



The 13th EURIPA Rural Health Forum was held in Lincoln, UK, from 20th – 22nd June 2024. The title of the conference was "Tackling Health Inequalities in Rural and Remote Communities" and was organised under the patronage of the Lincoln International Institute for Rural Health (LIIRH), University of Lincoln, England, UK. Professor Mark Gussy, Director of the Lincoln Institute for Rural and Coastal Health (LIRCH) Global Professor of Rural Health and Social Care was the co- chair of the EURIPA Forum Organising Committee along with Visiting Professor John Wynn-Jones, EURIPA past president. Helene Markham-Jones from the Lincoln Institute for Rural and Coastal Health and Jane Randall-Smith, EURIPA Executive Secretary were deeply involved in the successful organisation of the meeting.

One hundred and twenty two delegates from 17 European countries attended, and this is a record number for EURIPA, 43 abstracts were presented and published in the international indexed journal "Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine" (I.F.: 2.1) which also endorsed the event : <https://advances.umw.edu.pl/en/abstract-book-euripa2024>.

The Forum took place in the splendid campus of the University of Lincoln, and the Forum venue included the new Lincoln Medical School.

There were plenary sessions as well as two parallel sessions which included oral presentations, workshops and posters.

In the opening ceremony we had the privilege of hearing from Dr Sunil Hindocha, Medical Director, Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board & Chair of the Clinical and Care Directorate, Lincolnshire, Dr. John Wynn-Jones, EURIPA past president and Visiting Professor in Rural Health of the College of Social Science, University of Lincoln, Dr. Oleg Kravchenko, EURIPA president, Dr. Ferdinando Petrazzuoli, 13th EURIPA Forum Scientific Committee Co-Chair and Professor Karl Dayson, Pro Vice Chancellor of Research and Knowledge Exchange, University of Lincoln.

During the first day there was a panel discussion on developing a [Forum Statement](#); the EURIPA Lincoln Statement 2024 - Tackling Rural Health Inequity in Europe, was endorsed by the Forum delegates at the closing ceremony and highlighted the key messages of the Forum. The statement outlines the direction that EURIPA will be taking and the scope to explore all 7 issues further in the statement in greater detail in the future.

The development of the statement was led by Dr Veronika Rasic with input from Forum participants and rural academics.

In the morning of the second day, Friday, the 21st of June, the delegates went on a visit to the Marisco Medical Practice at Mablethorpe, a rural and coastal GP practice. Mablethorpe is a coastal community facing the greatest health inequalities in England. The local GP partner, Dr Lowe, gave a passionate presentation about the challenges they face in meeting the needs of the community. An innovative community based centre, the Campus for Future Living, is being developed next door to the practice. It aims to make health and wellbeing more accessible by providing a welcoming space for the community. Delegates also visited the Future Living facilities and symbolically planted the EURIPA Tree.

On the afternoon of the same day the keynote addresses were given by:

Dr Pauline Wilson, Consultant Physician/ Associate Medical Director, NHS Shetland on *Credential in rural and remote health: Unscheduled and urgent care. Quality-assured learning: Equipping doctors, assuring employers and benefitting rural communities.*

Dr Toni Dedeu, Senior Advisor on Integrated Primary Health Care, WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care on *Addressing rural health inequities: Strategies and policy implications.*

Over the years EURIPA has built links with the WHO Europe Centre for Primary Care and there was a new awareness that we needed to reach out to the other more disadvantaged countries to the east.

A welcome was given by the Mayor of Lincoln (819th Mayor of Lincoln!) during the Welcome Reception.

In the Forum the main topics addressed were Outreach/Community, Workforce, Enhancing Primary Care, Rural care: miscellaneous and Daily Rural Clinical Practice.

EURIPA also brought academics from across EUROPE together to plan to establish an academic rural health network (research and education). A special link has been built with the Lincoln Institute of Rural and Coastal Care. A workshop titled "*Creating a European dialogue with academics (Research and Education) across Europe with the aim of developing a working network to meet the needs of rural, coastal and remote communities across Europe* " addressed the obstacles to the academisation of European rural primary care and how to take it forward.

The Forum was a success in terms of both participation and scientific content. Key messages included the challenges for the rural health academic departments.

In this Forum EURIPA began to explore further the different geographical elements of rural, such as coastal, high mountain, remote etc. and how the wider determinants of health impact on the health of individuals and communities.

We concluded the Forum by acknowledging that EURIPA is maturing into a significant European organisation that is being increasingly listened to across Europe.

The Forum ended with a presentation by Alexander Bauer Dr. Project Manager Research Coordinator at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany to announce that next year's 14th EURIPA Rural Health Forum will be held in Germany in the city of Wittenberg at the Halle-Wittenberg, University from 26th - 28th June 2025. It will be hosted by the German Institute for General Practice and Family Medicine University of Halle-Wittenberg.

Prof. Thomas Frese Head of Department of the Institute of General Practice at the Medical Faculty of the University Halle-Wittenberg and Prof. Dr. med. Markus Herrmann MPH. M.A. from the Institute of General Medicine at the Medical Faculty of the Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg will be involved in the organisation of the Conference. The title of the Forum will be: *Rural Reformation: Meeting Wellbeing and Healthcare Needs in Rural Communities.*

