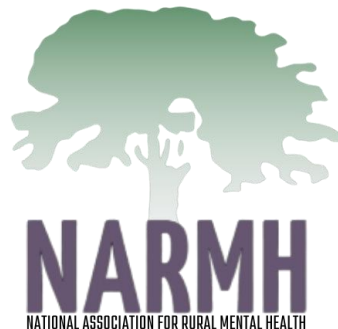




# Raising our Rural Voice

# Who we are?

- Small and Mighty association of people and organizations with a passion and commitment to rural mental health
- Two major focus areas
  - **Knowledge Transfer** for our Current and Future workforce
  - **Advocacy** for regulatory and policy direction to support rural mental health
- Governed by a volunteer board from across the country
- Partnered with NACBHDD for administrative support
- Over 50 years representing Rural Mental Health



# Why we exist:

## Grow Rural Strengths

### Close-Knit Communities

- Strong social ties can foster informal support networks and early identification of those in distress.

### Sense of Resilience and Self-Reliance

- Rural populations often demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and strong coping mechanisms developed through hard living conditions.

### Lower Cost of Living

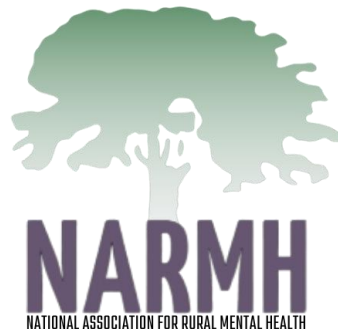
- Lower housing and operational costs can make it more affordable for practitioners or programs to establish long-term services (if appropriately funded).

### Integration with Primary Care

- In the absence of specialists, rural providers often integrate mental and physical health care, which can lead to more holistic treatment.

### Cultural Relevance

- Smaller populations allow for tailored, community-specific mental health programs that align with local values and beliefs.



# Why we exist:

## Bust Rural Barriers

### Limited Access to Workforce

- There is a significant shortage of mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists) in rural areas.

### Stigma and Privacy Concerns

- Tight-knit communities can increase the stigma around seeking help and reduce anonymity, leading to underreporting and avoidance.

### Transportation Challenges

- Long distances to clinics and lack of public transportation make it difficult for residents to access regular care.

### Technology Gaps

- Limited broadband or internet access in some areas hampers the growth of telepsychiatry and online mental health services.

### Economic Constraints

- Higher rates of poverty and underinsurance can make mental health services unaffordable for many.

### Lack of Crisis Services

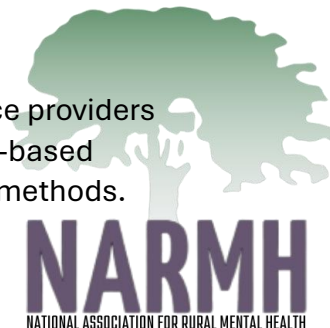
- Emergency and crisis mental health support is often inadequate or non-existent in rural regions.

### Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

- Providers unfamiliar with rural culture or lacking local language skills (especially in Indigenous or immigrant communities) may struggle to build trust.

### Administrative and Clinical Burden

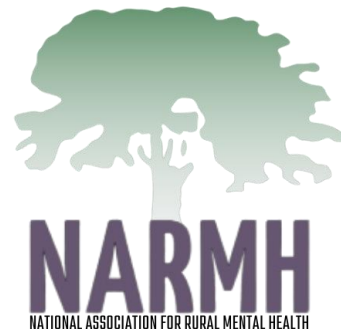
- A one size fits all approach often impedes rural service providers from being able to apply for funding, deliver evidence-based interventions and implement rigorous data reporting methods.



# What we do...

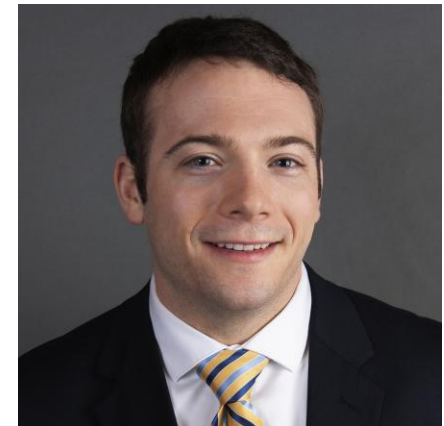
## “Linking Voices to Promote Rural Mental Health”

- Knowledge Transfer = Grow Rural Strengths
  - Push & Pull knowledge to and from Rural communities.
  - Bring best and promising practices, interventions, services and relationships to other rural communities
  - Develop our current and future rural Providers
  - APAs Journal of Rural Mental Health
  - Annual Conference
    - May 2025 Stronger Together: weaving cultural diversity and strengths to support mental wellbeing Anchorage AK
    - 200+ participants from around the world
    - 2026 in development



# What we do...

- Advocacy = Bust Rural Barriers
  - Non-partisan organization. Regardless of party, we ALL have mental health.
  - Amplify the Shared rural voice wherever we can
  - Participate and represent NARMH in coalitions, convenings, working groups
    - Member of the Mental Health Liaison Group
  - Partnership with NACBHDD for representation in Washington DC
    - Jonah Cunningham serves as NARMH's Executive Director
  - NACBHDD Week in Review & routine policy updates



# Recognition: 2025 Awardees



## **Go To Bat Award (Advocacy)**

Doug and Amy Modig

## **Victor I Howery Memorial Award (Achievement)**

Paul Mackie, PhD

## **Ann Schumacher Rural Clinic Practice Award**

Antonia Unaqsiq Commack

## **Peter G. Beeson Rural Arts Award**

Apayuq Moore (not pictured)

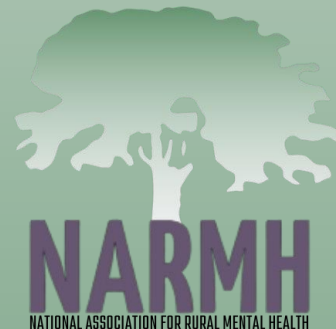
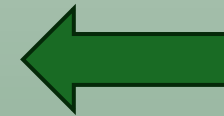


# Be part of our VOICE!

- It takes ALL of us...Become a NARMH Member Today!
- Affordable and valuable
- Types of Memberships
  - Individuals
  - Students
  - Lived Experience
  - Organizations
  - Corporate Sponsorship (in development)
- <https://www.narmh.org/index.php/join-renew/>



Sign Up  
Here





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