

April 22, 2020

Rural Health Information during COVID-19

Dear Rural Stakeholders,



To continue to have consistent and efficient communication to provide rural health stakeholders with the information needed during this global pandemic, here are updates from the rural health programs at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

As mentioned previously, for critical information relating to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we recommend that you regularly monitor information on the [Iowa Department of Public Health COVID-19 Page](#). In addition, discover the latest resources, maps and information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) on coronavirus.iowa.gov.

For additional resources and updates, see the following pages. Please reach out for technical assistance and for any questions you may have.

We are an ongoing resource for you.

Best,

Rural Health Programs

Iowa Department of Public Health

For questions, contact:

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Resources:

[Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health - COVID-19 Resources](#) offers information and resources to help agricultural communities address the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes links to prevention and preparedness tips and videos, and financial resources.

[HHS/ASPR COVID-19 Clinical Rounds: A Peer to Peer Virtual Community of Practice](#) offers Project ECHO webinars on COVID-19 critical care, and emergency department and emergency medical services (EMS) care. Includes a list of links to previously recorded webcasts and other resources focused on COVID-19 related topics.

Podcast dated April 13, 2020 found on [COVID-19: Health Care in Rural America](#) website focuses on how rural areas are taking action in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Looks at public health responses, volunteer activities, the effects of social distancing, and healthcare workforce issues. Features Alana Knudson, co-director of the Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, and physician Dr. James Hotz.

[COVID-19 OPEN Call Series](#) offers weekly Project ECHO sessions presenting information to mobilize and strengthen the public health response to COVID-19. Covers best practices, developing practices, and lessons learned.

If you were unable to attend the ***Confronting Rural America's Health Crisis: BPC Rural Health Task Force Recommendations panel*** discussion, you can find a recording of the panel discussion and the full report [here](#).

Recent News:

Apr 21, 2020 -- [RHS: Direct Loan Payment Deferrals for the Community Facilities Direct Loan Program](#): Notice from the Rural Housing Service of a temporary policy allowing borrowers with direct loans from the Community Facilities Program that are having temporary cash flow issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic to request payment deferrals for up to one year. The policy is effective May 12, 2020 and allows payment deferrals requests to be submitted until September 30, 2020.

Apr 21, 2020 -- A rural hospital in West Virginia closed in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, making it more difficult for residents to receive care in their community. [Rural Hospitals Are Facing Financial Ruin and Furloughing Staff During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) discusses how COVID-19 exacerbated existing challenges for rural hospitals, as many have had to cancel elective procedures, furloughing employees to save money.

Apr 21, 2020 -- The U.S. Senate passed the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, or the COVID-19 3.5 relief package, which provides \$484 billion to support small businesses, hospitals and enhance COVID-19 testing, including \$225 million in direct

funds to rural health clinics. The House will vote on the bill April 23, 2020. To read more, see [Senate Passes \\$484 Billion Coronavirus Relief Package](#)

Apr 20, 2020 -- [Livestream Conversation Offers First-Hand Accounts of Broadband Challenges During Coronavirus Pandemic](#) summarizes the first Daily Yonder/National Rural Assembly Livestream Conversation on rural broadband, featuring leaders from a school district in Central Texas, a hospital in a Washington tribal community, a community nonprofit in Mississippi, and groups serving rural youth in Vermont. Includes a recording of the webinar, discusses challenges to rural broadband access and highlights how they are responding to COVID-19.

Apr 19, 2020 -- A mobile health unit, named the Taking Hope, Recovery, Integrated care and Vitality Everywhere (THRIVE) bus, travels through rural counties in Georgia to provide behavioral services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bus is run by CarePartners and provides COVID-19 screenings, mental health screenings, and even delivers food to families in need. To read more, see [Bus Brings Behavioral Health Care to Rural Georgia Families](#)

Apr 19, 2020 -- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance to areas with low COVID-19 incidence recommending healthcare providers coordinate with public health officials and review the availability of resources before reopening non-essential healthcare services. This is part of Phase 1 in the Trump Administration's Guidelines for Opening Up America Again. To read more, see [CMS Issues Recommendations to Re-Open Health Care Systems in Areas with Low Incidence of COVID-19](#)

Apr 19, 2020 -- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced new regulations to require nursing homes inform residents and their families of COVID-19 cases in their facilities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also provided a reporting tool to nursing homes so they can more effectively track and respond to the disease. To read more, see [Trump Administration Announces New Nursing Homes COVID-19 Transparency Effort](#)

Upcoming Funding Opportunities and Deadlines:

[Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response program funding opportunity:](#) Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, HRSA received \$15M to allocate to tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian health organizations, and health service providers to tribes. The funding will provide support for the Tribes to prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19 in rural communities. Tribes can request up to \$300K in funding for COVID-19 related activities. For this funding opportunity, the System for Award Management (SAM) registration requirements will be relaxed for applicants at the time of submission in Grants.gov. Current registrants in SAM, with active registrations expiring before May 16, 2020, will be provided a one-time extension of 60 days. New applicants are able to submit an application without a valid SAM registration.

Applications are due by May 06, 2020.

DOL National Farmworker Services for Career Training and Housing: The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will make 65 awards with a total investment of nearly \$10 million to assist migrant and seasonal workers and their families. The purpose of the program is to counter chronic unemployment and underemployment for agricultural workers through career and training services, housing assistance, and youth services to help them acquire new skills for higher wages and year-round employment. Eligible applicants are state and local workforce development entities, public institutions of higher education, nonprofits, and tribal governments and entities.

Applications are due by May 14, 2020.

DOJ Preventing Trafficking of Girls: The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) will make four awards with total funding of \$1.8 million to prevent and reduce victimization of girls who are vulnerable to sex trafficking. Priority consideration will be given to applications that address specific challenges in rural communities, and/or that demonstrate benefit to high-poverty areas or persistent poverty counties

Applications are due by May 26, 2020.

NIH Addressing Racial Disparities in Maternal Mortality/Morbidity: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) will make awards of up to \$500,000 year for five-year projects that research the mechanisms underlying racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity and/or testing the efficacy of interventions to reduce these disparities. One specific area of research interest includes strategies to ensure minority women living in rural areas receive preventative obstetric care

Applications are due by May 29, 2020.

CDC Supporting Tribal Public Health Capacity/Coronavirus Response: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will make 574 award with total funding of \$40 million to strengthen the tribal public health system to carry out surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory capacity, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response activities in response to COVID-19.

Applications are due by May 31, 2020.

SAMHSA Treatment, Recovery, and Workforce Support Grants: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will make eight awards with total program funding of \$4 million to support individuals in substance use disorder treatment to live independently and participate in the workforce. Eligible applicants nonprofit entities that provide treatment or recovery services; award recipients must partner with one or more state or local entity. SAMHSA intends to make an equitable distribution of awards in terms of geography (including urban, rural and remote settings) and balance among populations of focus and program size.

Applications are due by June 1, 2020.

HRSA Nursing Workforce Diversity-Eldercare Enhancement Program: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will make two awards of up to \$500,000 each to expand opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the eldercare workforce in rural communities that have disparities in healthcare access and delivery.

Applications are due by June 4, 2020.

HRSA Nurse Practitioner Residency Integration Program: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will make five awards of up to \$1 million/year for a three-year program. The program objective is to expand and/or enhance accredited nurse practitioner residency programs in community-based settings. Eligible applicants include state and local governments, schools of nursing, academic health centers, and nurse-managed health clinics. Priority is given to projects that benefit rural and underserved populations.

Applications are due by June 8, 2020.

HRSA Supporting Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Screening and Intervention Program: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will make one award of \$1 million to reduce alcohol use among pregnant women, and to improve developmental outcomes for children and adolescents with a suspected or diagnosed Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Eligible applicants are any domestic public or private entity, including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and Indian tribes/ tribal organizations.

Applications are due by June 9, 2020.