



NRADAN, INC.

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The Rural

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NOTES FROM JOE AMICO NRADAN PRESIDENT

Welcome from the NRADAN Board

We are excited about changes in NRADAN and the Rural Institute. If you attended the Rural Institute in June 2025, you might have noticed some of them. We dropped breakfast in the Commons and offered continental breakfast in the plenary room of the Student Union. We hosted a barbeque one night and offered substantial snacks on Sunday night and before the variety show. Otherwise, you had a chance explore Menomonie's restaurants on your own. This saved money, kept registration costs down, and ensured that NRADAN will have enough cash to make it another year!

There are two other innovations this year: *The Rural* newsletter and *The Rural Impact Series*. The Rural newsletter is slated to come out bi-monthly. We welcome your suggestions for articles. The *Rural Impact Series* offers low-cost webinars on timely topics by nationally recognized speakers. Please join us for the next *Rural Impact* webinar and earn a CEU from NAADAC.

We're exploring other ways to make NRADAN and The Rural Institute even better. Some of our discussions have involved trying out other locations, but we need feedback about that. Would you still attend if we moved to a different location, in or out of Wisconsin? Could you pay a bit more if dorm rooms weren't available, but we could get a good discount at a popular resort? We need your help, so will be sending a survey about this and other ideas. Please complete it. We really need your thoughts and feedback. Please see the link to the survey below!

Thanks for all you do for NRADAN and the people you serve,
Joe Amico, President
revjoe@tabernaclechurch.org

The Rural Institute Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete our survey. The purpose is to gather feedback from current and past participants to help us with planning the 2027 Rural Institute! [Survey Link](#)

The Rural Impact Series: 12 - 1 p.m. Central Time on Zoom

- **March 4, 2026: *Leveraging Opioid Settlement Funds for Rural Impact***
- **Speaker: Lauren Carr, MSW, MPH**
- **Lauren Carr** is the Opioid Settlement Advisor for Vital Strategies' Overdose Prevention Program, seconded to the Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo). A native of Mayfield, Kentucky, and a graduate of Murray State University with a degree in Organizational Communication, Lauren was called to advocacy after losing her brother, Justin, to a fentanyl overdose in 2011. Since then, she has led youth prevention and harm reduction initiatives, helping establish one of Western Kentucky's first syringe exchange programs and the Mayfield-Graves County ASAP Youth Council. In her current role, she supports counties across the Commonwealth by providing technical assistance on the use of opioid settlement funds to advance best practices and evidence-based strategies that save lives and strengthen communities.
- **This session will provide** an overview of opioid settlement funds, including allowable uses, common challenges, and best practices emerging at the local level. Participants will hear examples of how counties and rural communities are using funds to address gaps in prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports, with an emphasis on transparency, sustainability, and community-driven decision-making.
- **Sign up today! URL:** <http://donorbox.org/events/896172>

What's Next on the Rural Impact Series?

- **May 6, 2026: *The Medical Impact of Cannabinoids***
- **Speaker: Kirk Moberg, MD, PhD**
- **Dr. Moberg** has been active in the field of addiction medicine for over thirty years. Formally trained in internal medicine, Dr. Moberg is board-certified in internal medicine and addiction medicine. Although retired from clinical practice, he

remains a member of the teaching faculty at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

- **This session** will explore the medical impact of cannabinoids, which encompass a variety of plant-derived and synthetic compounds that are governed by a complex, multi-layered system of federal and state regulations. This session will review a variety of cannabinoid products and their medical impact.
- **Sign up today! URL:** <http://donorbox.org/events/898703>

Member Spotlight: *Paul Mladnick*





Paul Mladnick

I believe in the wisdom and the fellowship of the Twelve Steps. By the grace of God and my mother's prayers, I am clean and sober today.

Paul is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a Board Approved Clinical Consultant through the International Gambling and Gaming Counselor Certification Board. Paul's as an alcohol/drug counselor has spanned over 40 years. Today, he is an Independent Contractor at the Bridges and Pathways Counseling Service in Forest Lake, Minnesota. He helps people with substance abuse, problem gambling, as well as relationship and interpersonal struggles, including anger management.

Paul and his spouse, Becky, enjoy going to movies and the theater. They also like traveling and spending time



with their children, stepchildren and 8 grandchildren.

Paul is a loyal Minnesota Vikings and Minnesota Twins fan, but he and his wife attend a variety of sports events. They also appreciate the Ellsworth, Wisconsin Cheese Curd Festival where Paul's stepson, Alex, was the champion of the cheese curd eating competition for 10 consecutive years.

Mike Early, Paul Mladnick and Joe Amico at the Rural

Why is The Rural important to you?

The Rural Institute offers evidence-based training at an affordable price. It provides an opportunity for camaraderie with other professionals from across the country. I agree with something one of our past participants said -- that the Rural Institute is "summer camp for counselors"!

What do you bring to The Rural Institute?

Part of what I bring to the Rural is the history. Mike Early, Larry Monson, and I co-founded the National Rural Institute, but it was Larry Monson's brainchild. The first Rural was going to be held in 1984 at Mt. Senario College in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, but that event was cancelled due to low registration. We tried again in 1985, and the first National Rural Institute was held at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. It was a great success and has been held annually ever since. The Rural Institute moved to the University of Wisconsin - Stout in 1998 and has been operating there ever since.

I also serve on the Board of Directors for the National Rural Alcohol Drug Abuse Network, Inc. (NRADAN), which oversees the National Rural Institute on alcohol, drugs and addictions.



The Rural is the **ONLY** National Conference with an LGBTQ+ Track!

In this chaotic time, services and resources for the queer community are drying up. Folks feel stressed and overwhelmed. The NALGAP Sponsored National Rural Institute on Alcohol, Drugs and Addiction is the only national conference offering a full LGBTQ+ track.

Please join us at The Rural, June 7-11, at UW-Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin!

Scholarships are available as are CEU's from NAADAC. You can earn up to 23 CEU hours in person during the conference AND for 90 days after the conference, you can go online, attend the recorded sessions, and get up to 40 additional CEU hours! The Conference is hybrid, so if you cannot attend in person, you can attend virtually and still earn CEUs! ***What a bargain!***

Long time NALGAP Board member and Past President, Joe Amico, is the chair of this conference. The LGBTQ+ track will be led by two trans persons and a Two Spirit person. Come join us. Register and apply for a scholarship today at: <https://the-rural.org/services/>

Speaking of Scholarships: A Quick Update

Past scholarship recipients may still be eligible for partially funded scholarships, and this year we are adding another feature. If you are applying for a scholarship, please let us know what you are able to contribute to the cost of attendance.

As many of you know, in the past, we were able to offer many full scholarships. These will still be available, but we will be prioritizing those who have not yet received one.

If you have experienced the Rural and found it helpful to your growth as a professional, we need your help. **When you apply for a scholarship, please let us know what you can afford to contribute.** We understand that financial hardship is something we all face in this industry, but you can be part of the financial solution by contributing to your success and ours. Please email with questions, and we'll do all we can to help you plan for a successful rural attendance.



Come and Present at the Rural!

Join us June 7 - 11, 2026 in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Share your expertise alongside leading national experts in Substance use and addiction treatment!

Present a Track

Tracks consist of four one-hour sessions on a single day, with each session building on the one it follows. Tracks are great for sharing in-depth information on complex topics!

Share a Special Topic

Special topics are one-hour, stand-alone sessions. They're perfect for a subject overview or to share tips and tricks related to addiction treatment.

The National Rural Alcohol & Drug Abuse Network, Inc. (NRADAN)

NRADAN, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused on promoting excellence in rural America by reducing the incidence and prevalence of substance-use and addictive disorders. NRADAN provides continuing education for professionals who serve rural clients, and resources for allied healthcare professionals, communities, and programs which serve rural communities.

Feedback from Mike Jamison, a Rural Institute Participant

"I have attended numerous workshops in the past 45 years. The Rural Institute is probably the best 3.5-day workshop I have ever attended. The atmosphere is a more casual, friendly type. I found the participants, lecturers, and staff friendly and welcoming. I recommend the Rural Institute to anyone looking for a different learning experience!" -- Mike Jamison, retired Minnesota LADC

Tell us what you thought about the Rural Institute! We'd love to share.



We have moved. Please visit our new website: www.the-rural.org!

Please consider a one-time or recurrent donation to the Rural! This conference is one of the only professional educational opportunities focused on providers in rural areas!

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- **Contact us if you are interested in serving on a committee!**
- **We are also interested in what you're seeing in the rural treatment arena. Please contact DowningSherri@gmail.com to share your news!**

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The National Rural Alcohol & Drug Abuse Network, Inc.

Celebrating 41+ years of promoting excellence throughout rural America

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