

Advancing the Health and Well-being  
of Pennsylvania's Rural Citizens and Communities

PENNSYLVANIA RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2024-2028



**paruralhealth.org**  
[paruralhealthassociation@gmail.com](mailto:paruralhealthassociation@gmail.com)  
814-799-0850  
P.O. Box 24 | Patton, PA 16668



## Our Mission

The Pennsylvania Rural Health Association (PRHA) is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of Pennsylvania's rural citizens and communities. Through the combined efforts of individuals, organizations, professionals, and community leaders, the Association is a collective voice for rural health issues and a conduit for information and resources.

## Our Guiding Aims

- Serve as an advocate for rural health development at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Provide continuing education opportunities for rural health professionals
- Provide opportunities for leadership development through active membership involvement
- Maintain a coordinated rural health emphasis in federal, state, and local health policy development and implementation
- Improve awareness and public education of rural health issues
- Promote regulatory flexibility and effectiveness for rural health care providers
- Promote improved rural health services
- Foster cooperative partnerships to improve rural health
- Promote the maintenance and enhancement of Pennsylvania's rural health infrastructure

## Building on Our Accomplishments

Over the last five years, PRHA has undertaken numerous successful projects demonstrating our value and voice as an advocate for PA's rural communities. We have:

- **Hired administrative staff support:** PRHA utilized external funding to hire a part time administrative staff person, which has reinvigorated our communications and provided key operations support.
- **Expanded our Board of Directors:** PRHA has welcomed several new board members, including student board members, who bring a diverse set of skills, organizational affiliations, and geographies. New board members have taken on key roles on PRHA committees and advocacy and policy efforts.
- **Formed Committees:** PRHA developed five new committees: the Strategic Planning Committee, Legislative Committee, Communications Committee, Executive Committee, and Nominating Committee. These committees, open to Board Members and the PRHA Members at large, have been the driving force behind many accomplishments.
- **Enhanced Member Communication:** PRHA has revitalized communication with our membership, including introducing highly popular monthly Legislative Reports, a redesigned website, and a quarterly newsletter.
- **Hosted Annual Legislative Briefings:** PRHA has hosted annual legislative briefings that highlight key rural health issues for members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. These events, held at the State Capitol, are well-attended, attracting lawmakers, legislative staff, and rural health advocates.

- **Increased Federal Funding:** PRHA applied for and received funding from the National Rural Health Association to support the 2023 PA Oral Health Summit.
- **Represented Pennsylvania at the federal level:** PRHA has had consistent member representation at the National Rural Health Association Leadership Conference, including a board member selected for the prestigious National Rural Health Association’s Rural Health Fellows program.
- **Published the 2024-2028 Pennsylvania Rural Health Plan:** PRHA led the development of Pennsylvania’s Rural Health Plan, the state’s first rural health plan in 24 years. The plan provides extensive data and information on the issues that impact rural health and proposes a robust roadmap for addressing challenges that impact the health and well-being of rural residents.
- **Supported Policy and Advocacy Efforts Statewide:** PRHA has drafted letters of support for 20+ policy and advocacy efforts to benefit rural Pennsylvanians, ranging from improving prescription drug repository programs to updating the Clean Indoor Air Act to supporting paid family and medical leave to expanding reimbursement rates for rural ambulance transportation services. PRHA has provided support and partnership to Pennsylvania Health Access Network, Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners, Thriving PA, and many others. We have provided information and research to the Wolf and Shapiro Administrations, and numerous House and Senate committees of the General Assembly.

These advancements represent the significant and sustained effort of the Board of Directors to reinvigorate the association. The previous strategic plan, developed in June 2016, describes waning membership, restrictive financial support, and declining board engagement suggestive of association closure. Over the past eight years, the development of strategic partnerships, targeted advocacy efforts, and united aspirations have reinvigorated the association.

The 2024-2028 Strategic Plan provides a vision for entering our next era. With a full board, active committees, staffing support, and growing membership, we are poised to solidify our reputation as a trusted voice for issues affecting rural communities in Pennsylvania.

## Strategic Planning Process

This plan was developed in 2023-2024 to fulfill the PRHA Board of Director’s strategic planning goals. The process was launched in the fall of 2022 with a day-long facilitated session to review progress and define future goals. The Strategic Planning Committee convened throughout the following year to assess previous PRHA strategic plans, review other state association plans, and determine PRHA’s strategic direction. The committee also launched a board stakeholder survey, the results of which informed the creation of a goals across three focus areas. These areas of focus are: 1) advocacy and policy; 2) communication, education, and awareness; and 3) membership and sustainability. The final strategic plan was approved by the board on September 13, 2024.

# Pennsylvania Rural Health Association

# Strategic Priorities 2024-2028



## Strategic Priority 1: Advocacy and Policy

We will serve as trusted advocates for issues impacting the social and structural determinants of health for rural Pennsylvanians. We emphasize social and structural determinants to expand our advocacy efforts towards broader public health and community infrastructure, beyond just health care, in support of healthy rural communities. We will promote our core successful activities such as the Legislative Briefings, while encouraging expansion of new advocacy efforts like PRHA-branded opinion pieces, public comment responses, and public testimony on issues affecting rural communities.



## Strategic Priority 2: Communication, Education, and Awareness

We will generate awareness and public education of rural health issues specific to Pennsylvania. We will continue to capitalize on our success in hiring administrative support for the association. We will build sustained communication by identifying and utilizing social media outlets, generating increased emphasis on rural issues during Rural Health Week, our Legislative Briefings, and other point-in-time events.



## Strategic Priority 3: Membership and Sustainability

We will build on our foundational goals of ensuring an active membership and engaged Board of Directors that are networked within Pennsylvania and with other state and national rural health organizations. We will bolster, retain, and support board members and general membership through professional development opportunities, relationship building activities, and leadership roles.

# Pennsylvania Rural Health Association

## Board of Directors

### Executive Board

President: Debra Youngfelt  
Vice President: Joseph Robare  
Treasurer: Sharon Adams  
Secretary: Jamie Hammond

### Strategic Planning Committee Members

Tori Baker, Co-Chair  
Jennifer Whittaker, Co-Chair  
Justin Beaupre  
Lisa Davis  
Diane Spokus  
Hope Wormuth

### Board Members

Tori Baker  
Justin Beaupre  
Daniel Champigny  
Lisa Davis  
Helen Hawkey  
Ronald Mezick  
Diane Spokus  
Jennifer Whittaker  
Kathy Wonderly  
Hope Wormuth

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### Our Mission

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### Contact Us

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Phone: 814-799-0850  
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## Strategic Priority 1: Advocacy & Policy

**Strategic Objective 1: Advocate for issues impacting the social and structural determinants of health for rural Pennsylvanians at the local, state, and national level.**

| Activities |  | Time frame | Responsible/ Supporting          | Measurement   | Outcome  | Impact  |
|------------|--|------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1.1        | Bring awareness to state-level rural health policy and legislation by monitoring relevant state activity and sharing with members via monthly legislative reports and other opportunities. | Monthly    | Legislative Committee            | Quarterly e-mail sent to members documenting legislative and policy activity  | Members are informed of legislative activity.  | Members are knowledgeable about recent and upcoming legislation and policy affecting rural health, and able to act accordingly.   |
| 1.2        | Host in person and virtual rural legislative briefing  | Annually   | Legislative Committee            | Annual rural legislative briefing is held and attracts a wide audience of legislators and staff, and rural health advocates, with a minimum of 50 people in attendance. | Legislators and staff members in state government are informed and receive consistent messaging on rural issues. | An increase in positive legislative actions occur to support rural health; PRHA is positioned as a knowledgeable resource for legislators and relevant state associations and agencies. |
| 1.3        | Coordinate relationships with key elected officials at the local, state, and federal level.  | Ongoing    | Legislative Committee/Full Board |   | Elected officials view PRHA as a trusted knowledge broker.   | We are consulted regarding proposed legislation that impacts rural Pennsylvanians.  |

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| 1.4 | Identify opportunities to expand PRHA advocacy efforts through key partnerships and activities, including letters of support for legislation and policy, opinion pieces, testimony, responding to public comments, and more. | Ongoing | Legislative Committee/Full Board | Legislative activity is tracked for each year. | PRHA's credibility and visibility is cultivated through the ability to support members in responding to and advocating for rural health-related legislation and policy. | PRHA's Board of Directors and membership are active in the policy and legislation activities; our reputation as credible participants in state level policy and advocacy has increased. |
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## Strategic Priority 2: Communication, Education, and Awareness

### Strategic Objective 2: Improve awareness and public education of rural health issues specific to Pennsylvania.

| Activities |  | Time frame | Responsible / Supporting  | Measurement   | Outcome  | Impact   |
|------------|--|------------|---|---|--|--|
| 2.1        | Identify social media platforms to share Pennsylvania rural health information, events, reports, and more. | 1 year     | Communications Committee<br>Staff Assistant/Student Board Members | Social media account is created, and we have active engagement with individual and organizational accounts. | PRHA-branded social media account (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X etc.) capitalizing on the <u>2024-2028 Pennsylvania Rural Health Plan</u> and <i>Status Check</i> . | Expand awareness of PRHA and our mission; augment dissemination efforts of PRHA publications; amplify the efforts of other state agencies and associations, the National Rural Health Association, NRHA and other national groups. |

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| 2.2 | Identify a student to create social media messages and schedule monthly (or more frequent) messaging.  | 1 year   | Communications Committee/<br>Nominating Committee                  | Weekly or bi-weekly social media content has been created and scheduled.                                  | Maintain a strong social media presence.   | Expand awareness of PRHA and our mission; augment dissemination efforts of PRHA publications; amplify the efforts of other state agencies and associations, the National Rural Health Association, NRHA and other national groups. |
| 2.3 | Support the yearly governor's proclamation declaring the relevant week in November as "Rural Health Week in Pennsylvania" to align with National Rural Health Day. | Annually | Communications Committee/Legislative Committee/Executive Committee | Rural Health Week is proclaimed annually and celebrated by advocates and aligned organizations statewide. | Rural Health Week in Pennsylvania is an annually anticipated event with a range of celebratory and educational activities. | Draw attention to the wide range of issues that impact rural health in PA.   |
| 2.4 | Expand partnerships by identifying one new association or organization each year that aligns with PRHA, and partner on education or community-based activities.    | Annually | Executive Committee/Strategic Planning Committee                   | Three new partnerships are cultivated.  | PRHA's organizational network is expanded.   | Opportunities are expanded for partnering with shared priorities on advocacy and other activities.   |



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| 2.5 | Retool and disseminate <i>Status Check</i> every two years   | 2 years | Executive Committee/Strategic Planning Committee | <i>Status Check</i> is reimagined, updated, and disseminated. | Reimagined report supports communities in accessing rural health-specific data.                             | Data on rural health in Pennsylvania is widely available for community use.  |
| 2.6 | Provide communication support and strategic direction to dissemination and utilization of the Rural Health Plan. | Ongoing | Communications Committee/ Full Board             | Rural Health Plan is widely shared.                           | The Rural Health Plan is being used by policymakers, community organizations, and educational institutions. | The Rural Health Plan provides cohesive, unified direction for strategic decision making regarding rural health in PA. |

### Strategic Priority 3: Membership & Sustainability

#### Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the long-term sustainability of our membership, board, and association.

| Activity |   | Time frame | Responsible / Supporting                  | Measurement  | Outcome  | Impact  |
|----------|---|------------|---|--|--|---|
| 3.1      | Invest in the next generation of rural health leaders through board mentorship and professional development opportunities | Ongoing    | Nominating Committee/ Executive Committee | Student positions on the Board of Directors are filled by engaged student members. | Student board members are well prepared to communicate the mission of PRHA with other students and are supported in their professional next steps in the rural health field. | PRHA's reach extends to universities and training programs in public health and allied fields.              |
| 3.2      | Sustain an active board by providing opportunities for leadership development and   | Ongoing    | Executive Committee                       | Board is maintained in size in accordance  | Board members value their association with PRHA and are  | PRHA board members are positive ambassadors for PRHA and excited to advance the mission of the association. |

|   | professional promotion  |            |  | with our bylaws.   | committed to the effort.   |  |
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| 3.3   | Develop an <i>engaged</i> membership body that understands the value and benefit of being a PRHA member   | 4-5 years  | Communications Committee/Full board              | The membership increases by 5% per year.   | The collective power to advocate has increased.                      | Our members work collaboratively and collectively with us <i>and</i> with each other to advance PRHA's mission.                  |
| <b>Strategic Objective 4: Intentionally position our board members in state and national events and educational opportunities</b> |   |            |  |  |  |  |
| Activities  |   | Time frame | Responsible/ Supporting                          | Measurement  | Outcome  | Impact   |
| 4.1   | Sponsor Board of Director and/or member attendance at state, national, and other relevant organizations' conferences and training opportunities | Annually   | Executive Committee/Strategic Planning Committee | At least one member of the Board of Directors or membership attends key national conferences and trainings annually. | The Board of Directors is educated, current, and nationally aligned. | PRHA's activities and knowledge remain relevant and aligned with other organizations and leadership in the rural health field.   |
| 4.2   | Develop and expand partnerships with other state and national rural health associations and their Boards of Directors and staff.                | Ongoing    | Strategic Planning Committee/Executive Committee | At least one new partnership is developed each year.   | Our vision and actions are informed by relationships with our peers. | Cross-sector and cross-geography relationships are strengthened to support collaborative action on issues in rural Pennsylvania. |
| 4.3   | Assess progress towards achieving the goals and   | Annually   | Strategic Planning Committee/Secretary           | A summary report on progress and   | Progress on meeting strategic goals is assessed; a report is         | An attainable plan is in place for the next five years.  |

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|  | activities in the PRHA Strategic Plan. |  |  | activities is developed and published. | developed; and continued and/or adjusted to meet goals. |  |
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