

February 12, 2021

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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Webinar Opportunity:

Iowa Rural Health Clinic Webinar: The Iowa Office of Rural Health and the Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics are co-hosting a webinar on **Wednesday, March 24 at 12 PM CST**. Gregory Wolf, MBA, Co-founder and President of LilyPad will provide an overview of the Practice Operations National Database (POND). POND is part of a national initiative to focus on the sustainability of the rural primary care delivery system. Read more on the *attached flyer*.

- [REGISTER](#)

COVID-19 Disparities and Vaccine Hesitancy: Moving Toward Health Equity

When: **February 16 at 12 PM CST**

- [REGISTER](#)

Resources:

COVID-19 Vaccination Intent, Perceptions, and Reasons for Not Vaccinating Among Groups Prioritized for Early Vaccination — United States, September and December 2020: Reports on intent to receive the COVID-19 vaccine among different groups and changes in intent between September and December 2020. Includes data for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. To read more, see [COVID-19 Vaccination Intent, Perceptions, and Reasons for Not Vaccinating Among Groups Prioritized for Early Vaccination — United States, September and December 2020](#).

Crises Collide: The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Stability of the Rural Health Safety Net: Examines the vulnerability of rural hospitals based on financial and operational metrics, and the impact of COVID-19 on these hospitals. Discusses declining access to obstetrics and chemotherapy services at rural hospitals. Includes a chart highlighting financial indicators and information on the availability of intensive care beds at rural hospitals by state. To read more, see [Crises Collide: The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Stability of the Rural Health Safety Net](#).

Equitable Recovery and Resilience in Rural America: Reports on geographic, economic, and cultural diversity in rural America, addressing issues of equity, health disparities, and economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Offers recommendations for local and federal action related to broadband internet access, small business development, and collaboration to support rural economic vitality and equity. To read more, see [Equitable Recovery and Resilience in Rural America](#).

In the News:

Feb 10, 2021 -- [New Infections Ease in Rural Counties, but the Number of Deaths Climbs Slightly](#): Analyzes new COVID-19 infection rates between January 31-February 6, 2021. Found a decline in new infections in rural areas for the fourth week in a row, but a slight increase in COVID-related deaths. Reports other key findings comparing rural and urban death rates, red-zone county classifications, and test positivity rates.

Feb 9, 2021 -- [In Hard-Hit Indian Country, Tribes Rapidly Roll Out Vaccines](#): Features stories of successful COVID-19 vaccination efforts in tribal communities across the country. Describes how tribes utilized phones to answer inquiries and book appointments, as well as social media, radio, and direct mail to get the word out. Explains how tribes prioritized elders in distribution efforts and addresses vaccine hesitation within Indian Country.

Feb 9, 2021 -- [Inside a Rural Oregon Hospital's Struggles with COVID-19](#): Features Sky Lakes Medical Center in Oregon that serves rural residents across a 10,000 square mile area. In January, the small facility hit capacity caring for COVID-19 patients. Describes the continuous toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has on healthcare workers and resources.

Feb 8, 2021 -- [California's Smallest County Makes Big Vaccination Gains](#): Highlights efforts by public health workers to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine in rural and remote communities across the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California. Discusses how the inclement weather, vaccine hesitation, and vaccine storage requirements pose challenges.

Feb 5, 2021 -- [A Year After COVID-19's Arrival, Sparsely Populated Communities Have Highest Case Rates](#): Analyzes COVID-19 cases across the U.S. finding the highest infection rates in rural communities, specifically the Native American Lands, LDS Enclaves, and Aging Farmlands. Early on in the pandemic, urban areas had higher rates of infection. Discusses the factors that could have contributed to the increased infection rates in rural and sparsely populated areas.

Feb 5, 2021 -- [Small Clinics Close Gaps in COVID-19 Vaccine Access for Rural Mainers](#): Highlights the small health centers providing COVID-19 vaccinations in rural Maine, discusses how they play a crucial role in reaching vulnerable populations. Explains how these centers are only a small part of the state's vaccination efforts, but they are easier to access and help to fill gaps in distribution.

Feb 2, 2021 -- [Medical Community in Rural Elko Credits Teamwork in COVID Fight](#): Highlights the medical community in rural Elko County, Nevada and their response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, including medical residents who staffed hotline phone banks during the shutdowns in early 2020. Discusses how the local hospital has expanded its mission to be a part of the state's vaccination efforts.