

May 29, 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:

DHS Launches COVID Recovery Iowa: (May 27, 2020). The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) announced that the State of Iowa has received nearly \$1 million in funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to offer free counseling to any Iowan who has been affected, in any way, by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The program, called *COVID Recovery Iowa*, is available starting May 27, 2020. Counseling will take place via virtual sessions, chat or phone call. People of all ages may join groups online to find support and learn new strategies to cope with the effects of the pandemic in a variety of creative ways.

“We are so grateful to our federal partners for providing Iowa with this critical funding,” said Director Kelly Garcia. “It’s not uncommon to experience feelings of stress or anxiety during uncertain times. This funding will help us support Iowans across the state who are trying to find their new normal.”

Iowans can access services through the following options:

- Call 800-447-1985 to connect with a counselor specializing in rural issues and agriculture 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Call the Iowa Warm Line, 844-775-9276, to connect with a peer counselor or request to get in touch with a COVID Recovery Iowa counselor.
- Visit www.COVIDrecoveryiowa.org and complete a contact form and a counselor will get back to you.

DHS has contracted with five providers throughout the state to provide counseling, virtual activities, referrals and help finding resources. *COVID Recovery Iowa* will announce additional programs in the coming weeks to help Iowans build coping skills and resilience.

For more information contact Matt Highland at 515-281-4848 or mhighla@dhs.state.ia.us.

Resources:

COVID-19 Resources on Vulnerable Populations: A collection of federal COVID-19 resources for those working with vulnerable populations, including people living in rural areas, older adults, those with underlying medical conditions, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. Offers information for healthcare professionals, researchers, community partners, consumers, and patients. To read more, see [COVID-19 Resources on Vulnerable Populations](#).

Broadband Connectivity and COVID-19: The FCC's Response: Describes the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) response to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically regarding internet access and network reliability. Outlines waived regulations and extended deadlines for several programs, including the Rural Health Care program. To read more, see [Broadband Connectivity and COVID-19: The FCC's Response](#).

Telehealth and Patient Safety During the COVID-19 Response: Discusses the use of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic and presents safety protocols to transition care from telehealth to in-person treatment. Looks at the ways telehealth is used as a substitute for regular visits, as well as for monitoring the virus. To read more, see [Telehealth and Patient Safety During the COVID-19 Response](#).

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Health Departments: Offers guidelines, tools, and resources to help state, local, and tribal health departments respond to COVID-19. Includes information on surveillance, contact tracing, infection prevention, community mitigation, public health workforce, and more. To read more, see [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Health Departments](#).

County-Level 14-Day COVID-19 Case Trajectories: Explores the 14-day trend in COVID-19 cases in every U.S. county. Analyzes the trends by county type: metropolitan, nonmetropolitan, or noncore. Includes county-level maps. To read more, see [County-Level 14-Day COVID-19 Case Trajectories](#).

Recent News:

May 25, 2020 -- Hospitals in Eastern Washington are working to reopen for elective surgeries and non-urgent procedures after being closed on March 19th. Hospital officials are hoping this will begin to repair the financial damage done by COVID-19. To read more, see [Rural Hospitals Reopen, with Extra Safety Precautions in Place](#).

May 22, 2020 -- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced payments of \$500 million to the Indian Health Service (IHS) including tribal hospitals and clinics, to support the tribal response to COVID-19. To read more, see [HHS Announces \\$500 Million Distribution to Tribal Hospitals, Clinics, and Urban Health Centers](#).

May 22, 2020 -- The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy invites rural stakeholders to participate in a call to discuss federal efforts to increase access to substance use disorder treatment in rural areas during COVID-19. The call will take place on June 2, 2020. To read more, see [ONDCP Rural Stakeholder Call - The Federal Response to COVID-19: Supporting Care for Substance Use Disorder in Rural America](#).

May 20, 2020 -- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released two resources to aid states, tribes, localities, and territories in safely reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first summarizes CDC initiatives and includes information on infection control; the second resource is a set of health considerations to be used by summer camps, schools, youth sports organizations, institutes of higher education, and restaurants and bars. To read more, see [CDC Releases Resources to Assist States to Open](#).

May 20, 2020 -- Addresses the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on America's farmers as they face additional stress and financial instability. Mental health advocates worry about the effects the pandemic will have on farmers and their families, including the potential for increased suicides and post-traumatic stress disorder. To read more, see [COVID-19 Crisis Puts Pressure On Farmers' Mental Health](#).

May 20, 2020 -- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provided \$225 million to over 4,500 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for COVID-19 testing. The funding is provided through the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act and may be used to expand testing capacity, procure supplies for testing, train staff, report data, and build facilities to support COVID-19 response efforts. To read more, see [HHS Provides \\$225 Million for COVID-19 Testing in Rural Communities](#).

Funding for COVID-19 response:

Rural and Tribal Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance: Technical assistance for tribes and rural communities of less than 50,000 people to plan system start-up, transit service improvements, facility development, marketing, transportation coordination, and staff training. Currently, CTAA is particularly interested in requests to address issues during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To read more, see [Rural and Tribal Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance](#).

Webinar Opportunity:

[Primary Care Management of Suicidal Ideation](#) – **Tuesday, June 2 at 2:00 pm CST**. In an online session specifically for rural primary care providers, the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center will discuss operational components of implementing suicide screening and referral to services