

*Editorial***FROM THE DESK OF KAY ROSENTHAL, PHD, RN**

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According to the Institute of Medicine Report, Rural America is a vital component of American society. Representing nearly 20 percent of the population, rural communities, like urban landscapes, are rich in cultural diversity. However, the smaller, poorer, and more isolated a rural community is, the more difficult it is to ensure the availability of high-quality health services. The Institute of Medicine report, *Quality Through Collaboration: The Future of Rural Health* examines the quality of health care in rural America.

In the report, the committee offers a five-pronged strategy to address the quality challenges in rural communities:

1. Adopting an integrated approach to addressing both personal and population health needs;
2. Establishing a stronger health care quality improvement support structure to assist rural health systems and professionals;
3. Enhancing the human resource capacity of health care professionals in rural communities, and the preparedness of rural residents to actively engage in improving their health and health care;
4. Assuring that rural health care systems are financially stable; and
5. Investing in an information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, which has enormous potential to enhance health and health care over the coming decade; (<http://www.iom.edu/report.asp?id=23359>).

Rural nursing is patient-centered, especially since we are caring for our neighbors and community members. We strive to be safe and efficient in the care we deliver. With technology we can ensure that we are giving effective and timely healthcare and that our treatments are equitable to all those we deliver care to.

What are you or your facility doing to ensure quality care? This is the time to become active on the local level. The Rural Nurse Organization (RNO) encourages you to read the reports, give your input and become actively involved in the pursuit of quality.