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National Rural Health Day

Adair County joins in the celebration of the power of rural

Adair County joins the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Office of Rural Health and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health in celebrating National Rural Health Day on November 17, 2011. National Rural Health Day is an opportunity to honor small towns, farming communities and rural areas, and also to highlight the unique healthcare challenges the individuals who live in these areas face. In Iowa, 90 percent of the land mass is considered rural, and half of Iowans live in an area that is considered rural.

“Rural communities are a vital part of Adair County and are wonderful places to live and work,” said Angela Mortoza, CEO of Adair County Health System. “However, rural communities face a lack of healthcare providers, an aging population with a greater number of chronic conditions, and larger percentages of uninsured or underinsured residents. It’s important that private and public partnerships continue to tackle these issues while meeting the unique needs of these areas.”

While about 20 percent of Americans live in rural areas, only about nine percent of all physicians and 12 percent of all pharmacists practice in rural areas. The Iowa rural health workforce reflects the national trend; however, the state ranks lower for mental and behavioral health care access than 46 other states. IDPH and Adair County Public Health understand that rural healthcare needs can’t be addressed through a “one size fits all” approach. Because each community is different, programs and policies must be flexible enough to enable rural communities to identify and address the unique needs of their residents. For more information on the IDPH Office on Rural Health, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/rural_health.asp. For more information on National Rural Health Day, visit <http://celebratepowerofrural.org/>.

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