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

September is Suicide Prevention month. And for me and my family, it marks a sad anniversary. It was 10 years ago this month that my nephew, Brooks, died by suicide at the age of 28. He left behind many family members and friends who still miss him dearly.

Brooks’ death was a wake-up call for both my family and small farming community in upstate New York, as we realized that mental illness and suicide were stigmatized issues and no one wanted to talk about them. And since that time, I aspired to do something to honor Brooks – something that would help those who struggle with mental illness.

That’s how the founding of Rural Minds came about – to help overcome the unique mental health challenges faced by people in rural communities across America. These challenges include the stigma of mental illness, reduced access to mental healthcare, and limited access to the internet.

As you’ll read in this newsletter, Rural Minds has partnered with the National Grange to develop a rural suicide awareness and prevention program – Growing Hope Together. One component of this program is a webinar on suicide awareness and prevention. We hope you can join us for the webinar – presented live via Zoom – on Tuesday, September 13, at 6:30 p.m. CT. Click here to register for the webinar at no cost.

As always, we are grateful for your continued support in our quest to end the suffering, silence, and stigma around mental illness in rural America, and our work to confront rural suicide with information for awareness and prevention.
Rural Suicide Awareness and Prevention Webinar

Rural Minds and the National Grange are pleased to present another Rural Mental Health Connections Webinar – the third FREE webinar in the 2022 series.

Tuesday, September 13, 2022
4:30 pm PT | 5:30 pm MT | 6:30 pm CT | 7:30 pm ET

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 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

Webinar presenters include:

- Monica Kramer McConkey – Professional counselor from Minnesota
- Nathan Lawson - Farmer and rural mental health advocate from Kentucky

This webinar will be presented live via Zoom with the option to hear live audio as listen-only. Webinar video will be archived and available post-event on www.RuralMinds.org.

Click Here For More Information And To Register
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology Dr. Pravesh Sharma is a child and adolescent psychiatrist with Mayo Clinic Health System in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His research areas include substance use disorder among adolescents and young adults, and digital health equity among rural and racially diverse populations.

In this article, Dr. Sharma shares his insights on digital healthcare in rural communities.

Growing Hope Together – Rural Minds and the National Grange Collaborate to Help Prevent Suicide in Rural America

There’s a mental health emergency in rural America. People living in rural communities have much higher rates of depression and suicide than people living in urban areas.

That’s why Rural Minds and the National Grange are partnering to develop a Rural Suicide Awareness and Prevention program. Our goal for this educational program is to create an ongoing, grassroots, person-to-person approach that provides people who live in rural communities with mental health and suicide prevention information.

The Growing Hope Together – Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program Launches

In recognition of September being Suicide Prevention month, the Growing Hope Together program launched and includes a free webinar on suicide awareness and prevention. One of several components of the educational
program, the webinar will be presented by Rural Minds and the National Grange live via Zoom on September 13 at 6:30 p.m. Central Time. A video recording of the webinar will be housed on an expanding Rural Suicide Awareness and Prevention webpage that provides additional resources for mental health and suicide prevention.

Click here to view the Rural Suicide Awareness and Prevention webpage.

Rural Minds Thanks Partnership Council Members

We were pleased to host the latest Rural Minds Partnership Council meeting on September 7. The purpose of the Partnership Council is to bring together leaders of companies in the biopharma and agricultural industries, who are partnering with Rural Minds to support educational initiatives that address the mental health challenges in rural communities across the country. This includes recognizing the healthcare disparity facing rural residents and patients with comorbidities that exacerbate an existing mental illness or become the source of anxiety, depression, or other mental health challenges.

We thank our Rural Minds Partnership Council members for their participation and support, and invite leaders from other organizations to join us.

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.

Organizations Must Confront Mental Health Challenges In Rural America – The Tennessean

When country music legend Naomi Judd tragically passed away on April 30, it was a sobering reminder of the many people who are suffering with mental health challenges in rural America. Like millions of her other fans, many of whom grew up listening to Judd’s music like I did, I was devastated to learn the news about her untimely death after her brave and public journey living with mental illness. Along with recognizing September as Mental Health Awareness Month, it’s important to note that suicide rates among people living in rural counties are 25% higher than those in major metropolitan areas. Read more.

Advice from a Farmer Who’s Been Through It All – Country Folks

“When we talk about tough situations, the conversation about suicide and mental health is tough, but it’s even harder to have that conversation when you
lose someone.” That's how farmer Jeff “Ditz” Ditzenberger began his presentation during a recent Rural Mental Health Connections webinar, hosted by the National Grange.

The webinar series is presented by Rural Minds and the National Grange. Both organizations have missions of education to impact people and their communities in positive ways and with opportunities to address mental health challenges. Read more.

**Rural America Is in Mental Health Crisis – Farm Progress**
Two factors that make production agriculture an ideal occupation for many farmers – working in the country and being independent – are also catalysts for a mental health crisis in rural America. Read more.

**How to Recognize the Warning Signs of Stress and Deal with Hard Times in Farming – Farm Journal's PORK**
From epidemic illnesses impacting pigs to falling commodity prices to increasing farm debt load, many factors cause stress among pig farmers today. Find out how to recognize the warning signs of stress, practical ways to deal with tough times and 3 tips to get your health on track in Farm Journal's PORK's new e-book, “Your Guide to Mental Health.” Read more.

**Rural America Continues to Lose Farmland – WNAX Radio 570**
A recent report from American Farmland Trust shows an alarming trend of farmland disappearing from rural America. Angie Doucette, the Midwest farmland protection manager with American Farmland Trust, says the number of lost acres is disturbing. She says there’s almost no chance of farmland getting put back into production once it is lost. Doucette talks about some of the Midwest states that have lost the most farmland. Listen to the radio broadcast here.