

June 26, 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 Iowa Department of Human Services (IDHS) has launched a “COVID Recovery Iowa” program to help farmers, small business owners, healthcare workers, and others on the front lines of the pandemic, deal with emotional and financial stress.

IDHS is partnering with Abbe Center for Community Mental Health Inc., Heartland Family Service, ISU Extension, Pathways Behavioral Sciences and the University of Iowa to provide recovery resources, including:

- Confidential counseling through the Iowa Concern Hotline
- Virtual group activities, including yoga and cooking
- Discussions about how COVID-19 has changed the workplace
- Strategies to deal with stress — or help others dealing with stress — on the farm
- How to avoid burnout and self-care tips
- Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) suicide prevention training
- Mental health first aid
- Family financial consultations
- Farm financial planning

These services are free to all Iowans and are funded by a FEMA SAMHSA grant. More information is available [covidrecoveryiowa.org](https://www.covidrecoveryiowa.org). For questions, you can contact: Jason Haglund at Jason@COVIDrecoveryiowa.com to discuss other services.

For resources to use during the COVID-19 outbreak, please visit ISU Extension and Outreach’s [Finding Answers Now page \(www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/disaster-recovery\)](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/disaster-recovery).

Resources:

Preparedness Tools for Healthcare Professionals and Facilities Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19): Resources to help healthcare facilities respond to COVID-19 and maintain healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Provides information for hospitals and clinics, including information on mitigating staff shortages. To read more, see [Preparedness Tools for Healthcare Professionals and Facilities Responding to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Information for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus (COVID-19): Provides guidance and resources from the CDC for healthcare professionals and healthcare facilities related to COVID-19. Includes information on patient care, protecting patients and workers, and

more. To read more, see [Information for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Rural COVID Research and Figures: A collection of reports and visualizations examining the impact of COVID-19 on rural areas, including rural hospital and community vulnerability, hot spots, and more. To read more, see [Rural COVID Research and Figures](#).

State Efforts to Expand Medicaid Coverage & Access to Telehealth in Response to COVID-19: Describes how state Medicaid agencies have expanded coverage and access to telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses how state and federal governments have supported the implementation of, and promoted patient access to, telehealth services. To read more, see [State Efforts to Expand Medicaid Coverage & Access to Telehealth in Response to COVID-19](#).

In the News:

Jun 24, 2020 -- **Providing in a Pandemic: The Challenges of Rural Maternity Care Just Got More Difficult:** Addresses rural maternal healthcare challenges and the additional burden the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on new mothers and access to care. Discusses how the pandemic has highlighted the importance of midwives and doulas, describes changes necessary to make midwifery more accessible for people of all socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. To read more, see [Providing in a Pandemic: The Challenges of Rural Maternity Care Just Got More Difficult](#).

Jun 23, 2020 -- **HHS Announces Partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to Fight COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority and Vulnerable Communities:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) selected the Morehouse School of Medicine as the awardee for a new \$40 million initiative to fight COVID-19 in racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable communities. The National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities (NIMIC) Initiative is a three-year project working with community-based organizations to deliver resources to fight the pandemic. To read more, see [HHS Announces Partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to Fight COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority and Vulnerable Communities](#).

Jun 22, 2020 -- **Trump Administration Issues Call to Action Based on New Data Detailing COVID-19 Impacts on Medicare Beneficiaries:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) called for a commitment to value-based care due to Medicare claims data that shows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Medicare population. Data highlights disparities in health outcomes for minority communities and low-income populations and

shows that older Americans and those with chronic health conditions are at the highest risk for COVID-19. To read more, see [Trump Administration Issues Call to Action Based on New Data Detailing COVID-19 Impacts on Medicare Beneficiaries](#).

Jun 17, 2020 -- **Alexander: Make the Two Most Important COVID-19 Telehealth Policy Changes Permanent:** Senate health committee Chairman Lamar Alexander recommended the federal government permanently extend policy changes that allow physicians to be reimbursed for a telehealth appointment wherever the patient is located as well as policy changes that doubled the number of telehealth services that could be reimbursed by Medicare. Explains that 29 other temporary federal policy changes should also be considered for being made permanent. To read more, see [Alexander: Make the Two Most Important COVID-19 Telehealth Policy Changes Permanent](#).

Funding Related to COVID-19 Response:

[Community Interventions to Address the Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic among Health Disparity and Vulnerable Populations \(R01- Clinical Trial Optional\):](#) Grants to implement and evaluate community interventions testing the impacts of (1) strategies to prevent COVID-19 transmission in health disparity populations and other vulnerable groups; and (2) interventions to address the adverse psychosocial, behavioral, and socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic on the health of these groups. Geographic coverage: Nationwide and U.S. territories. Application Deadline: Aug 28, 2020

[Economic Development Assistance Programs Including CARES Act Funding:](#) Grants support the implementation of regional economic development, including public works projects and job creation projects. Past projects have included funding for water and wastewater projects in hospitals and healthcare facilities and road infrastructure projects that would support the expansion of healthcare facilities. CARES Act funding will provide a wide-range of financial assistance as communities respond to, and recover from, the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Application Deadline: Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.