



## Rural pediatrics offers unique challenges, rewards

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Steve Schering, Staff Writer

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**Editor's note:** For more coverage of the 2022 AAP National Conference & Exhibition, visit <https://bit.ly/AAPNationalConference2022>.

While navigating barriers to care has been a challenge for many in the medical field, pediatricians such as Betsy M. Peterson, M.D., FAAP, and Claudia K. Preuschoff, M.D., FAAP, often face very different constraints from those of their colleagues in urban settings.

Dr. Peterson, who practices in Beaver Dam, Wis., and Dr. Preuschoff, a pediatrician in Poplar Bluff, Mo., often care for patients who live more than an hour away from their offices.

“In rural areas, we have a lot more barriers,” Dr. Peterson said. “Not only financial, but distance and access to care and how many specialists are available. We have to overcome a lot more barriers in order to provide the high-quality care that we want to provide.”

The two doctors will present “It’s Different out Here: Challenges and Rewards of Providing Pediatric Care in Rural America” (S4520) from 3:30-4:30 p.m. PST Monday, Oct. 10 in room 163 of the convention center.

“We’ll be talking about the joys and challenges of rural pediatrics,” Dr. Preuschoff said. “One of the things I’m really going to emphasize is the importance to build relationships early as you’re starting in rural pediatrics — relationships locally and getting to know those resources because they’re going to look very different in a rural community from say an urban environment. It’s also to build those relationships and resources with your specialists that may be 100, 150, 200, 250 miles away or maybe a helicopter or a plane ride away, so you have them ready when you need them.”

Drs. Peterson and Preuschoff often act as consultants for family practitioners and community services, and provide mental health care, nutrition advice, parenting education, home health and more to their families.

They also must plan for medical care and visits well in advance for patients they may see only twice a year, as well as schedule prescriptions and services that may not be available immediately.

Growing up in a small town and having practiced rural pediatrics for 17 years, Dr. Peterson said she enjoys helping the children in her community and values the connections she's made throughout the years.

"Going to the grocery store, parents know me. Or when I go to the county fair I have to look for each project that the kids have made," Dr. Peterson said. "Even going to the children's musical, I see my patients everywhere."

Attendees also will gain an understanding of how local culture affects the health care of children in rural communities.

"High-quality, evidence-based care can be delivered in any setting, whether it's rural, urban or suburban," Dr. Preuschoff said. "It really depends on the priorities of the pediatrician who is delivering the care. I would love for people to have an understanding of what it's like to practice rural medicine and spark that interest and alleviate that fear."

As far as other things in store for attendees?

"Probably some pictures of my horses," Dr. Preuschoff said.

*For more information on the National Conference, visit <https://www.aapexperience.org>. View the conference schedule at <https://www.eventscribe.net/2022/AAPexperience/>.*