



# NEWS & VIEWS

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2013

## 2013 IN REVIEW AND LOOKING FORWARD

As the year slowly drifts (or should I say skids?) into winter and the Holiday season, people tend to get involved in reviewing the past year and looking forward to the next twelve months. While it's not quite time to get maudlin about it, there are a few past and future items I'd like to bring up in this issue's column.



### MY 2¢ WORTH

By Bob Wolverton,  
NRTRC Program Director

We had our annual NRTRC Board of Directors meeting in Jackson, Wyoming, in mid-October. As has become the usual schedule, we had a day of training and a day of Board business. The training, presented by The Cavalry in Jackson, was very productive and got the Board Members thinking and planning ways to help NRTRC become even better.

I'm not quite ready to spill the beans on the project we brainstormed in the meeting, but we've got an exciting plan that we'll share as all the t's are dotted and I's crossed. As the plan evolves, it looks like we'll be collaborating with another TRC in our second multiple-center project. More detail will follow soon.

## OUR NEW LOOK

You might have noticed our new logo and newsletter layout, as well. We rolled the new logo out at the Board meeting and are now incorporating it in all our communications and publications. While our old logo served us well, we felt we wanted something that showed graphically what we were all about (at least *where* we

were all about), so we held a competition and picked the best of the submissions. We chose this one because we like the colors and because the compass needle points toward our region. I hope you like it as much as we do, because you'll be seeing it from now on.

## TELEHEALTH CONFERENCE 2014

We're in the midst of planning the annual Regional Telehealth Conference, set for March 24-26 at the beautiful Benson Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Our keynote and plenary speakers are finalizing their plans to join us, our educational track presenters are being notified of their presentation schedule, we're finalizing our syllabus for the very popular Telehealth 101 seminar and this promises to be the best and biggest conference ever. We're partnering with the Telehealth Alliance of Oregon to put the meeting together and their participation has been very helpful. The attendee registration website is open at <http://www.nrtrconference.com> and I encourage you to sign up early and often. Well, early, anyway. Be sure to bring the whole gang from your facility. The staff is looking forward to meeting everyone.

There will be plenty of information in the rest of the newsletter about the conference, so I won't dwell on it here, but repeat my invitation for you to join us. This is NRTRC's big annual event and we look forward to spending a few days with you!

## NRTRC STAFF

Speaking of staff (well, I was), we have a new member joining the TRC. **Patricia Inabnit** is taking over as our Social Media and Outreach guru, replacing **Sara Rivera**, who's going to transition to the much more challenging job of being a full-time mom for my good buddy Colton. Thanks for your help, support and friendship, Sara, and stay in touch with the TRC. Welcome, Patricia, we look forward to working with you! ▶



Your source for confidential, objective answers  
and valuable insights into Telehealth issues in the Northwest.



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By Martha Nikides,  
NRTRC Administrative  
Assistant

## Registration Opens for 2014 Telemedicine Conference

This will be our best conference yet. Plan to join us in Portland in March!

**R**egistration has now begun! That means it is time to firm up your plans for attending the 3rd Annual NRTRC Telemedicine Conference.

This regionally-offered educational and networking opportunity will be held in the beautiful city of Portland, Oregon on March 24-26, 2014. We have a wide variety of presenters and topics touching on just about every area of Telemedicine. Whether you are interested in the technical side of things, the clinical, or even the administrative, we have just the program for you!

To register, please visit [www.nrtrcconference.com/registration/](http://www.nrtrcconference.com/registration/) and take advantage of some of our great offers!

Our early bird discount price of \$150 is good until January 31, 2014 and we also offer discounts for groups and students. When you register, don't forget to make your reservations with the historic Benson Hotel and take advantage of the low \$149/night rate while rooms are still available.



If you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact Martha Nikides at [Martha@nrtrc.org](mailto:Martha@nrtrc.org) or call (406) 237-8665.

Conference | continued next page



## HRSA Administrator to Address NRTRC Conference

**M**ary Wakefield, PhD, RN, administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will open day two of the NRTRC conference with a live video broadcast from the HRSA offices in Washington, D.C.



Mary Wakefield,  
PhD, RN

Dr. Wakefield was named administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) by President Barack Obama on February 20, 2009. HRSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

HRSA works to fill in the health care gaps for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable. The agency uses its \$8.1 billion annual budget to expand access to quality health care in partnership with health care providers and health professions training programs.

Dr. Wakefield joined HRSA from the University of North Dakota (UND), where she was associate dean for rural health at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. In the 1990s, she served as chief of staff to two North

Dakota senators: Kent Conrad (D) and Quentin Burdick (D). She also has served as director of the Center for Health Policy, Research and Ethics at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, and worked on site as a consultant to the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS in Geneva, Switzerland.

Dr. Wakefield is a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing and was elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM). She served on the IOM committee that produced the landmark reports, "To Err is Human" and "Crossing the Quality Chasm." She also co-chaired the IOM committee that produced the report "Health Professions Education" and chaired the committee that produced the report "Quality through Collaboration: Health Care in Rural America."

In addition, she has served on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, as chair of the National Advisory Council for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, as a member of President Clinton's

Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, and as a member of the National Advisory Committee to HRSA's Office of Rural Health Policy.

Dr. Wakefield is a native of Devils Lake, North Dakota. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from the University of Mary in Bismarck and master's and doctoral degrees in nursing from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Wakefield will be addressing such topics as the role of telehealth in the evolving healthcare environment; the actions HHS could undertake to further the use of telehealth to improve health care outcomes and control costs; the specific challenges and opportunities implementation of the ACA presents for telehealth; and where those of us in telehealth need to focus our efforts to ensure that the promise of telehealth and its role in our ever-evolving healthcare system is realized.

NRTRC conference participants are indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to hear Dr. Wakefield's presentation and to dialogue with her about telehealth from the federal perspective.

## George Demiris Joins Distinguished Faculty for NRTRC Conference

**N**RTRC is pleased to announce that George Demiris, PhD, will be joining the NRTRC Conference's plenary faculty. The focus of Dr. Demiris' presentation will be the use of technology to assist seniors to successfully age in place.



George Demiris,  
PhD

George Demiris is the Alumni Endowed Professor in Nursing at the School of Nursing, and Biomedical and Health Informatics, at the School of Medicine, University of

Washington (UW). He is the Director of the UW Clinical Informatics and Patient Centered Technologies Program. He obtained his MSc degree in Medical Informatics from the University of Heidelberg, Germany and his PhD degree in Health Informatics from the University of Minnesota.

His research interests include the design and evaluation of home-based technologies for older adults and

patients with chronic conditions and disabilities, smart homes and ambient assisted living applications and the use of telehealth in home care and hospice.

With the addition of Dr. Demiris, the plenary faculty is now complete. They include **Dr. Mary Wakefield, Jay Srin, Dr. Eric Arzubi, Dr. Ana María López and Dr. Demiris.** These faculty members bring a vast array of knowledge and experience in healthcare and telehealth, and will provide participants with a valuable conference experience.



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## SPOTLIGHT

### Telehealth's Renewed Opportunity

By Nancy Vorhees, Chairperson, NRTRC  
COO, Inland Northwest Health Services

DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AND INCREASE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS AND SPECIALTY CARE, HOSPITALS ARE UTILIZING THE POWER OF VIDEO CONFERENCING TO ENHANCE THEIR SERVICE LINES AND PROVIDE EDUCATION TO THEIR PATIENTS AND STAFF.

**D**elivery of clinical services via video provides a cost effective and convenient solution for accessing care at distant locations. For hospitals, the development and support of telemedicine services has the potential to expand outreach programs as well as increase referral patterns. With telemedicine, the opportunity exists to provide access to specialty care, improve clinical outcomes and enhance an organization's rating and reimbursement opportunities. Rural communities with limited resources benefit by expanding

the depth of services being offered locally, decreasing the number of patients traveling to urban centers for healthcare. Telehealth represents a win-win solution for patients, providers and healthcare organizations.

As telemedicine becomes integrated into mainstream healthcare, decisions must be made with regard to service delivery. A sustainable solution is one based on business needs, which seamlessly integrates into existing infrastructure, tools, and networks.

Telemedicine | continued next page

Video conference solutions must be adaptable, consistent and reliable for user adoption and program integration to occur. The technology needs to work with all endpoints, new and old, inside and outside of firewalls, and be scalable for future growth. Understanding the clinical model and technology needed to support a telemedicine service line requires a team effort, and includes support from administrators, IT, healthcare providers, staff, and patients. Efficiencies in workflow, productivity, staff integration and provider acceptance must be considered when implementing services. Program considerations involve regulations, reimbursement, business agreements

and services support models.

Leveraging the experience, knowledge, infrastructure and support of an existing video conference network is a cost effective way to implement telemedicine services, while maximizing return on investment. Existing networks provide a unified delivery platform of shared resources and support to ensure reliable and sustainable healthcare delivery to those in need. Existing networks help defray the costs of program development while providing a platform for increased revenue, expanded outreach and cost avoidance associated with patient transport and travel. Telehealth networks also

provide a collaborative environment for administrative, educational and clinical activities to improve access to services, care coordination and health education to benefit patients and providers.

As the regulatory landscape and reimbursement models improve for telemedicine services, a renewed opportunity emerges as medical communities establish best practices for health care delivery via video both regionally and nationally. Organizations like the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center provide a platform for collaboration and industry integration to improve healthcare in our country. ►

**ON BEHALF OF THE NRTRC STAFF  
AND BOARD, WE WOULD LIKE  
TO WISH YOU AND YOURS  
A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON!**







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**HAPPY  
2014!**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

By Martha Nikides

**Thursday, January 30, 2014**  
NRTRC Open Mic Webinar Series  
Virtual Urgent Care  
Presented by Wes Valdes, DO

**Thursday January 16, 2014**  
National TRC Webinar Series  
Hosted by South Central  
Telehealth Resource Center  
Check the National Website ([http://www.  
telehealthresourcecenters.org](http://www.telehealthresourcecenters.org)) for details

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on upcoming events, please go to [www.nrtrc.org](http://www.nrtrc.org).

### EVENT SUBMISSIONS

Please forward event information to [martha@nrtrc.org](mailto:martha@nrtrc.org)

### ARTICLE AND PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

If you would like to write an article or provide photographs for this publication, please contact Cathy Britain ([csbritain@gmail.com](mailto:csbritain@gmail.com) or 541-910-7366)

### ABOUT US

The Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center leverages the collective expertise of 33 telehealth networks in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming to share information and resources and develop new telehealth programs.

### NRTRC SERVICES

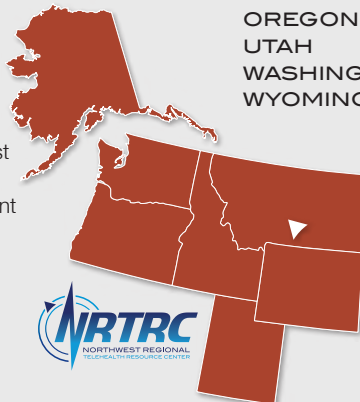
- Provide technical assistance for new programs and applications
- Increase exposure to telehealth as a health care delivery tool
- Improve access to specialty care through regional collaboration
- Develop information on best practices and telehealth toolkits
- Provide current information and facilitate discussion of regional regulatory, policy and reimbursement issues

### NORTHWEST REGIONAL TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER

1233 North 30th Street  
Billings, Montana 59101  
888-662-5601 or 406-237-8665

### NRTRC STAFF

Bob Wolverton  
Program Director  
Patricia Inabnit  
Social Media Specialist  
Martha Nikides  
Administrative Assistant  
Doris Barta  
Principle Investigator



### NRTRC BOARD MEMBERS

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>ALASKA</b>     | Cynthia Roleff, Christie Artuso           |
| <b>HAWAII</b>     | Joe Humphry Ex officio                    |
| <b>IDAHO</b>      | Tom Hauer, Neill Piland                   |
| <b>MONTANA</b>    | Doris Barta,<br>Thelma McClosky-Armstrong |
| <b>OREGON</b>     | Cathy Britain, Doug Romer                 |
| <b>UTAH</b>       | Patricia Carroll, Wesly Valdes            |
| <b>WASHINGTON</b> | Cara Towle, Nancy Vorhees                 |
| <b>WYOMING</b>    | Jim Bush, Tom Richards                    |

