



October UPEDA Agenda
October 17th, 2025
Location – Marquette – Holiday Inn
Theme – Health Care in the Upper Peninsula

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan faces unique healthcare challenges shaped by geographic isolation, workforce shortages, aging populations, and limited resources. This workshop brings together healthcare providers, community leaders, and policy experts to explore the realities of delivering quality care across this rural region.

Participants will engage in solution-focused discussions on overcoming access barriers, improving care coordination, and strengthening the rural health workforce. The session will highlight innovative models and local success stories from across the U.P., providing actionable insights and replicable strategies. Whether you're a healthcare practitioner, administrator, policymaker, or advocate, this workshop offers valuable knowledge and collaboration opportunities to help sustain and improve rural health in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

8:30 Registration and Networking

9:00-9:45 Opening Remarks – Introduction by Zach Houtala

Melissa Holmquist, CEO, UP Health Plan

9:45-10:00 Networking Break

10:00- 11:30 Rural Non-Profit Hospital Panel – *Facilitator Kathy Reynolds*

Dennis Smith, Interim CEO, Munising Memorial Hospital

Helen Johnson, CEO, Helen Newberry Joy Hospital

Karen Cheeseman, CEO, Mackinac Straits Hospital

11:30 – 12:00 Lunch

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch Keynote Speaker - Introduction by Zach Houtala

Tonya Darner, CEO, Upper Peninsula Healthcare Systems

1:00- 2:30 Regional Solutions Panel – *Facilitator Christopher Germain*

Elise Bur, Director, Northern Michigan University Center for Rural Health

Mike Fedrizzi, Blue Cross Blue Shield Provider recruitment specialist

Trevor Hodges, CEO, Upper Great Lakes Family Health Center

Katrina Totes, Executive Director, Upper Peninsula Health Care Solutions

2:30 Adjourn