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**

As you’ll read in this newsletter, Rural Minds is off to a strong start in 2024. Over the past few weeks, Rural Minds team members and I participated in numerous media interviews and attended events across the country where we had the opportunity to share vital rural mental health information and resources.

In addition, we were thrilled and humbled with Rural Minds being selected as the **2023 STARR Coalition Advocacy Organization of the Year** – just two years after our nonprofit was founded. We are grateful to the STARR Coalition for this prestigious award as we strive to build on the momentum of advocating for the 46 million people living in rural America and confronting the mental health challenges and stigma they face.

Our new [Rural Mental Health Resilience Program](#) is one way we aim to help people living in rural America become part of the solution to improving mental health in their communities. And we are excited to present the first webinar in the 2024 Connections series to launch the program! The webinar will be presented live via Zoom on Wednesday, March 27, at 7 pm ET. Find more information and a link to the free webinar registration below. We hope you’ll join us!
The Next Webinar in the Rural Minds Rural Mental Health Connections Webinar Series:

Rural Mental Health Resilience Program Launch Webinar

Wednesday, March 27, 2024
7 pm ET | 6 pm CT | 5 pm MT | 4 pm PT

Click here for more information and free webinar registration

Recognizing the self-reliance and do-it-yourself mindset that are common among many people living in rural America, the Rural Mental Health Resilience Program provides a toolkit with free mental health information, resources and training to help rural residents improve mental health in their communities.

This webinar will feature the experience of those who have already used the program to start a conversation about mental health in their rural communities. In addition to sharing best practices and hosting a Q&A session, we will briefly demonstrate how to easily access materials on the program’s webpage so you can:

- Empower yourself and others with the knowledge to become part of the solution for improving rural mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness in your community.
- Know the facts about rural mental health challenges, mental illness and suicide.
• Confront the mental health emergency in your local community and throughout rural America.

• Encourage or lead difficult conversations about mental illness and suicide that must be heard.

• Serve as a trusted source of information so you can help your family, friends and community.

The webinar will be moderated by Rural Minds Vice President of Communications Julie Lux and presented live via Zoom with the option to hear audio as listen-only.

Register Now!

Collaboration is key for Rural Minds in our work to confront the mental health challenges in rural America and eliminate the stigma, suffering and silence that surround mental illness. That’s why we’ve created this feature for our newsletter – Partners in the Spotlight – where we take a moment to recognize organizations that collaborate with us as valued members of the Rural Minds Partnership Council.

In this issue, we highlight Takeda.

Takeda is focused on creating better health for people and a brighter future for the world. Takeda aims to discover and deliver life-transforming treatments in the company’s core therapeutic and business areas, including gastrointestinal and inflammation, rare diseases, plasma-derived therapies, oncology, neuroscience and vaccines.

Together with their partners, Takeda aims to improve the patient
Rural Minds Receives National Advocacy Award

Mental Health Challenges for Veterans in Rural America – Help for Our Heroes

To all our veterans who have served in the armed forces, we at Rural Minds wish to express our gratitude for the courage, strength and sacrifice you and your families have made to defend our country and keep us safe. We realize that some of you may still be struggling with both emotional and mental battles after leaving military life, as well as encountering barriers in accessing mental health support. And for the 4.4 million veterans who live in rural communities across the country, the challenges of accessing mental health services are likely to be even greater.

In this blog post, we share national and rural statistics to help raise awareness of mental health challenges facing our nation’s veterans and provide resources for additional mental health information and support.

Read More
We at Rural Minds are honored and grateful to have been selected as the 2023 STARR Coalition Advocacy Organization of the Year and received the prestigious STARR Award.

“I would like to express our sincere thanks for this award and appreciation for acknowledgement of the collaborative work that we are doing through Rural Minds to help people in rural communities who face unique barriers and challenges to mental health,” said Rural Minds Executive Director Chuck Strand, who accepted the STARR Award on behalf of the Rural Minds team.

Click here to read more about the STARR Award.

**Rural Minds on the Road – Raising Awareness of Rural Mental Health Challenges**

Here are some highlights of the events that featured Rural Minds over the last few weeks to help raise awareness of rural mental health challenges and provide actionable information and resources for confronting the mental health crisis in rural America.

Jeff Winton and Rural Minds Vice Chairman Jim Modica gave a presentation on January 8 to 75 horse trainers and riding instructors from across the country at the Instructor’s Insight Seminar 2024 in Columbia, MO. During their presentation, Jeff and Jim shared self-care strategies for equestrians and mental health resources and discussed how vital it is for trainers and riding instructors to recognize mental health issues in themselves and their students. In addition, they talked about Rural Minds’ mission and the important work we are doing to challenge the stigma of mental illness and help improve mental health in rural America.

On Jan 17, Jeff Winton was the guest speaker at the League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County’s Hot Topics Event: “Recognizing and Improving the State of Mental Health in Rural...
From January 31 to February 2, Rural Minds Vice President of Communications Julie Lux and Social Media Coordinator Adriel McMahan participated at the 2024 CattleCon and National Cattlemen and Beef Association Trade Show in Orlando, FL. Julie and Adriel distributed rural mental health information and resources at “The Back Porch,” which was located on the convention floor.

Julie Lux also gave a presentation – “Recognizing and Improving the State of Mental Health in Rural America” – at the KWS Seeds 2024 Winter Sales Meeting on February 2 in Orlando, FL. Jeff Winton joined the presentation virtually to introduce Rural Minds and our vision of a rural America where there’s no more suffering, silence and stigma around mental illness.

Rural Minds Executive Director Chuck Strand was a keynote speaker at a Rural Mental Health Solutions Roundtable on February 8. Hosted by the Western Community Assessment Network, the roundtable discussion was a virtual event that focused on mental health approaches and solutions that are working in small towns and rural communities.

Help Us Help Others

Rural Minds depends on personal donations and corporate support to develop and distribute free educational information and training resources to improve mental health in rural America. Please consider a donation to Rural Minds to help confront the mental health emergency in rural America and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.
Click here to learn more about other ways you can help Rural Minds help others.

Make A Donation Today!

Rural Minds in the News

Be sure to visit the “Rural Minds in the News” webpage to see media coverage of the organization that helps to increase awareness about mental health challenges in rural America and the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Click on the links below for some of Rural Minds’ latest media coverage:

Morning Ag Clips – Mental Health Nonprofit Receives National Advocacy Award

The Post Journal – Rural Minds Sends Message of Support to Bills Kicker Following Playoff Loss

Chautauqua Sunrise with Doc Hamels – Interview with Jeff Winton

Ag Issues with Slade Wiley of 580 WIBW – Interview with Jeff Winton

Cornellians – Alum’s Nonprofit Combats the Mental Health Crisis in Rural U.S.

ST Genetics STtalks Podcast – Importance of Mental Health with Rural Minds

www.RuralMinds.org

Connect with us!