



# 2026 Annual Conference

June 23-24, 2026 | French Lick, IN

[indianaruralhealth.org/conference](http://indianaruralhealth.org/conference)



# ABOUT

The Indiana Rural Health Association's Annual Conference is the largest gathering of its kind in the state, bringing together physicians, nurses, pharmacists, public health professionals, students, and others committed to improving rural health. This interactive, educational event features insights from both frontline practitioners and national experts on today's most pressing rural and public health issues. Attendees gain valuable updates and practical guidance on the development and management of effective rural healthcare delivery models.

- **Date:** June 23-24, 2026
- **Location:** French Lick Resort Event Center (French Lick, IN)
- **Audience:** Estimated around 600 attendees
  - Including health professionals from the fields of telehealth, public health, maternal health, mental health, and more.
- **Audience Attire:** Business/Business Casual
- **Speaker Attire:** Business
- **Past speakers include:**
  - Dr. Will and Kristin Flanary (The Glaucomfleckens)
  - Pandit Dasa
  - Erin Brockovich
  - Billy Riggs, MRE, MDIV, CSP, OMG!
  - Dr. Jerome Adams, Former Surgeon General
  - Dr. Tray Dunaway

## Earn ACHE Qualifying Education Credits

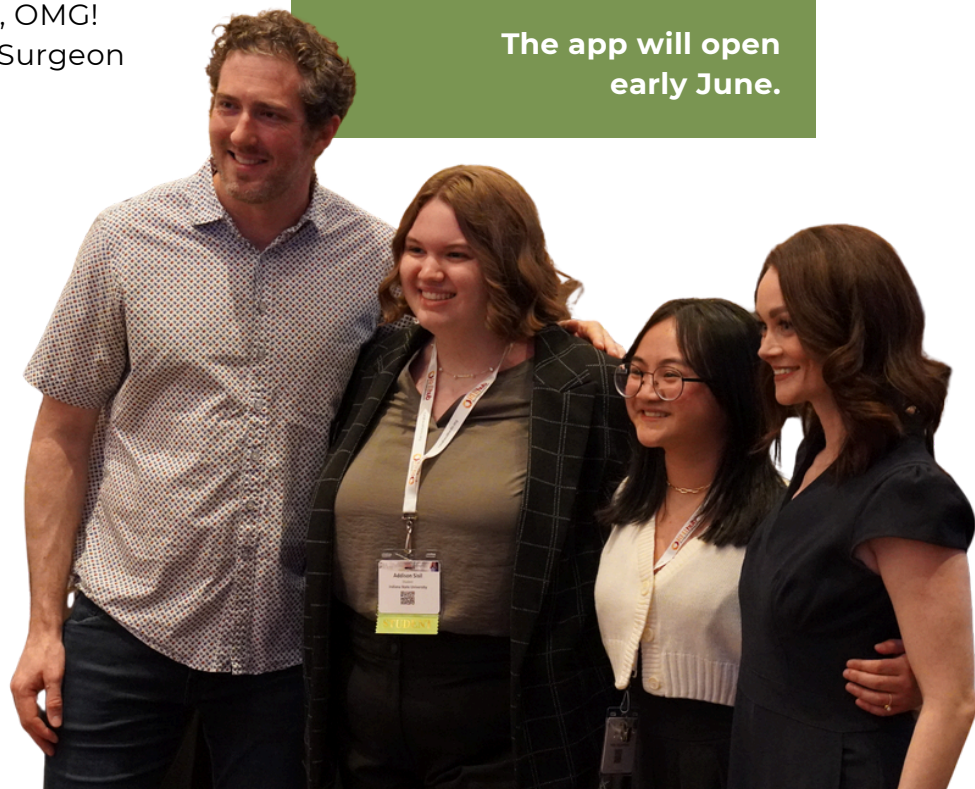
As an independent chartered chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the ACHE of Indiana, is authorized to award 7.0 hours of ACHE Qualifying Education credits toward advancement or recertification in the American College of Healthcare Executives. Participants in this program who wish to have it considered for ACHE Qualifying Education credit should list their attendance when they apply to the American College of Healthcare Executives for advancement or recertification.



## Conference App

The IRHA Conference App provides the most up-to-date information throughout the conference. Visit the app store on your mobile device and download the **IRHA Events** app.

The app will open early June.



# AGENDA AT A GLANCE

## Monday, June 22

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**

Welcome Reception

►Windsor Ballroom

Open to conference registrants only.

## Tuesday, June 23

**6:00 a.m.**

22nd Annual 5K Run/Walk

Event Center Entrance

**8:00-8:55 a.m.**

Registration/Breakfast/Exhibitor  
Networking

►Hoosier Ballroom

**8:55-9:20 a.m.**

Welcome

►Hoosier Ballroom

**9:30-10:30 a.m.**

Concurrent Sessions I

**10:45-11:45 a.m.**

Concurrent Sessions II

**11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Lunch and Exhibitor Networking

►Hoosier Ballroom

**12:40-12:45 p.m.**

Bylaw Revision Vote

►Windsor Ballroom

**12:45-2:00 p.m.**

Keynote Address

***“Beyond Coping: A Candid Conversation  
about Resilience, Connection, and  
Happiness in the Workplace”***

Johnny Crowder

►Windsor Ballroom

**2:15-3:15 p.m.**

Concurrent Sessions III

**3:15-5:00 p.m.**

Exhibitor Reception

►Hoosier Ballroom

**5:00-5:30p.m.**

Door Prize Drawings

## Wednesday, June 24

**7:00-8:00 a.m.**

Breakfast

►Windsor Ballroom

**8:00-8:45 a.m.**

General Membership Meeting and  
Award Presentations

►Windsor Ballroom

**9:00-10:00 a.m.**

Concurrent Sessions IV

**10:15-11:15 a.m.**

Concurrent Sessions V

**11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Plenary Address Luncheon

***“AI in Action: Real-World Applications  
in Rural Providers”***

Adam Elkins, Good Samaritan

Joyce Geis, Rush Memorial Hospital

Janelle Sponsler, Cameron Health

Dan Vanderbilt, Indiana University Health

►Windsor Ballroom

**1:00 p.m.**

Adjournment

*\*Please note: The agenda is subject to change.*

*Last updated on April 9, 2026.*



# KEYNOTE

## Johnny Crowder

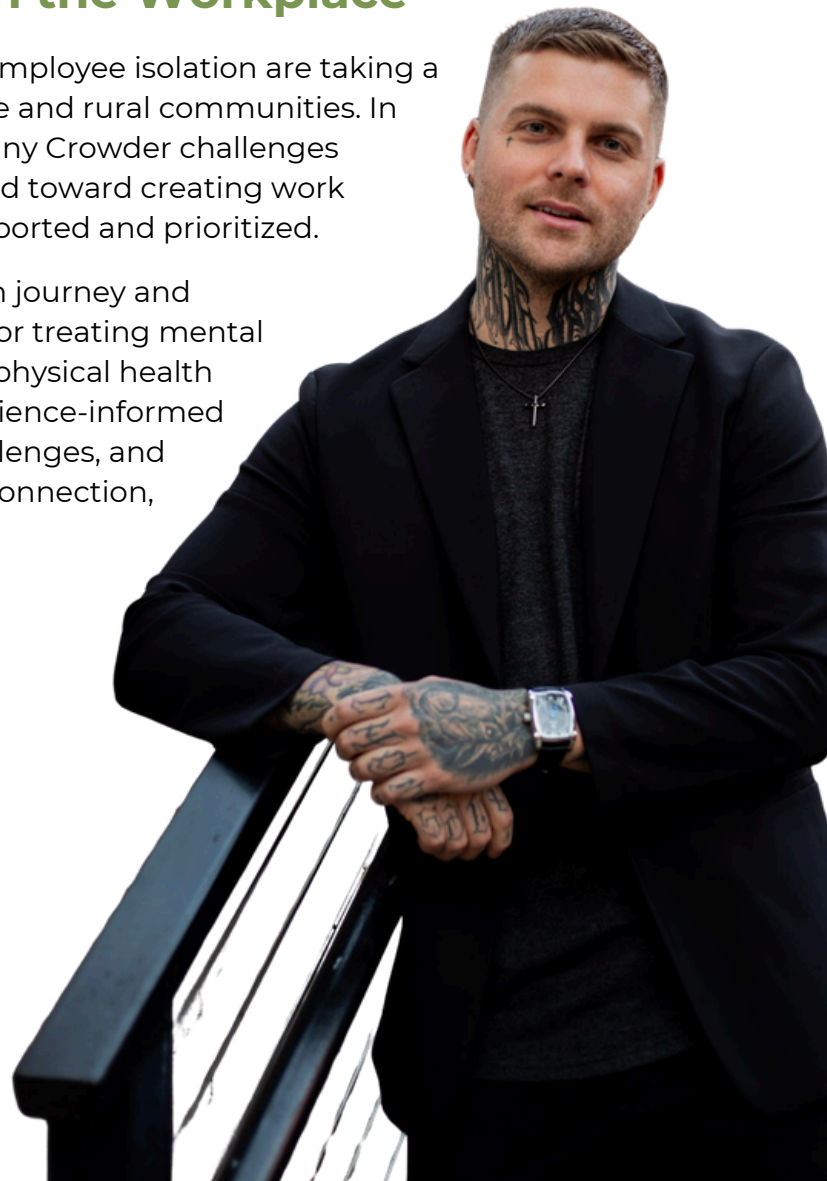
Johnny Crowder is a mental health, resilience, and workplace culture expert and the Founder & CEO of Cope Notes, a text-based mental health platform providing daily support to users in more than 90 countries. A suicide and abuse survivor, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, TEDx Talks speaker, and touring musician, Johnny brings a rare blend of lived experience, clinical insight, and authenticity to every stage he steps on.

With a psychology degree from the University of Central Florida and more than a decade of clinical treatment, peer support, and public advocacy experience through the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Johnny has impacted millions worldwide through his work. His refreshingly candid approach to mental health has been featured by *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CNN World*. Known for his empathy, energy, and unconventional wit, Johnny delivers messages that resonate deeply with leaders and frontline professionals alike.

## Beyond Coping: A Candid Conversation about Resilience, Connection, and Happiness in the Workplace

Burnout, absenteeism, compassion fatigue, and employee isolation are taking a toll on today's workforce—especially in health care and rural communities. In this fast-paced and highly relatable keynote, Johnny Crowder challenges organizations to move beyond simply “coping” and toward creating work environments where mental health is openly supported and prioritized.

Drawing from his own decade-long mental health journey and professional experience, Johnny makes the case for treating mental health conversations with the same openness as physical health discussions. Attendees will leave with practical, science-informed strategies to build stronger cultures, reframe challenges, and support emotional wellbeing in ways that foster connection, confidence, and long-term happiness at work.



# PLENARY LUNCHEON

## AI in Action: Real-World Applications in Rural Providers

Artificial intelligence is no longer a future concept--it is actively reshaping how rural healthcare organizations deliver care, improve efficiency, and support their workforce. This session brings together rural healthcare leaders who are implementing AI in practical, impactful ways across clinical, operational, and administrative settings. Panelists will share real-world examples and lessons learned, including efforts to streamline documentation, enhance revenue cycle performance, and improve access and patient experience.



Adam Elkins, MBA, serves as Executive Director of Practice Operations at Good Samaritan Hospital, where he leads strategic growth, access, and financial performance across 31 outpatient departments serving a 10-county rural region in Southern Indiana. With eight years in healthcare, including frontline patient care, he brings a practical, data-driven approach to innovation. He recently led the implementation of AI-powered ambient listening through Epic, improving provider efficiency and reducing documentation delays. A Vincennes native, Adam enjoys raising his family locally, owning a CrossFit gym, and competing in endurance events, including completing his first half Ironman in 2025.



Joyce Geis serves as Vice President of Provider Services at Rush Memorial Hospital, where she oversees all physician and advanced practice provider operations, including two certified Rural Health Clinics. With more than 25 years of experience as a nurse practitioner and over 10 years in executive leadership, she has led initiatives focused on quality performance, operational efficiency, and patient-centered care. She joined Rush Memorial Hospital 13 years ago as a Family Nurse Practitioner, where her work centered on strengthening rural health services through policy development, workflow design, and quality-driven initiatives. Joyce holds a Bachelor of Nursing from Indiana University, a Master of Nursing from the University of Indianapolis, and a Master of Health Administration from Ohio University. She is actively involved with IRHA, where she serves on the Policy and Legislative Committee, and she is also a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



Janelle Sponsler serves as Executive Director of Revenue Cycle for Cameron Health, a comprehensive health system that includes a Critical Access Hospital, an Outpatient Cancer Center, and Cameron Medical Group, which encompasses more than 75 providers across five family practice locations and seven specialty offices. With over 20 years of experience in healthcare revenue cycle management, Janelle brings expertise in IPPS, OPSS, and Critical Access Hospital reimbursement models, as well as rural health clinics and provider-based clinic operations, enabling her to navigate evolving healthcare regulations while optimizing financial performance across diverse care settings.



Dan Vanderbilt is a Practice Operations Manager for IU Health, where he oversees three primary care clinics and a university health center. He leads through service, data, and IU Health's core values, especially Purpose, while working to improve patient experience and support care teams. Dan is known for addressing staffing and operational challenges and supporting teams with practical tools. Outside of work, he travels with his family and tries to keep up with teenage slang, with varying success.

# SPECIAL EVENTS



## Student Pre-conference Session and Luncheon

Monday, June 22 | Noon-2:30 p.m. | Clifton 102A

This session, open to students attending the conference, will feature a guest panel of rural health providers to share their experiences and highlights of working in rural communities.

## Welcome Reception

Monday, June 22 | 5:30-7:30 p.m. | Windsor Ballroom

Join fellow attendees to kick off the IRHA 28th Annual Conference. This networking event is open to registered attendees and offers a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and meet new partners before sessions begin.



## Exhibit Hall

Tuesday, June 23 | Open All Day | Hoosier Ballroom

Explore the Exhibit Hall to connect with vendors, partners, and organizations advancing rural healthcare. Then, join us for the Exhibitor Reception from 3:15–5:00 p.m. to network with peers and exhibitors in a collaborative setting.



## 22nd Annual 5K Run/Walk

Tuesday, June 23 | 6:00 a.m. | Event Center Entrance

Choose between a 5K route or a 1.5-mile walk option and enjoy a fun, energizing morning with fellow rural health champions.



## **Beyond Treatment: Supporting Patients Through Integrated Case Management**

### **Truman 201**

**Zak Bushue, MSW, LCSW | Valley Professionals Community Health Center (VPCHC)**

**Jade Schuman, BS, MS | Valley Professionals Community Health Center (VPCHC)**

What "integrated case management in behavioral health" looks like in practice. Practical strategies health providers can adopt to strengthen patient support systems. Evidence of improved outcomes when treatment is paired with case management. To inspire rural FQHCs to innovate behavioral health.

## **Close the Gap and Save Your Bottom Line**

### **Roosevelt 202**

**Khrista Boster, MBA | Woodlawn Health**

Woodlawn Health needed a way to grow their services in a small rural area. Working on two EMR's and no way to track a patient journey, it seemed impossible to work on outmigration. However, through teamwork and interdepartmental partnerships, the organization launched the Close the Gap Initiative

## **Small Teams, Big Impact: Onboarding Strategies that Strengthen Compliance and Safety in Rural Facilities**

### **Kennedy 203**

**Tawnya Brock, BSN, RN, BSPH | Advent Health**

When turnover occurs, effective onboarding can mean the difference between compliance and recurring deficiencies. This session explores how small teams can build a culture of safety and compliance through intentional onboarding, using scalable, practical tools that fit any facility size.

## **Behavioral Health and the Judiciary**

### **Eisenhower 204**

**Brittany Kelly, JD, MSW, LSW | Office of Behavioral Health, Office of Judicial Administration**

**Stephanie Campbell, JD | Fountain County Circuit Court**

Judge Campbell, Fountain County judge and Chair of Indiana's Behavioral Health Committee, and Brittany Kelly, State Court Behavioral Health Administrator, will discuss the unique challenges rural communities face in connecting people to care and the importance of strong relationships between the judiciary and healthcare providers.

## **RHCs Billing and Cost Reporting Changes**

### **Johnson 206**

**Charles James | North American HMS**

Learn new billing methods for vaccines, CPT II codes, and Social Determinants of Health in RHCs.

## **Building a Client-Centered Continuum: Measurable, Cross-Sector Collaboration in Rural Behavioral Health is Possible**

**Truman 201**

**Jason Haglund, MS, CADC | Rural Policy Partners**

**Renee Schulte, MA, LMHC | Rural Policy Partners**

Attendees will leave with practical steps to begin convening local cross-sector partnerships, ideas for leveraging existing resources, and strategies for demonstrating measurable outcomes that support sustainable rural behavioral health improvements.

## **Elevating Revenue Cycle Performance: How Leadership Alignment Drives Cash Collections**

**Roosevelt 202**

**Amy Graham, MBA, CRHCP | Stroudwater**

Elevating revenue cycle performance-and ultimately improving cash collections-requires more than process fixes. This session will explore how engaged leadership at every level can directly influence efficiency, accountability, and financial outcomes.

## **The Power of Partnership: Unlocking Potential through Strategic Partnerships**

**Kennedy 203**

**Maddie Haffner | Parkview Health**

**Greg Johnson, DO | Parkview Health**

**John Bowen | Parkview Health**

**Lainie Dean | UpVia Health**

This session explores how rural health systems can use strategic partnerships to expand services, strengthen market position, and drive sustainable community impact through collaborative, mission-aligned growth models.

## **Managing Social Services In Healthcare**

**Eisenhower 204**

**Nicole Adams, PhD, RN | Purdue University**

**Mike Shepard | Leto Tech, PBC**

It is widely accepted that addressing the social needs of patients is crucial to improving their health. In this presentation, we will discuss the challenges of social referrals, identify best practices and the new innovations making this process easier for healthcare practices.

## **RHC Surveys and Compliance**

**Johnson 206**

**Amanda Dennison, CPC, MBA, CRHCP, RH-CBS | Blue & Co., LLC**

Is your RHC truly "survey ready"? Whether you are getting ready for your first RHC survey, or ensuring ongoing compliance for your next survey, this session will walk you through the survey process, and highlight the most common deficiencies cited. Attendees will gain practical strategies for creating a culture of constant readiness, establishing robust policy and procedures, and managing the self-evaluation process to ensure compliance with RHC requirements.

## **Building Sustainable Surgical Access Through Rotating Surgeon Models**

**Truman 201**

**Quinn Wang, MD | Doctors in Network**

Consistent collaboration between Rotating Surgeons and fixed perioperative teams can enhance care quality and reduce outcome variability in rural hospitals. Structured perioperative workflows provide additional support for safe and sustainable surgical services.

## **Connected Care and Sustainability: Leveraging RPM and APCM to Strengthen Rural Health**

**Roosevelt 202**

**Kathy Boedeker, | Carematix, Inc**

As Indiana's rural health organizations expand connected care through new funding opportunities such as the RHTF, it's essential to ensure these programs are both clinically effective and financially sustainable. This session explores how RHCs can create scalable revenue-positive care models

## **Value-based Care Facility Design: Spaces That Support Population Health in Rural Communities**

**Kennedy 203**

**Andy Mitchell, AIA, ACHA | MKM architecture + design**

**Zach Benedict, AIA, LEED AP, RID | MKM architecture + design**

**Allison Vanderhorst, EDAC | MKM architecture + design**

This presentation examines how facility design can support value-based care delivery in rural settings, exploring spatial strategies that facilitate care coordination, chronic disease management, team-based care, and community health programming.

## **Telehealth Compliance for Rural Providers: Navigating Legal Risks & Maximizing Benefits**

**Eisenhower 204**

**Suzannah Wilson Overholt | Amundsen Davis**

During this presentation, Health Care Attorney Suzannah Wilson Overholt will review the key legal issues affecting rural telemedicine and provide practical strategies to minimize risk while leveraging the benefits of virtual care.

## **Maximizing RHC Revenue**

**Johnson 206**

**Charles James | North American HMS**

Go beyond the basics with advanced RHC billing topics-learn how to handle complex claims, specialty services, global billing periods, and navigate carve-outs and commingling.

## **Bringing Medicare Support Close to Home: SHIP's Partnership with Rural Health Providers**

**Truman 201**

**Megan Rogers | SHIP**

Discover how Indiana SHIP partners with rural health providers to expand MK outreach in underserved communities. Learn how our collaboration with Greene County Hospital brings counselors directly into local hospital-offering free, unbiased guidance on MK plan options and helping community members.

## **Moving from Closure Risk to Resilience**

**Roosevelt 202**

**Jeff Sommer | Stroudwater Associates**

Provide a framework for timely evaluation of strategic risk, including risk of hospital closure. Gain insight into key metrics to analyze risk and strategies to move toward resilience.

## **Top 10 Employment Law Issues Facing Healthcare Employers in 2026**

**Kennedy 203**

**Amy Adolay, Attorney | Krieg DeVault**

**Jenna Shives, Attorney | Krieg DeVault**

Healthcare employers, like all employers, have obligations to provide lactation breaks and accommodations to pregnant employees. The U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are showing an increased focus on ensuring employers are in compliance.

## **Pathways to Rural Practice: How AHEC Scholars Shape the Future Health Workforce**

**Eisenhower 204**

**Jennifer Taylor, DHEd, MPH | Indiana University School of Medicine**

**Jeff Hartz, MA | East Indiana Area Health Education Center**

**Jackie Mathis, MS | Landsbaum Center for Health Education**

Indiana AHEC Scholars prepares students for primary care in rural and underserved areas. This session shares statewide strategies for engaging students in rural communities and shows how the program strengthens their pathways into rural health practice.

## **RHC Key Performance Indicators; Benchmarking for RHC Success**

**Johnson 206**

**Charles James | North American HMS**

Discover the best practices that drive successful RHC operations-from financial management and patient policies to key performance indicators that improve efficiency and satisfaction.

## Connecting Care in Rural Communities: Paramedicine and Maternal-Child Health

Truman 201

Jessica Martin, RN | IU Health System Health Solutions

Tammy Fitter, RN, BSN | IU Health

Courtney Ellis, Paramedic | Keeping Pace/IU Health

This session examines how implementation of a rural community paramedicine program is strengthened by extensive community engagement and collaboration, improves health outcomes for rural mothers and infants, and decreases service gaps in maternal care deserts.

## Rural Hospitals 2026: Navigating the Legal and Financial Shifts Ahead

Roosevelt 202

Brandon Shirley, Attorney | Krieg DeVault, LLP

Brian Heaton, Attorney | Krieg DeVault, LLP

Major policy and reimbursement changes are coming for rural hospitals in 2026. From Medicaid reforms in the Big Beautiful Bill Act to Medicare payment updates and evolving 340B oversight, this session will help leaders understand what's ahead and how to position their organizations for success.

## How to Build Sustainable Rural Physician Staffing Models - Tips from a Physician

Kennedy 203

Joseph Pazona, MD | VirtuCare

Recruiting physicians is a challenge. Physicians are burned out. Learn to build staffing models that providers actually want to stay in-combining smart workload design with innovative care delivery.

## How Rural Health systems can use podcasts to power their content and AI searches

Eisenhower 204

Khrista Boster, MBA | Woodlawn Health

Bill Klaproth | Doctor Podcasting

The success of rural and small healthcare marketing teams lies in their ability to repurpose content for various uses. A podcast is one of the tools that rural teams can utilize to repurpose content and adapt to AI-driven searches. Learn all the tips and tricks.

## Building Better Access and Patient Experience in Underserved Rural Communities

Johnson 206

Bill Ledger, AIA, ACHA, NCARB, EDAC, LEED AP, LSSGB | Design Collaborative

Joyce Geis, FNP-BC, MHA, FACHE | Rush Memorial Hospital

Discover how Rush Memorial Hospital and Design Collaborative redefined rural healthcare through the new Milroy Clinic-balancing budget, culture, and community to create a welcoming and efficient space that improves access, fosters trust, and sets a new standard for rural care.

# SPONSORSHIPS

The Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) invites organizations to support its Annual Conference, the premier event of the year for Indiana's rural health community. This highly anticipated gathering offers sponsors an unparalleled opportunity to connect with healthcare leaders, providers, and stakeholders from across the state.

With several sponsorship levels available, your organization can choose the level of involvement that best aligns with your goals, gaining valuable visibility and making a meaningful impact on rural health. Join us in advancing healthcare in rural Indiana by becoming a proud sponsor of this flagship event.

*Each sponsorship, other than the speaker sponsors, receives **one** complimentary registration.*

**Break Sponsor - \$1,000**

**Internet Sponsor - \$1,000 (limit 1)**

**Awards Sponsor - \$1,500 (limit 1)**

**Student Network Event - \$2,000**

**Breakfast Sponsor (Tuesday or Wednesday) - \$2,500**

**Lunch Sponsor (Tuesday or Wednesday) - \$2,500**

**Speaker Sponsor - \$7,500 (limit 2)**

**Exclusive Speaker Sponsor - \$10,000 (limit 1)**

**[Learn more about each sponsorship opportunity here.](#)**

# HOTEL INFORMATION

## French Lick Resort

From the time they were established in the mid-1800s, **French Lick Resort's** grand hotels have been a preferred destination for guests looking to relax and rejuvenate in comfort and style. The resort offers activities and facilities for the entire family - with everything from pools and bowling to shopping and a spa, there is something for everyone to enjoy.



## Make Your Reservation Today!

Hotel Room Block Deadline – **May 25, 2026**

Room rate: \$169/night

Book your room before the block sells out!

**BOOK NOW**

Group Code: 0626IRH

Attendee Password: 0626IRH

*(group code and password are the same for everyone; once logged in, click the "book now" button on the group landing page)*

Or call 1(844)-241-6361 and use contract code 0626IRH

*Reminder: IRHA does not cancel your French Lick room reservations for you, and French Lick does not cancel registrations to attend the IRHA Annual Conference. You must contact both organizations, or you will be responsible for fees incurred by both organizations.*

## French Lick Cuisine

With everything from **1875 Steak House** to **O'Hana Hawaiian Grill**, there is food available to suit every pallet. Whether you stay on site or visit the town, you'll be sure to find something to enjoy.

**DINING OPTIONS**





The Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) is a nonprofit organization representing a diverse statewide membership consisting of individuals and organizations committed to the improvement of health and resources for rural Hoosiers. IRHA seeks to provide a meaningful forum for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the health and safety of rural communities in Indiana. IRHA seeks to provide educational programs that focus on the unique needs of the residents of rural Indiana and the providers who serve them. IRHA also works to educate the public on relevant issues and focus unified efforts to bring about the necessary changes in public and private policies to ensure that all rural Hoosiers have access to quality healthcare in their own communities.

[www.indianaruralhealth.org](http://www.indianaruralhealth.org)