

## **ANNEX H**

### **ADVANCE LETTERS TO RESPONDENTS AND PROJECT BROCHURE**

**ERS: Rural Community Wealth and Health Care Provision  
Key Informant  
Advance Letter 2013**

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

Dear [NAME],

One of the ongoing challenges in rural communities is the availability of affordable and quality health care. The Community Assets/ Community Health (CA/CH) project is a new research effort designed to address this issue in an innovative way. Researchers at Iowa State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service want to identify how the unique assets of communities can contribute to strengthening local health care, and how a strong local health care industry can help communities to prosper.

The researchers have chosen 150 rural communities in 9 states to study, and [TOWN, STATE] is one of the communities chosen to participate in this new research.

We hope to talk with a few people who are leaders in your community and who are familiar with local health care issues. Local health care providers will also be contacted to get their input. We are particularly interested in any efforts communities have made to recruit or retain health care providers. We are also gathering some information from state and community websites and other published materials.

We understand that you are [RESPONDENT TYPE]. We would like to talk with you because you are in a leadership role in the community. One of our research interviewers will call you by telephone within the next couple of weeks to ask some questions about your community. The interview could take anywhere from 15 to 60 minutes and can be scheduled for a day and time that is as convenient for you as possible.

Your participation is voluntary. However, your input is very important to get an accurate understanding of the role that the health care industry plays in your community. Any information you provide will be used only for statistical research purposes. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and the data that is reported will be summarized by groups of communities to protect the identity of respondents and communities.

Please read the enclosed brochure to learn more about CA/CH and its goals. More information about the study can be found on the back of this letter. If you have questions or concerns, please call Iowa State University project staff, toll-free, at 877-578-8848. Tell the person who answers that you are calling about the CA/CH project.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. We look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Janice Larson  
Iowa State University  
Survey & Behavioral Research Services  
2321 N Loop Drive, Suite 120  
Ames, IA 50010

## Community Assets / Community Health(CA/CH)

**Project Researchers.**CA/CH is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS), whose mission is to inform and enhance public and private decision making on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural development. Data collection is being conducted by Iowa State University's Survey & Behavioral Research Services (SBRS). The principal investigator is John Pender, Senior Economist at ERS. Principal researchers at Iowa State University are Cindy Yu (Statistics) and Shirley Huck (SBRS).

### Project Goals.

Health care services is one of the largest and most rapidly growing industries in rural America, and adequate provision of health care services is critical for achieving economic development and improved well-being of rural people. Information obtained through the CA/CH project will aid both local decision-making and rural policy development by contributing to a better understanding of the linkages between health care and economic viability in rural communities. Such understanding is critical to address the challenge of inadequate access to health care services in many rural communities and to realize the opportunities offered by improved health care provision to retain rural populations, provide employment, and improve the quality of life.

**Confidentiality.**All information that is provided by participants in the Community Assets/Community Health project will only be used for statistical research purposes and reported in summary form, either by groups of communities or groups of respondent types. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107-347 and other applicable Federal laws, individual responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed in identifiable form to anyone outside of the research team. By law, every ERS and SBRS employee is subject to a jail term of up to 5 years, a fine of up to \$250,000 or both if he/she discloses any identifiable information about research participants.

**Protection of Research Subjects.**Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants may refuse to answer any specific questions they feel are too personal or intrusive, or they may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. All information will be kept in locked facilities and password protected computer files. Federal government regulatory agencies, U.S. Department of Agriculture, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information. If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Iowa State University IRB Administrator at 515-294-4566, or e-mail . This project has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management & Budget. The OMB Control Number for this Information Collection is #XXXXX.

**Contact Information.**For more information about CA/CH, please call research staff at Iowa State University's Survey & Behavioral Research Services, toll-free, at 877-578-8848. Tell the person who answers that you are calling about the CA/CH project. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, John Pender, Senior Economist, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, at . Project information is also available online at .

**ERS: Rural Community Wealth and Health Care Provision  
Health Care Provider  
Mail Survey Cover Letter**

DATE

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY/STATE/ZIP

Dear [NAME],

One of the ongoing challenges in rural communities is the provision of affordable and quality health care within an increasingly complex industry during uncertain economic times. The Community Assets/Community Health (CA/CH) project is a new research effort designed to address this issue in an innovative way. Researchers at Iowa State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service want to identify how the unique assets of communities can contribute to strengthening their local health care, and how, in turn, a strong local health care industry can help communities to prosper.

The researchers have chosen 150 rural communities in 9 states to study and [TOWN, STATE] is one of the communities chosen to participate in this research. Please read the enclosed brochure to learn more about CA/CH and its goals. The back of this letter also includes information about the researchers, project details, assurance of confidentiality and protection of research subjects.

As a [PROVIDER TYPE], you have been chosen to be included in this important component of the project. We have already gathered information from a variety of sources, including local leaders within each community; but now we need input from those who provide health care to these communities. Please complete the enclosed paper survey, returning it in the envelope provided. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online at [URL], using the Username [USERNAME] and Password [PASSWORD]. It should only take about 15 minutes. The questions address your own background and experiences practicing in your community, as well as your reasons for beginning and continuing your involvement there.

We recognize you are very busy. Unfortunately we are unable to compensate you financially; however our hope is that the project will significantly benefit many rural communities like yours. Participation is voluntary, and any information you provide will be used only for statistical research purposes. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and the data that is reported will be summarized by groups of communities to protect the identity of respondents.

If you have questions or concerns, please call Iowa State University project staff, toll-free, at 877-578-8848. Tell the person who answers that you are calling about the CA/CH project.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

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*...Research for the benefit of your town*

- Health care is one of the largest and most rapidly growing industries in rural America.
- Despite this growth, the availability of adequate health care in rural areas continues to be a complex and challenging issue.
- Changing and sometimes unpredictable economic dynamics add to the challenge.
- CA/CH is investigating those challenges by asking the right questions of the right people...*members of rural communities.*



Survey & Behavioral  
Research Services

Phone: 877-578-8848

Fax: 515-294-2456

E-mail: [sbrsinfo@iastate.edu](mailto:sbrsinfo@iastate.edu)

Website: [www.sbrs.stat.iastate.edu/cach](http://www.sbrs.stat.iastate.edu/cach)



Community Assets/Community Health is a voluntary study sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, OMB #\_\_\_\_\_. Data collection is conducted by Survey & Behavioral Research Services at Iowa State University.

All information that is provided by participants in the Community Assets/Community Health study will only be used for statistical research purposes and analyzed in summary form. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107-347 and other applicable Federal laws, individual responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed in identifiable form to anyone outside of the research team. By law, every ERS and SBRS employee is subject to a jail term of up to 5 years, a fine of up to \$250,000 or both if he/she discloses any identifiable

...with your town in mind

# CA/CH

*Community Assets/  
Community Health*



Tel. : 1-877-578-8848

## Why?

Our goal is to help provide rural communities with effective tools and supportive policies that will promote local prosperity. If we can better understand how the varied assets of rural communities influence the development of local health care, policies can be structured to help rural communities thrive. CA/CH was formed to explore this interaction between the health care industry and rural economic development.



## How?

Leaders and health care providers in your community will be contacted by phone, mail, or in person to help us understand the barriers rural communities can face in accessing health care, attracting/retaining providers, and promoting economic development. **The perspective of community members is vital.**



**CA/CH**  
Community Assets/  
Community Health

*Provision of adequate health care services may be a key factor in attracting residents and businesses to rural areas, contributing to growth and prosperity.*



- What aspects of your community do you think would be attractive to prospective health care providers?
- What aspects of your community, including the availability of quality health care, currently attract new residents to your community?
- What recruitment efforts has your community used to attract and retain health care providers?
- How do the local economy and local health care delivery system impact each other in your community?

With your help CA/CH hopes to identify successful rural health care delivery and economic development practices, as well as those that may not work as well. Sharing what works effectively in rural communities can be instrumental in helping people in rural areas achieve the highest quality of life.

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CA/CH guarantees that any information provided by project participants will be kept strictly confiden-

## ...CA/CH

The CA/CH study is being conducted with 150 selected communities in 9 states:

*Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas.*

Your community has an opportunity to make a difference in its own future as well as the future of other communities in rural America.



Please participate with us in this exciting new venture . . .

