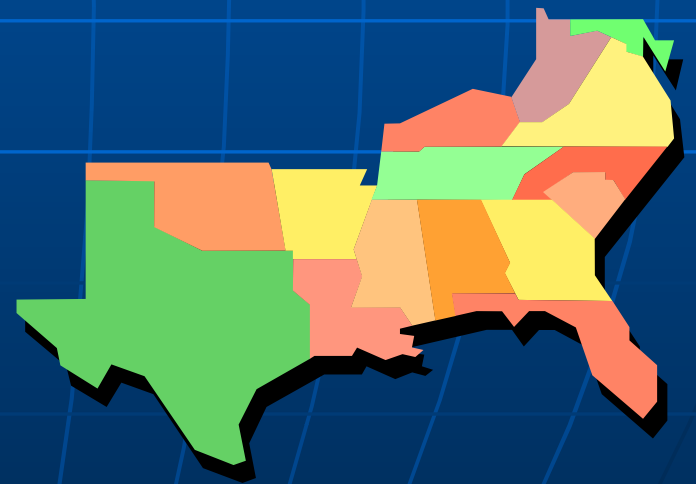# The Role of Networks in Improving Access to Pharmaceutical Services in Rural Areas
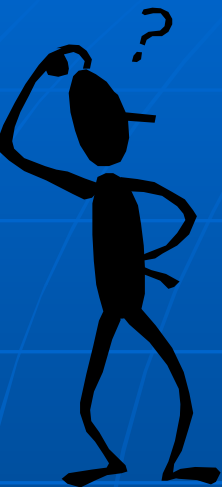
Stephanie Geller, EdM

Research Director

Volunteers in Health Care

The People

- 41.2 million Americans without health insurance
  - 10.1 million uninsured are poor
  - 3.3 million are near poor

- 10 million seniors without prescription coverage

The Problem

- Those without prescription coverage pay the highest rates

- Many go without or take medications improperly to save money

- The result is that many who are poor and lack prescription coverage are putting their health at risk
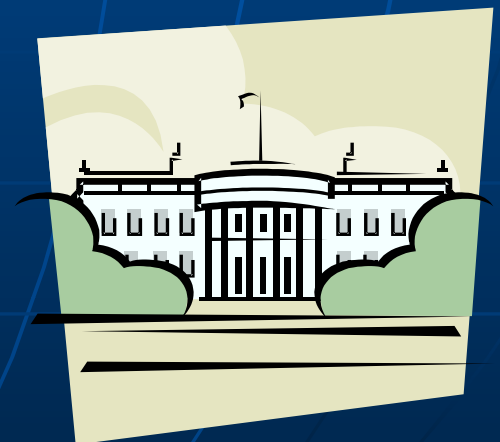
The States

- States like Maine, Michigan, and Florida taking on the drug industry

- Smaller states developing buying cooperatives

- State-supported prescription assistance programs for seniors and others

The Federal Government

- Efforts to establish a prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients

- Office of Pharmacy Affairs providing technical assistance and grants

- Medicare.gov

The Pharmaceutical Industry

- Patient assistance programs

- Discount cards for seniors

Network Collaborators

- Health departments
- Hospitals
- Private physicians' offices
- Pharmacies
- Community health centers
- Free clinics
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Universities
- Foundations

Strategies for Accessing Free and Low-Cost Medications

- Free
  - Drug samples
  - Patient assistance programs (PAPs)
  - Bulk donations
- Cost-saving
  - Discount cards
  - Discounts from local pharmacies
  - Public Health Service drug pricing (340b)
  - Bulk purchasing
  - Pharmacy benefit managers (PBM)

Effective Models

- West Virginia Health Right

- Commun-I-Care

- Senior PHARMAssist

- CenLA Medication Access Program

VIH Resources

- Case studies
- RxAssist website – www.rxassist.org
- RxAssist Plus software
- Product lists
  - Pharmacy inventory software
  - PAP tracking software
- Manuals
  - Managing samples
  - Starting a pharmaceutical access program
  - Accessing patient assistance programs (in progress)
- Technical assistance
- Advocacy

Other Resources

- Office of Pharmacy Affairs
- Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
- Medpin
- Useful websites
  - www.medicare.gov
  - www.phrma.org
  - www.helpingpatients.org
  - www.needymeds.org
  - www.rxhope.com

A National Resource on Caring for the Uninsured

1-877-844-8442

www.volunteersinhealthcare.org

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