Rural Health Needs Assessed

A rural health network, funded by a grant from the New York State Office of Rural Health, held a meeting on January 13th to identify health care concerns and needs in the southwestern region of Ulster County, with specific emphasis on the community of Ellenville. The twenty participants represented physicians, hospitals, public health and human service agencies, pharmacies, rescue squads, schools, community leadership, and religious organizations. The discussions focused on concerns with the current system, gaps in services, and opportunities to improve health and health services of the community.

Under the auspices of *Mid-Hudson Family Health Institute* (Institute), this network's focus is to address the medical and dental needs of populations living in medically underserved regions and coordinate care of the various providers within those communities. The Network Advisory Board represents *Ellenville Regional Hospital*, The Kingston Hospital, County Legislature, SUNY New Paltz, Margaretville Hospital, *Family Practice Center of Ellenville*, the Catskill Hudson Areas Health Education Center and the Institute.

The immediate goals of the network are: 1) to develop systems of rural health delivery to replace or upgrade existent services; 2) to enhance the viability of the health care providers within this network, with particular emphasis on the *Ellenville Regional Hospital*; 3) to increase access to all levels of care within the community; 4) recruitment and retention of qualified health care professionals to under-served, rural areas; and 5) to develop a community campaign to educate the public about health care services and insurance options as well as how to access these and other resources.

The next step in this process is to conduct a Consumer Focus Group meeting within the Ellenville community targeted for later this spring. In addition, the participants of the January focus group will continue to meet to work together to improve the services which currently exist in the community, minimize duplication, and develop new services.

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Defensive Driving Course at ERH

Do you want to save 10% on your vehicle liability, collision, and personal injury insurance premiums for THREE YEARS? How about reducing your driving record by up to FOUR POINTS? If so, then you should attend the Defensive Driving Course being offered at *Ellenville Regional Hospital*.

The course will be held on May 2nd and May 4th from 4:30–7:30 PM. You must attend both sessions to complete the course. The cost is $40 per student.

To register for the course, please contact Debbie Briggs at **647-6400 ext. 286**.