



Illinois Health and Hospital Association

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\*\*MEDIA AVAILABILITY\*\***

***Illinois Health and Hospital Association to Host  
Small and Rural Hospitals Annual Meeting: Inspiring Connections***

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) will host its Small and Rural Hospitals Annual Meeting entitled “Inspiring Connections” on June 16-17 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

More than 100 healthcare leaders from across Illinois have registered for the event, which features expert presenters from Illinois and around the country who will address key healthcare topics with a focus on strategies for rural hospital and health leaders.

A media availability will be held on **June 16 from 10 – 11 a.m. at the Crowne Plaza at 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway in Springfield**. Media will have an opportunity to conduct interviews and film b-roll of the event.

During the two-day event, programming will focus on addressing workforce challenges, achieving growth and sustainability, highlighting resources to support rural hospitals, and sharing ideas on how to better serve patients and communities in rural areas. Illinois’ small and rural healthcare leaders will also have the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions centered on recruitment and retention strategies and achieving health equity. For more information about the event [click here](#).

The keynote speaker for the event is **Paul Keckley, PhD, Managing Editor of *The Keckley Report***. He is a frequent speaker and advisor to healthcare organizations. Keckley focuses on long-term growth, sustainability and advocacy strategies. He is the managing editor of his weekly newsletter, *The Keckley Report*, and has published three books and 250 articles. Leading up to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Keckley facilitated sessions between the White House Office of Health Reform and major health industry trade groups to provide sought-after private sector input on the legislation.

Other speakers include:

**Rich Bluni, RN, Senior Director, Huron Consulting and National Speaker and Author**

Bluni is one of Huron's most sought-after speakers and the bestselling author of several award-winning books: *Inspired Nurse*, *Inspired Journal*, *Inspired Nurse Too* and *Oh No...Not More of That Fluffy Stuff!: The Power of Engagement*.

**Jessi Gold, MD, MS, Assistant Professor and Director of Wellness, Engagement and Outreach, Department of Psychiatry, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis**

Dr. Gold is a nationally recognized expert on healthcare worker mental health and burnout, particularly during the pandemic. She also focuses on using social media and media for mental health advocacy and the overlap between pop culture and mental health. Dr. Gold is an outpatient psychiatrist, seeing faculty, staff, and hospital employees and their dependents.

**Tom Morris, MPA, Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

Morris oversees the work of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, which is charged with advising the HHS Secretary on rural health issues. The office, which has an annual budget of \$317 million, administers a range of research and capacity-building grant programs that serve rural communities.

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