Responding to the shrinking and aging farm population, Congress has broadened approaches to stimulating growth and innovation in the food and agriculture sector through recent Farm Bills by including added funding for new and beginning farmer and rancher programs. Along with increasing access to markets, capital, and land, many programs focus on building human capital in the farm sector through training and education. These rural and workforce development programs have not, however, considered how social issues at the household level such as health insurance influence these initiatives or the role of health insurance as a salient tool for supporting rural economic development. Dr. Inwood leads the national USDA-NIFA-funded project Health Insurance Rural Economic Development and Agriculture (HIREDnAg). The goal of this multi-disciplinary project is to understand how health insurance affects economic development and quality of life in the agriculture sector. Dr. Inwood will present new research findings examining the connections between health insurance and risk management, farm viability, farmland access, and implications for efforts to grow the next generation of farmers and support rural economic development.