties (regions lying beyond the suburbs of a city) had higher percentages of residents under age 65 without health insurance than counties with cities or suburbs.

The counties with the most uninsured were in the intermountain region of the West and in the South. Thirty-two of the fifty rural and exurban counties with the largest percentages of uninsured persons were in Texas.

In 2003 I collected information about insurance costs for farm people, as a subsection of rural residents. Farm and ranch owners were more likely to have health insurance than workers on

farms. The deductible amounts and the premiums paid by the owners were higher than for people not engaged in agriculture.

Are there solutions? The recently passed Affordable Care Act (ACA) addresses the lack of healthcare insurance. As written currently, it is estimated the ACA will reduce the number of uninsured people by half.

The ACA creates a "medical home" team of care providers which includes a nurse care manager and a primary care provider (physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant) who follow the patient's overall health and manage most medications, and psychiatrists, psychologists and other specialists who are available as consultants either in-person or through telecommunications.

The ACA penalizes hospitals, clinics and insurers with too high administrative costs. Current administrative costs by the Medicare system on a "per case" basis are well below those of private facilities and insurers; Medicare provides a model for administrative cost-saving.

The ACA also offers tax credits to small businesses, such as most farm operations, to make insurance more affordable for their employees. Unless the ACA is significantly "tweaked," the Congressional Budget Office estimates 30 million residents will still lack healthcare insurance a decade after its full implementation. Besides extending insurance coverage, the "tweaking" that needs to be done should include reducing excessive costs for drugs and certain procedures, limiting malpractice awards, and establishing a single claims processor, among other things, in order to approach "budget neutral."

There is also a need to address the persistent stigma that seeking behavioral healthcare assistance is a sign of weakness. Farm and rural people especially tend to be self reliant and avoid seeking behavioral health services even when needed. Improving education about behavioral health in rural areas is essential. We should look at our behavior as something we can manage. Even using the term "behavioral health" is more acceptable to most people than "mental health."

Training currently available primary physicians in rural areas to respond better to the behavioral healthcare needs of their patients and training more psychologists and behavioral health nurse practitioners to prescribe psychotropic medications are also partial solutions. Current estimates by most primary care providers are that about 25-50 percent of their services involve treating behavioral health problems.

Together with full implementation of a "tweaked" ACA, better training to diagnose and treat rural and agricultural patients' behavioral health would vastly improve the overall quality of healthcare in rural America.

Dr. Rosmann is a Harlan, Iowa psychologist and farmer. Readers may contact him at his website: www.agbehavioralhealth.com.

SPONSORED BY LEWIS AND CLARK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.



Dr. Mike ROSMANN

Visiting Hours

Hot Cocoa's De-stressing Charm

BY RACHEL PINOS

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Nothing warms you up better on a cold winter day than a nice cup of hot cocoa. Would you believe that indulging in your chocolate craving can actually be good for you? This year National Cocoa Day is on Thursday, Dec. 13.

Cocoa — the dried, fully fermented seeds of the cacao tree — is the basis for cocoa powder which is used to make the hot cocoa beverage we all know and love. Monkeys were the first creatures to discover that the cacao plant was edible and quite tasty. More than 1,500 years ago, monkeys began to consume the pulp of the plant and spit out the beans. Humans soon began to follow the monkeys' lead.

Cacao trees are grown all over the world, but it is believed that the first cacao trees grew in South America. Cocoa is similar to wine in that its flavor differs depending on the location where it is grown. It's a good thing that cacao trees are plentiful because approximately 300 to 600 cocoa beans are needed to make just two pounds of chocolate!

Did you know?
• Choosing your chocolate wisely could mean decreasing stress and increasing endorphin



production, the "feel good" chemicals in the body shown to improve mood.

• The higher the cacao content (represented on packaging by percentage), the more benefits. Avoid products that are

highly processed or have a high sugar content.

• Dark chocolate and cocoa powder contain the most flavonoids, antioxidants known to relax blood vessel and reduce blood pressure.

- Dark chocolate may also reduce LDL, or bad cholesterol.
- Chocolate is a much weaker stimulant than most people think. In fact, a typical 1.4-ounce chocolate bar contains the stimulant equivalent of a cup of decaf coffee.
- While a little dark chocolate is good, a lot is not better. Chocolate still is loaded with calories. Remember a balanced diet – and plenty of exercise – is still the key to heart health and stress management.

SCENTS OF THE SEASON

Add some spice to your cocoa as these comforting aromas are also known to provide a sense of calmness.

Cinnamon provides an aroma of warming, cheering, comforting and nurturing.

Cloves fill the air with a sweet, spicy aroma evoking a calming energy.

Ginger spices up a cold, snowy night with an earthy aroma, producing a warming sensation.

Peppermint has a minty aroma. It offers a cooling and refreshing sensation.

Celebrate Cocoa Day by sipping a cup and knowing you are doing something good for yourself!

Pinos is a dietitian at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

KOA

From Page 1

listening to our campers, and I'm proud to be able to recognize the best among the best with the KOA President's and Founder's Awards."

While both awards consider similar criteria, Starzl said the Founder's Award relies heavily on customer feedback. The award is named in honor of Dave Drum, who founded KOA on the banks of the Yellowstone River in Billings, Mont., in 1962.

"A lot of the award is based on

customer 'rate your stay' surveys, which talk about the cleanliness of the campground, friendliness of service and the amenities that we have," Starzl said.

The campground manager said that while it's an honor to receive both awards, he is especially proud of the Founder's Award because it shows that customers are pleased with the services provided.

"That is the most important thing — to have a happy guest," he said. "We really strive to make their stay here as comfortable and as safe as possible."

While the President's Award also considers customer reviews, the award bases much of its criteria on the physical attributes of

the campground, Starzl said.

The Yankton/Missouri River KOA campground, which opened in 2010 and is located downstream from Lewis and Clark Lake and Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, features RV and tent sites, cabins and lodges, a heated pool, basketball and sand volleyball courts, a playground with a Jumping Pillow for children, a dog park, cable television and Wi-Fi. There are also opportunities for boating, sailing, jet skiing, kayaking and swimming.

Starzl said that, in addition to maintaining the numerous current offerings, the campground is always looking for ways to improve the site.

"We keep thinking about new

things to add," he said. "In the future, we might do miniature golf, and this spring we're going to try and put in a big-screen TV so we can show movies at night."

Starzl added that the campground's accomplishments would not have been possible without the site's owners — Jeff Liudahl and family, Dale James and family, Steve Slowey and family, and Bruce Cull and family — as well as its guests.

"The clientele that come here are just very good people, and the campground would not be a success without our campers," he said.

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d_bartos

Gertsema

From Page 1

Board accepted at their regular meeting Monday night.

His resignation will be effective June 30, 2013.

He stated last week that his resignation was in no way connected to the October arrest.

"The board is certainly very appreciative of Dr. Gertsema's 22 years of dedicated service to our district and our community," said school board president Chris Specht at Monday's meeting.

Gertsema said Monday that the accomplishment for which he felt the most pride was that of student achievement.

"The thing that has really driven me, contrary to what some people may think, has always been the kids," he said. "Without the students here, we don't need to be here tonight."

Gertsema was arrested at approximately 1:20 a.m. Oct. 7 after failing a sobriety test at a South Dakota Highway Patrol checkpoint about three miles east of Vermillion on Highway 50.

Press & Dakotan reporters Derek Bartos and Nathan Johnson contributed to this report.

Course

From Page 1

Participants would have the option of setting up tents at the camp or using the staff housing there if they wanted.

Klimisch said the number of competitors will probably be capped at 300, with sections for adults and young adults.

"Maybe Mom and Dad are doing the longer race, and the kids are doing the shorter one," he stated. "Maybe we could even arrange for the families to do some of the obstacles together. We would like to have

that family element."

In addition to raising money for youth activities, Klimisch wants the influx of people to create business for local hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions.

"I think this will be a fun, challenging activity that Yankton doesn't currently have," Klimisch said. "I also hope it brings in people who may not even be familiar with Yankton to see what we have to offer and provide support to youth sports in the process."

More information about the event will become available in the coming months as details are finalized.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

Cliff

From Page 1

including recommendations to cull \$340 million from Medicare over a decade and an additional \$250 billion from other government benefit programs.

The House Democratic leader, Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, challenged Boehner to allow a vote on the president's proposal to extend most expiring tax cuts while letting them lapse at higher incomes.

She predicted it would gain "overwhelming approval," even in the GOP-controlled House.

Two weeks before the year-end holidays, time to find agreement was short, but not prohibitively so.

"I think it's going to be extremely difficult to get it done before Christmas but it could be done," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

Boehner's office took the step

— unusual in secretive talks — of announcing that Republicans "sent the White House a counteroffer that would achieve tax and entitlement reform to solve our looming debt crisis and create more American jobs."

Both sides say they want a deal to prevent damage to the economy, but that stated commitment has been accompanied by a fierce battle to gain the political high ground in negotiations — and the occasional comment that one side or the other would be willing to let the deadline pass without a deal unless it got acceptable terms.

Republicans acknowledge that Obama has an advantage in one respect, citing his re-election last month after a race in which he made higher taxes on the wealthy a centerpiece of his campaign.

At the same time, Republicans hold powerful leverage of their own, the certainty that by spring the president will be forced to ask Congress to raise the government's borrowing authority. It was just such a threat that previously allowed them to extract \$1 trillion in

spending cuts from the White House and Democratic lawmakers, a situation that Obama has vowed he won't let happen again.

Democrats have watched with satisfaction in recent days as Republicans struggle with Obama's demands to raise taxes, but Reid has privately told his rank and file they could soon be feeling the same distress if discussions grow serious on cuts to benefit programs.

Coincidentally, in an ABC interview, Obama did not reject a Republican call to raise the age of Medicare eligibility from 65 to 67, a proposal that many Democrats strongly oppose.

The proposal is "something that's been floated," Obama said, not mentioning that he had tacitly agreed to it in deficit-reduction talks with Boehner more than a year ago that ended in failure.

‘Divorced, Separated And Widowed’ Group To Meet Starting Jan. 14

"Divorced, Separated and Widowed," a support group sponsored by Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, will meet at Roncalli Center, Mount Marty College, Yankton, each Monday night at 7 p.m. beginning Jan. 14, 2013.

The support group is a nine-week program created to help divorced, separated and widowed persons work through

and deal with the different stages of grief in their lives. The book, "Rebuilding When Your Relationship Ends" will be used as a text to provide a guide in understanding and adjusting to the ending of a love relationship and to rebuilding self-esteem and positive relationships with those around them.

For more information, call Carol Hamvas 665-7158.

Season's Greetings

FloorTec
PROFESSIONAL Cleaning Services

605-665-4839

INSURANCE CLAIM SPECIALISTS
Yankton

So many

Candle Holders

of different heights & widths – check them out!

THE P
A
N
T
R
Y

215 W. 3rd
Historic
Downtown
Yankton
665-4480

Fruits & Nuts

- Almonds ▪Dates
- Pecans ▪Figs
- Cashews ▪Filberts
- Apricots ▪Brazil Nuts
- Cranberries
- And More!

Body Guard

Yankton Mall
665-3482

L&S ELECTRIC

Harry Lane Electrical Contractor

- Commercial •Residential •Farm Wiring
- Prompt Service •Quality Work •Competitive Prices

New Construction or Remodeling

Home: 665-6612 Mobile: 661-1040

We are available to you
24 hours a day; 7 days a week
For more information call
Colette Broekemeier • 689-0382

Autumn Winds Comfort Care

Offering Hospice and Palliative Care by a team of professionals in your home setting, whether it be your private home, or a long term care facility, where ever you call **HOME!**

We coordinate your care to provide comfort and dignity, support to family and friends, and enhance your quality of life. We're not just about your medical condition, we're about YOU, as a whole person; emotional, spiritual, recreational.... **INDIVIDUAL YOU!**