Our mission is to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. We are working to confront mental health challenges in rural communities and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

A Message from Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton

The momentum is building as Rural Minds collaborates with other organizations and mental health advocates to help combat the mental health crisis in rural America. Here are just a few examples of what we’ve been doing recently:

- Rural Minds participated in an initiative to pass legislation for the expansion of rural mental health virtual peer support groups, which is in alignment with Depression Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) expanding to include rural mental health support groups in their network. On May 18, the Upton Amendment successfully passed out of committee with a vote of 55 to one.

- Rural Minds was a signatory for letters sent to Congress to support Save Our Air Medical Resources (SOAR), a national campaign that aims to preserve access to emergency air medical services across the country, especially in rural communities.

- Rural Minds has been involved in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) planning meetings for 988 – the new national suicide and mental health crisis hotline that went live on July 16 to provide callers who are experiencing mental health-related distress with direct access to trained crisis counselors.

As you’ll see in this newsletter, we are also moving forward with many other initiatives to help increase awareness of the mental health crisis so prevalent in our rural communities.

Thank you to all who continue to support our vision of eliminating the suffering, silence, and stigma surrounding mental illness in rural America.
Rural Minds Welcomes the Launch of 988

Rural Minds welcomes the July 16th launch of 988 – the new three-digit national suicide and crisis lifeline. People can now call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org if they are in crisis or are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support, which can include having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

Available 24/7, the 988 dialing code is comprised of a network of more than 200 locally operated and funded crisis centers in the U.S., operating through what was formerly known as Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)’s National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

“We were very pleased for Rural Minds to be included in the 988 planning meetings as a representative of the people we serve in rural communities across the country,” said Executive Director Chuck Strand.

Support Mental Health in Rural America – The Value of Sharing Lived Experiences
Family Features* — Throughout many parts of the country, an increased understanding of mental health has led to enhanced awareness of its importance. A catch-all description of emotional, psychological and social well-being, mental health affects how people think, feel and act, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Read More

* Rural Minds recognizes Family Features – an industry leader in food and lifestyle content for newspapers, magazines, and websites – for their generous in-kind donation of a full-page mat release about rural mental health and Rural Minds. In addition to this article being posted in the Rural Minds blog, it is currently available to editors and web producers nationwide and distributed through Family Features’ social media channels.

July was formally recognized in 2008 as National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month to help bring awareness to the unique mental health challenges faced by people in underrepresented groups in the U.S. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to mental health and substance-use treatments and services is even more difficult today, especially for minority populations.

Rural Minds is working to raise awareness of mental health challenges in rural communities throughout the U.S. and provide mental health information and resources to individuals with diverse backgrounds, religions, ethnicity, sexual
Rural Minds Receives Pro Bono Marketing Services from Two Organizations

We at Rural Minds are excited and grateful to be chosen as the recipient of two pro bono programs that will deliver strategic marketing support to help us advance our mission:

- **The 2022 Seed to Succeed Grant from Curious Plot**, a marketing, communications, and consulting agency serving the agriculture, food, and companion animal care markets. This grant will provide up to $75,000 of in-kind public relations, creative, social/digital, and content strategy to Rural Minds. Click here to read the press release from Curious Plot that announces the award.

- A pro bono integrated advertising and public relations marketing program developed by University of Alabama students enrolled in Dr. Kenon Brown’s Integrated Communications Campaigns summer course. The campaign will focus on reaching youth in rural America and will fit within the broader marketing efforts being developed by Curious Plot.

Both programs will undoubtedly have a huge positive impact on our ability as a newly formed organization to help end the suffering, silence, and stigma surrounding mental health for people living in rural communities throughout the U.S.

Rural Suicide Awareness and Prevention Webinar

To confront the higher incidence of suicide in rural communities compared to other populations across the country, Rural Minds and the National Grange are hosting a free webinar featuring:

- People from rural America sharing their experiences of being personally impacted by suicide
- Information to help prevent suicide
- Free resources for rural mental health and suicide awareness and prevention.
IN THE NEWS:

Rural Minds and Mental Health in Rural America

Click on the links below for recent news stories about some of the important issues impacting mental health in rural America today.

**National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s Cattlemen to Cattlemen**
Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton discussed the growing incidence of mental illness and suicide in rural America and how our nonprofit is helping to improve mental health resources in rural communities.

**Hoard’s Dairyman: “Bringing Darkness to Light”**
In this feature article, Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton described why and how the nonprofit is working to give a voice and hope to people in rural communities who are living in the shadows of mental illness.

**Our Ohio Weekly: “Mental Health in Rural America”**
Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton was featured in Ty Higgins’ podcast, where he spoke about the nonprofit’s mission to combat mental health challenges in rural America and help break down the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

**Scientific American: “Mental Health Care Should Be Available for All, Not a Luxury”**
In this article on the challenges of accessing mental health care in America, Rural Minds was mentioned as an organization that aims to help overcome stigma surrounding mental illness and expand access to mental health care in rural communities.

Connect with us!