



**State/Tribal/Adolescents at Risk Suicide
Prevention Grantee
Technical Assistance Meeting
*Telling the Story: A Pathway to Sustain Suicide
Prevention Programs*
Portland, Oregon**

**Coping with provider shortages:
A challenge for rural and frontier grantees
December 12, 2007**

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WICHE – Established 1953

- ❖ Mission: To expand educational access and excellence for all of the West's citizens

WICHE Mental Health Program - Established 1955

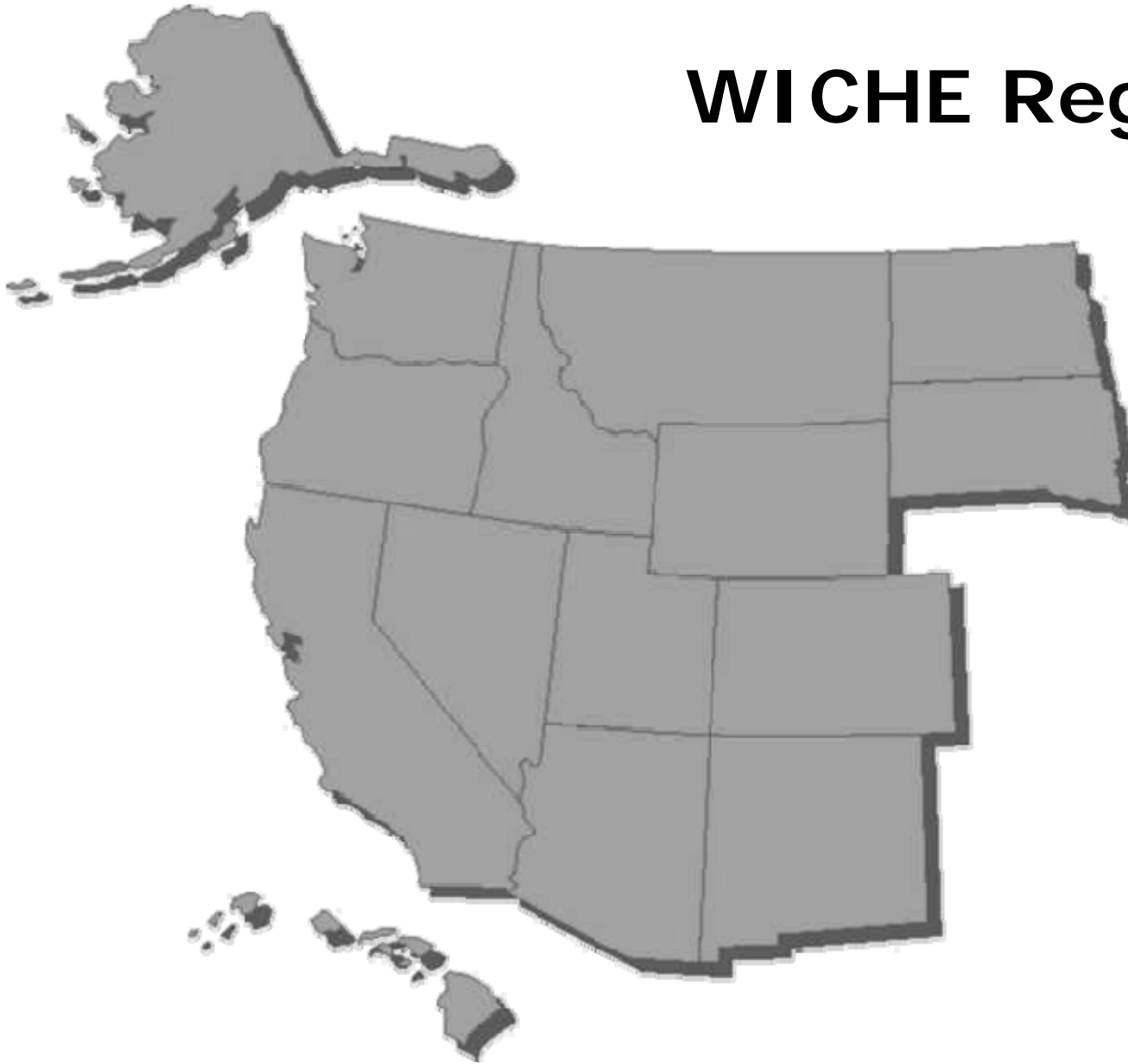
- ❖ Mission:
 - 1) assist states in improving systems of care for mental health consumers & families; and
 - 2) advance the preparation of a qualified mental health workforce in the West.



WICHE Mental Health Program Functions:

- Primary focus Rural Mental Health
- Research and technical assistance center
- State Specific Technical Assistance
 - Workforce Development
 - Primary Care Integration Training
 - Systems of Care
 - Cultural Competence
- Western States Decision Support Group
- WICHE Center for Rural Mental Health Research

WICHE Region



- **Alaska**
- **Arizona**
- **California**
- **Colorado**
- **Hawaii**
- **Idaho**
- **Montana**
- **Nevada**
- **New Mexico**
- **North Dakota**
- **Oregon**
- **South Dakota**
- **Utah**
- **Washington**
- **Wyoming**

Behavioral health trends, issues,
and influences are magnified in
RURAL communities!



The Cold, Hard Facts



- > 60% of rural Americans live in mental health professional shortage areas
- > 90% of all psychologists and psychiatrists, and 80% of MSWs, work in metropolitan areas
- > 65% of rural Americans get their mental health care from their primary care provider
- Rural Americans enter care later in the course of their disorders, with more advanced symptoms, resulting in more intensive & expensive interventions

Unique Workforce Issues in Rural Communities

- Geography
- Rural culture
- Transportation
- Aging workforce population



Challenges to Recruit and Retain Rural Placements



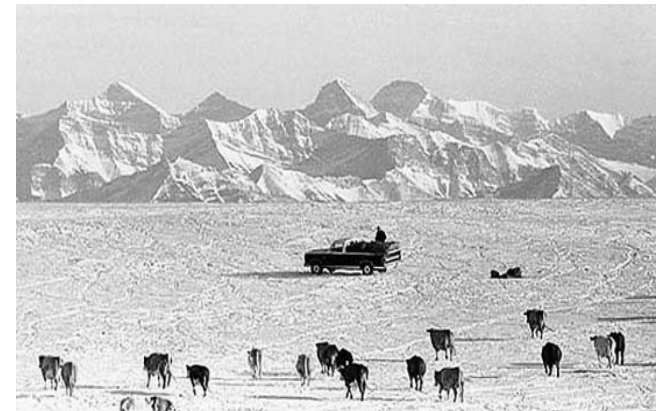
- Urban-trained individuals are reticent to move to a rural places
- Lower than standard wages and salaries
- Life in the “Fish Bowl”
- Lack of rural specific training opportunities
- Limited access to supervision & mentorship opportunities, & peer support



Strategies for Responding to the Challenges

Identified Strategies

- Create New Rural Educational Delivery Methods and Models
- Grow Your Own
- Partnering, Natural Community Supports, & Leadership



Addressing Suicide Prevention Training for Primary Care Providers In Rural And Frontier Areas

- WICHE Center for Rural Mental Health Research project
- PCPs are often first point of contact for persons with suicide potential
- Training will be developed to help PCPs feel more comfortable identifying signs of suicidality
- Ultimately train PCPs to screen, treat and/or refer



Rural Workforce Innovations

Rural Workforce Innovations

- Rural Human Services Program Model
- Behavioral Health Aide Program Model
- Behavioral Health Career Clubs
- Applied Bachelor's and Master's Degrees
- Training to Primary Care



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