Narrowing Rural Health Disparities

By Debra Miller

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Narrowing Rural Health Disparities
Saturday, December 4. 2:00 - 3:30 pm.

Programs under federal health reform aim to tackle the persistent challenges of rural health disparities through expanded access and quality. New investments in rural primary care work force development and changes to rural hospital financing are part of the strategies to improve quality and reduce cost while improving health. State experts will describe how investments in telemedicine are bringing immediate specialized care to remote areas to save lives and reduce unnecessary care and costs. Hear about state successes in teaching patients to effectively manage chronic diseases, showing how integrating information technology, coordinating health providers, and incorporating evidence-based service improvement could diminish rural health disparities.

Presentation by William O’Leary

William D. O’Leary is responsible for business development and leadership of Microsoft Health and Human Services. He directs the Connected Health and Human Services business for Microsoft, and develops IT strategy across state and local markets. He coordinates the Microsoft American Recovery and Reinvestment Act strategy concerning state cooperative agreement grants, medical homes, regional extension centers and state Medicaid Health Information Technology plans. He has authored Microsoft’s roadmap to develop consumer-centered services across state and local governments and service providers. O’Leary is a former Secretary of Health and Human Services in Massachusetts, and co-chaired the Massachusetts Health Care Task Force. He developed a comprehensive technology-based initiative to integrate services delivered to children and families, and implemented an expansion of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance coverage resulting in less than a 5 percent uninsured rate for children. He also served as state commissioner of the Department of Youth Services, where he developed a community-based system of services and supervision and was a principal in the development of sweeping juvenile court reform. He has served as consultant to the U.S. Justice Department, and numerous states regarding development of health, human service and criminal justice systems.

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