

NEWS RELEASE
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National Conference Puts Amish and Plain Community Members Center Stage

Community Members, Researchers, and Healthcare Practitioners Convene
to Discuss Best Practices in Communications, Access, Delivery and Design

Millersburg, OH – The Center for Appalachia Research in Cancer Education (CARE) announced that registration is open for *Addressing the Health Care Needs of Amish and Plain Communities*, the first ever conference designed by and for Amish and Plain community members, researchers and healthcare providers. The conference is the premier continuing education event for best practice, community-led initiatives that have improved the health of the Amish and Plain communities and will be held April 28 through April 30, 2015 at Mohican State Park Lodge and Conference Center, Perrysville, Ohio. A unique aspect of the conference is the opportunity for participants to engage directly and network with Amish and Plain community members. Continuing education hours for various disciplines will also be offered.

The event will host over a dozen distinguished panelists and speakers comprised of community leaders, physicians, health educators, researchers, community health works and healthcare practitioners. Key speakers include Dr. D.J. McFadden, Holmes County Health Commissioner, physician and Mennonite community member; Jake Beachy and David Kline, church bishops in Holmes County, home of the world's largest Amish settlement; Dr. Melissa Thomas, public health researcher and founder of *Project Hoffnung*, a program aimed at delivering culturally competent outreach, education and breast health services to combat the disproportionately high breast cancer mortality rates among Amish and Mennonite women; and Dr. Joseph F. Donnermeyer, author and professor of rural sociology and environmental social sciences at The Ohio State University.

“Far too often speakers at conferences represent their views of communities of which they are not even a member,” said Margaret Hiermer, CARE board member. “We are excited about the balance we’ve achieved in designing a conference that represents each unique and important voice in providing and accessing culturally competent health care – from the ultimate end-user patient to the funders, agencies, and healthcare service providers.”

Keynote and Plenary Sessions will address:

- Overview of Anabaptist history and culture
- Impact of the social determinants of health on the Amish/Plain culture
- Health Literacy
- Innovative partnerships to bridge the gaps between communities and healthcare delivery organizations
- Cultural competency in healthcare service delivery

- Improving the relationship between hospital systems and the community

Attendees will also have the opportunity to visit the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center and witness the history of the Amish, Mennonites and Hutterites at *Behalt*, one of four cycloramas in North America.

The Conference is hosted by the Center for Appalachia Research in Cancer Education (“CARE”), a community-led nonprofit organization whose mission is to reduce the burden of cancer in Appalachia and rural communities. Lead sponsors and partners include the Ohio affiliates of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Joel Pomerene Hospital and the Ohio Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE).

For more information on the conference program and to register, please visit:

[Bit.ly/amishhealthconference](https://bit.ly/amishhealthconference)

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