

OnTASC

A newsletter brought to you by the Technical Assistance and Services Center

TASC Welcomes Two New Team Members

Save the Date...

- A TASC 90 Call is scheduled for **January 22, 2003**, on quality/performance improvement
- TASC is coordinating a Workshop in **March, 2003**, on Performance Improvement (Dates TBA)
- The ORHP Super Conference has been set for **August 17-23, 2003**

If you have questions about these dates, contact TASC

TASC is administered by the Rural Health Resource Center. For additional information about TASC, contact Terry Hill, Tami Lichtenberg, or Heather Hartung at 877-321-9393 or tasc@ruralresource.org



Tami Lichtenberg
TASC Program Manager

Tami Lichtenberg, Program Manager, joined the TASC team in October. She replaces Ann Miller. Lichtenberg is not a new face to rural health. She was previously Director of Rural Health Programming at Avera Health in Sioux Falls, SD and is an EMT-B. Her successes in rural health include one of the programs she assisted, the South Dakota SEED project, a winning National



Heather Hartung
TASC Program Coordinator

Rural Health Program of the Year in 2002 from the NRHA. She has worked with many CAHs at the local level and is very excited for the opportunity to work with the broader Medicare Flexibility Program. Lichtenberg's background also includes experience in fund development, grant writing, program development and public speaking.

Heather Hartung, Program Coordinator, is the newest addition to the TASC team. She has a B.S. in Health Education and most recently served as an intern at St. Mary's/Duluth Clinic in Duluth, Minnesota. She is customer service oriented with an outgoing personality as well as proficiency in verbal and written communications.



Needs Assessment Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who participated in the TASC survey we conducted with the state Flex Programs in November. Your input was greatly appreciated. Some high priority areas identified by states in the coming year include: telemedicine, quality/performance improvement, EMS integration and networking. You also identified "Best Practice" as a method of technical assistance you find useful for almost every topic. The topics and needs areas

identified, as well as the methods of technical assistance you find most helpful, will help us shape our future programs. We will also use the survey as a guide in developing conference topics, TASC 90 calls, technical assistance manuals, and other materials in the year ahead. Please feel free to contact us with any other comments or ideas. We appreciate feedback as we strive to continually improve our products and services.

Toolkits & Technical Assistance Manuals

There are three new manuals to add to the TASC toolkit list including: (1) "Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program "Flex Program" Evaluation Toolset;" (2) "Recruitment and Retention for Small Rural Hospitals;" and (3) "Hospitals that Have Not Converted: Is CAH Still an Option?" Every state Flex coordinator/program should have received one copy of these manuals. These toolkits will also be available online by

January 6, 2003, for those of you who would like to have additional copies. We still have a limited number of copies of past resources including the following: (1) "Hospital CEO Recruitment Manual;" (2) "Patient Satisfaction Manual;" and (3) Saving our Rural Hospitals (Video). If you are interested in one of these Tools, or if you have any questions, please contact Heather at hhartung@ruralcenter.org.

New State Flex Program Coordinator Manuals

Keep your eyes open for a new Orientation and Welcome Manual for State Flex Program Coordinators coming in February 2003. The manual will help (1) familiarize new Flex Coordinators with the program; (2) encourage new staff to use TASC as a resource, and; (3) answer frequently asked questions.

Introduction to TASC 90

You may have noticed the "Flex Hour" is now 90 minutes long instead of the traditional 60 minutes and will be referred to as "TASC 90." This change occurred to accommodate the increasingly complex issues as well as leaving adequate time for questions and discussion. Please feel free to contact us with topic ideas. The January 22, 2003, (3:00 p.m. EST) topic will be Quality and Performance Improvement.

Rural Is Where...

1. All you need is a name and a town to get your mail.
2. The stories of what your kids do on a Friday and Saturday night get home before they do.
3. You eat dinner at noon and supper in the evening.
4. Calling your neighbor can be a long distance call.
5. You hit the "SCAN" button on the radio and it just goes around; and around; and around...
6. The nurse, respiratory therapy, lab tech, and EKG tech are all the same person.
7. You can walk into the grocery store and have a message to call home.
8. A traffic light is a landmark.
9. It's more important to know something about everything than everything about something.

Courtesy of Denise Denton

A collection of real definitions of "rural." From the Colorado Rural Health Center

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"There's still some work left in this one. Get him another pot of coffee."