The AHA's 32nd 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 governance programming 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. Sessions include:

**Governing in the Digital Age**

*Dottie Schindlinger*, VP/Governance Technology Evangelist, Diligent Corporation

There has never been a time when serving on a board has been more challenging than right now. Board oversight is loaded with more risk than ever before—from operating in an unpredictable climate to the increased regulatory ramifications of data breaches, and much more. In this complex landscape, the question becomes—what might actually help directors govern better? For the organizations with the best performance results, what is different about the way their boards function? To what extent are the norms and practices of governance beginning to transform to ensure the deliberative process can keep pace with the speed of business? Perhaps most importantly, what approaches, tools and technology might help directors and boards transform governance for the digital age? There’s a lot at stake—the boards that continue to find ways to leverage the speed of information and technology to inform careful deliberation could quickly outpace their peers.

**Trends and Their Impact on Governance: Time for a New Model**

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

For years we have analyzed the impact of trends on hospitals and health systems. But what about the impact of these trends on the governance model itself? Profound societal, economic, and demographic challenges, in addition to the daunting and disruptive pressures of the health care environment are stressing the traditional governance model to the point of failure. In this provocative presentation, Jamie Orlikoff identifies the trends challenging the traditional governance model, and outlines strategies to both sustain it as long as possible and to create new governance models.
The Change-Ready Rural Health Care Board

Steve Long, President/CEO, Hancock Regional Hospital; Timothy Clark, Board Member, Hancock Regional Hospital; Beth Nelson, Principal, Witt/Kieffer; and Jim King, Senior Partner, Chief Quality Officer and Board Member, Witt/Kieffer

Rural hospital boards are challenged by the daunting changes in today’s environment, especially in pursuing a more strategic type of governance centered around value-based care and population health. Governance leaders wonder what crucial skills and knowledge are needed on the board, where these can be found, and how such expertise can be maintained. This presentation addresses these questions through the example of one change-ready board that has aligned governance activity, developed member qualifications, established onboarding best practices, instituted performance reviews, and oriented board membership around the organization’s population health goals.

Total Integration: Merging a Rural Not-for-Profit Health System with a Rural For-Profit Physician Group

Michael Canady, MD, CEO, Holzer Health System; Brent Saunders, Chairman, Board of Directors, Holzer Health System; and Michael Haynes, CFO, Holzer Health System

Hear about the assumptions and concessions that drove the merger of former competitors Holzer Hospital and Holzer Clinic, and learn how the new health system is maximizing strategic partnerships, advancing population health with limited resources, approaching physician alignment and recruitment differently, enhancing workforce engagement, and leveraging HIT. Special attention will be paid to the governance dimensions including the importance of having the right structure, strategies to improve the inner workings of the two boards, and the establishment of strong board performance improvement measures.

The Board and CEO Relationship—What Could Be More Important?

Todd Linden, President, Linden Consulting and Bill Menner, Board Chair, Unity Point-Grinnell Regional Medical Center and member of the AHA Committee on Governance

In today’s ever changing landscape, keeping patients, employees and the medical staff all satisfied can be a tall order that creates tension between administration and the board. For exceptional organizational performance, the board and CEO relationship must be optimized through trust, transparency, understanding and a thoughtful game plan. Learn strategies for building strong board and CEO relationships including topics such as creating effective board meeting agendas, tackling CEO evaluations, and maintaining excellent medical staff relationships.

Managing Smooth Board Succession during Uncertain Times

Steve Gordon, MD, Member, Board of Directors, St. Charles Health System and National Principal Consultant, Point B and James E. Orlikoff, President, Orlikoff & Associates, Inc., Member, Board of Directors, St. Charles Health System

Effective succession management is an essential function of self-perpetuating boards. Vetting, appointing, and onboarding new trustees is a critical opportunity for aligning the board around organizational purpose, values, and strategic direction, while introducing fresh energy and perspective. The process must be well executed by and for the board itself. This session will review the approach taken by one board from various perspectives: the existing board, executive leadership, staff support, the board candidate, and national best practice.

Interactive Governance Clinic

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

Bring your thorniest governance issues to one of the nation’s preeminent health care governance experts. You’ll 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!