The AHA’s 31st Annual Rural Health Care Leadership Conference features extensive educational programming to connect the work of governing boards to the challenges of transforming the rural health care delivery system. The conference’s Trustee Track provides opportunities for board members to explore emerging trends and best practices with governance and rural health care experts. Board members will gain insights into the innovative governance approaches and critical leadership competencies that will move the board from good governance to excellent governance, while learning how heightened demands for improved quality, new collaborations, and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness are changing the board’s role and oversight responsibilities. Track sessions include:

**PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP:**

**Engaging Governing Boards and Leadership in Embracing Accountable Care Challenges**

Lynn Barr, CEO, Caravan Health

A key aspect of navigating the shaky bridge from fee-for-service and cost based payment models to value based accountable care models is engaging governing boards in support for the transformation journey. In rural communities, board members often wear many hats and are stretched thin, making the prospect of engaging them in the move into accountable care models a significant task. This workshop will provide a pathway for rural hospitals leaders to engage with their boards to prepare them to support the formulation and implementation of plans to move their rural facilities into accountable care models. You'll learn about a board education model that was developed from the experience of convening 23 rural ACOs that include 164 rural hospitals. Participants will gain an understanding of how MACRA impacts rural hospitals and clinics, the requirements for Quality Payment Program reporting for hospital and non-hospital-based providers, and how to communicate this effectively to the board. Engaging the board around the basic components of a sound population health model will pave the way to accountable care.

**Decisions, Decisions: Trends and Effective Leadership and Governance of Rural Hospitals**

Jamie Orlikoff, President, Orlikoff & Associates, Inc.

Health care is in turmoil, and nowhere is the impact of that more apparent than for the canaries in the coal mines of U.S. health care: rural hospitals and health systems. This session examines the challenging and conflicting trends buffeting U.S. health care, and unpacks their implications. Boards and leaders will learn strategies to maximize the effectiveness of their decision-making to help their organizations survive this risky time.

**STRATEGY AND SUNRISE SESSIONS**

**Collaborative Governance and Staffing Practices that Lead to Rural Health Success**

Robin Schluter, President/CEO, Regional Health Services of Howard County; George Willis, Chair, Board of Trustees, Regional Health Services of Howard County; and Shelly Russell, CEO, Mitchell County Regional Health Center

This session will share the experiences of two CAHs that have achieved greater financial success, improved staff recruitment, and expanded patient services through CEO driven and local board endorsed collaborative practices. You’ll learn how the two community boards approached collaboration and what considerations came into play to transition the board mind set to the new strategy. The presenters also will explore how sharing highly skilled and hard to recruit staff has enabled both organizations to fill roles and recruit candidates that normally would not look at a single CAH role—with the added benefit of enhancing mentoring and succession planning.
STRATEGY AND SUNRISE SESSIONS, CONTINUED

CEO Succession Planning – Your “Must Do’s”

Bill Westwood, Senior Client Partner, Korn Ferry and Tom Giella, Chair, Health Care Services, Korn Ferry

Examine the best practices of CEO succession planning in a health care setting. The session will include a thorough description of the process to follow to ensure that succession planning is smooth, efficient and objective. It also will include specific recommendations for the roles that each party plays in the process, and what risks should be avoided. Board members, incumbent CEO’s and potential CEO’s will learn how to prepare for and execute succession planning in their organizations.

Governing Under Changing Rules

Paul Maughan, PhD, Commissioner and President of the Board, Island Hospital

Learn how the governing board of a Medicare-dependent rural hospital is preparing for change to ensure that consistent quality health care is provided to the communities it serves in an ethical, cost-effective manner, so that individuals can achieve their optimal level of wellness. Commissioners govern by establishing policies, making strategic decisions and overseeing the organization’s activities. When faced with changing rules, the board should seek information from multiple sources including drawing assistance from the community as well as other resources. Join this discussion to examine best practices for how governing boards can effectively synthesize information in order to formulate and implement strategic policies to ensure the mission is achieved.

Critical Access Hospital R&D – Investing in Value-Based Care Capacity

Clint MacKinney, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Iowa; Jennifer Lundblad, President and CEO, Stratis Health, Bloomington, MN; Ed Pitchford, President and CEO, Cole Memorial Hospital; and David Crandall, Board Member, Cole Memorial Hospital

The critical access hospital’s capacity to deliver better care, improved health, and smarter spending (or health care value) requires research and development investment. But how does a CAH determine how much and where to spend R&D funds? This session will introduce the concept of health care value, describe why value remains important during times of uncertainty, and discuss how to start a value conversation with the board. This conversation with CEOs and trustees from innovative rural hospitals will probe their successes and challenges balancing investment in operational improvement and investment in value-based R&D. Participants will be able to identify value-based care success factors among CAHs, understand how to build infrastructure and capacity for value-based care, and hear how challenges and barriers have been addressed.

The Board Chair: The Role, Responsibilities and Performance Evaluation

James E. Orlikoff, President, Orlikoff & Associates, Inc.

A simple truth of governance is that a significant part of a board’s effectiveness depends upon the quality of the board chair. No individual board member has more influence on board culture and performance than the board chair. By clearly defining the chair’s position, role and responsibilities, and authority, a board helps ensure that it governs based on principle and policy, instead of personality. Effective boards also strive to oversee their chairs; while ineffective boards are controlled by them. Periodically assessing board chair performance can make a good chair even better. This presentation outlines key approaches to clarify an explicit role and job description for the board chair and offers a step-by-step process for establishing a productive board chair evaluation process.

Interactive Governance Clinic

James E. Orlikoff, President, Orlikoff & Associates, Inc.

Bring your thorniest governance issues to one of the nation’s pre-eminent health care governance experts. Participants will gain practical solutions and proactive ideas for improving governance performance. This session will be very interactive and no issue is off the table, so come prepared to talk, to question and be challenged!