

June 12, 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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Updates:

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced additional distributions from the Provider Relief Fund, distributing \$15 billion to eligible providers that participate in state Medicaid and CHIP programs and have not received a payment and \$10 billion to safety net hospitals. HHS launched an enhanced Provider Relief Fund Payment Portal that will allow eligible Medicaid and CHIP providers to report their annual patient revenue to help determine their payment. To read more, see [HHS Announces Enhanced Provider Portal, Relief Fund Payments for Safety Net Hospitals, Medicaid & CHIP Providers](#)

Resources:

Why Rural Hospitals May Not Survive COVID-19: Non-coronavirus patients avoid seeking emergency medical care in fear of the pandemic, so hospitals are bringing care to their patients through telehealth. Explains how rural patients will benefit from telemedicine after the pandemic and why it is necessary to address technological disparities between rural and urban areas. (May require a free account to view full article). To read, see [Why Rural Hospitals May Not Survive COVID-19](#).

Already in Fiscal Crisis, Rural Hospitals Face COVID-19: Summarizes a May 29, 2020, webinar on rural populations' vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses rural hospital closures, rural demographics and healthcare disparities, access to broadband and telehealth services, and the Pennsylvania Rural Health Model. Includes a recording of the webinar. To read more, see [Already in Fiscal Crisis, Rural Hospitals Face COVID-19](#).

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Recommendations: Re-opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent Non-COVID-19 Healthcare: Offers recommendations for healthcare facilities on how to resume non-emergent, non-COVID-19 healthcare in states and regions entering Phase II of the Opening Up America Again framework. Discusses guidelines related to preserving surge capacity and other facility considerations, COVID-19 testing capacity for patients and staff, personal protective equipment and supplies, workforce availability, and sanitation protocols. To read more, see [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Recommendations: Re-opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent Non-COVID-19 Healthcare](#).

Changes in Medicaid Telehealth Policies Due to COVID-19: Provides an overview of how states have used Medicaid program flexibilities to promote the use of telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Catalog lists state-specific telehealth policies on services and specialties eligible for telehealth delivery, eligible providers, telehealth service modalities, originating site and licensure rules, and reimbursement. To read more, see [Changes in Medicaid Telehealth Policies Due to COVID-19](#).

The Health Center Program and Increasing Access to Comprehensive Care Through the Use of Telehealth: An Update During COVID-19: Describes the increased use of telehealth services by health centers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses how health centers' use of telehealth services have changed since 2016. Compares how rural and urban health centers use telehealth services and technologies. To read more, see [The Health Center Program and Increasing Access to Comprehensive Care Through the Use of Telehealth: An Update During COVID-19](#).

The Importance of Video Visits in the Time of COVID-19: Highlights the importance of video-to-home telemedicine (VTH) for maintaining mental healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses the usefulness of VTH in expanding access to mental healthcare broadly, as well as some of the infrastructure-based limitations that currently exist. To read more, see: [The Importance of Video Visits in the Time of COVID-19](#).

Rural Housing in the Time of COVID-19: Recording of a livestream conversation on the effect of COVID-19 on rural housing and inequities. Features experts on homeownership and rental housing, community development, rural data, and rural poverty. To read more, see [Rural Housing in the Time of COVID-19](#).

Funding Opportunity:

Funding for demonstration sites to strengthen local infection prevention and control capacity. Goals include to increase capacity for local health departments to prevent and respond to COVID-19 in healthcare facilities, strengthen infection prevention and control practices in high-risk facilities, increase coordination among local partners to bolster response efforts, and enhance coordination with state and local partners. To read more, see [Building Local Operational Capacity for COVID-19 Demonstration Site Project](#). Application Deadline: Jul 1, 2020.

USDA program for lenders: to guarantee their loans to rural businesses and agricultural producers to supplement their working capital to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19. To read more, see [Business and Industry CARES Act Loan Guarantee Program/](#)

Webinar Opportunities:

HRSA: Combating Healthcare Provider Burnout - Wednesday, June 17 at 1:00 pm CST. As part of its Workforce Grand Rounds webinar series, the Bureau of Health Workforce at the Health Resources and Services Administration will spend 90 minutes on the subject of burnout in clinical settings. To register, see [HRSA: Combating Healthcare Provider Burnout](#).

Tackling Child Poverty in the Wake of COVID-19 – Thursday, June 18 at 1:00 pm CST. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will host experts in a

discussion about policies and programs to reduce child poverty. To register, see [Tackling Child Poverty in the Wake of COVID-19](#).

NCSL: Maintaining Child Vaccination Rates During Pandemic – Monday, June 22 at 1:00 pm CST. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is holding an hour-long session on actions states are taking to reverse the trend of decreased immunization. To register, see [NCSL: Maintaining Child Vaccination Rates During Pandemic](#).

RWJF on Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Black Communities – Thursday, June 25 at 2:00 pm CST. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings will explore existing disparities and discuss how communities can begin to address them. To register, see [RWJF on Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Black Communities](#).