

October 2, 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:

Reporting Requirements for Provider Relief Funds: This guidance, released last week, informs Provider Relief Fund (PRF) recipients who received payments exceeding \$10,000 of the data elements that they must report for calendar years 2019 and 2020 as part of their terms and conditions. It provides detail on how to report expenses attributable to COVID-19, including general and administrative, health care related, and lost revenue. To read more, see [Reporting Requirements for Provider Relief Funds](#).

Farmer Stress: Describes stressors affecting U.S. farmers, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes a video conversation about farmer stress and links to resources on managing stress, seeking help, and resources for mental health providers. To read more, see [Farmer Stress](#).

Finding Innovation and Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Provider Telehealth Innovations & How-To Guide for Thinking Sustainably: Provides guidance on how providers can focus on sustainability of telehealth services during a period that is uncertain due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Provides examples of how providers, including those in rural settings, are adapting their practices. To read more, see [Finding Innovation and Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Provider Telehealth Innovations & How-To Guide for Thinking Sustainably](#).

Additional links: [A Sustainability How-To Guide for Providers of Telehealth](#), [Telehealth and COVID-19: Provider Innovations and the Need to Think Sustainably](#), [Telehealth and COVID-19: What Practitioners Need to Know](#).

In the News:

Sep 30, 2020 -- [Red-Zone Report: Rural Counties Set Record for New COVID-19 Cases](#): Analyzes new COVID-19 cases and finds that rural counties saw 61,000 new infections between September 20-26, 2020, setting a record for infections in a single week and placing half of all rural counties in the red zone. Includes an interactive map of new cases, general trends, regional changes, and a comparison to metropolitan counties.

Sep 29, 2020 -- [CMS Updates COVID-19 Testing Methodology for Nursing Homes](#): The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced an update to the methodology employed to determine the rate of COVID-19 cases in counties, affecting nursing homes who are required to test staff for COVID-19 based on the positivity rate of their respective counties. The changes help to reduce the burden on nursing homes in rural counties with seemingly high comparative positivity rates.

Sep 28, 2020 -- [Health on Wheels: Tricked-Out RVs Deliver Addiction Treatment to Rural Communities](#): Features an addiction treatment program in Colorado that transformed six RVs into mobile clinics to reach rural and remote communities across the state. Even while other addiction clinics closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mobile clinics continued to provide addiction services, including a telehealth bridge to connect patients with doctors who can prescribe medicine to fight addiction.

Sep 24, 2020 -- [Rebuilding the Foundation of Rural Community Health after COVID-19](#): Blog post discusses how COVID-19 highlighted the existing cracks in rural America's community health system, including increased risk of facility closures, loss of services, low investment in public health, and maldistribution of health professionals. Recommends four policy changes that would rebuild the rural health system, focusing on new financing and delivery models, community engagement, local health planning, and regionalization of delivery systems.

Webinar Opportunity:

[HHS Telemedicine Hack](#) – **Wednesdays at 11:00 am CST through November 25**. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) is partnering with the [ECHO Institute](#) at the University of Mexico, and the Public Health Foundation's [TRAIN Learning Network](#) to deliver a 10-week peer-to-peer learning community called Telemedicine Hack to provide knowledge and skills for video-based telemedicine. All ambulatory providers (e.g., primary care, surgical, rural/urban, dental, mental health, solo practitioners) are invited to participate.

[COVID-19 Update from White House and IHS](#) – **Thursday, October 8 at 3:00 pm CST**. An hour-long call from the Indian Health Service and the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

[NCSL on COVID-19 Health Disparities](#) – **Wednesday, October 14 at 1:00 pm CST**. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) will provide an overview of racial/ethnic disparities in the pandemic and look at state actions to reduce these disparities.

Funding Opportunity:

[Addressing Needs of People with Disabilities in COVID-19 Local Preparedness Planning, Mitigation, and Recovery Efforts](#): Funding to improve the capacity of local health departments to address the needs of people with disabilities when planning and responding to outbreaks and other national emergencies, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Funding amount: Fixed price contracts up to \$83,000 to 10 local health departments. **Deadline: October 13, 2020.**

[AmeriCorps State and National Grants for Community Service](#): AmeriCorps awards federal grants to community organizations for civic engagement through service and volunteering. Funding priorities include recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic and programs that actively advance racial equality. **Deadline: January 6, 2020.**

Other funding opportunities:

[DOL H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program](#): The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will make up to 40 awards with a total investment of \$40 million to train health care professionals working in rural areas. [The H-1B Skills Training Grants fund projects that train workers](#) for high-skill jobs in underserved areas of the country to allow employers to meet workforce needs. **Deadline: November 13, 2020.**

[HRSA Rural Health Network Development Planning Program](#): The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will make 20 awards of up to \$100,000 each to plan the development of networks among at least three separately-owned local health care providers. Eligible applicants include public, private, and nonprofit entities with the capacity to serve rural populations. A technical assistance webinar for applicants is scheduled on **Wednesday October 7, from 2-3pm CST**. A recording will be made available for those who cannot attend. **Deadline: November 16, 2020.**

Webinar Day and Date: Wednesday October 7, 2020

Time: 2pm-3pm CST

Call-In Number: 1-888-790-3724 | Participant Code: 7731478

Weblink: <https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/rhndppta/>

Playback Number: 1-800-518-0083 | Passcode: 10720

[FY21 Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program \(Outreach\)](#): The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) plans to award approximately \$12.7 million to 60 organizations. The Outreach Program administered by HRSA's FORHP focuses on expanding the delivery of health care services to include new and enhanced services exclusively in rural communities. Applicants are required to deliver health care services through a consortium of at least three organizations, use an evidence-based or promising practice model to inform their approach, and demonstrate health outcomes and sustainability by the end of the four-year performance period. A webinar for applicants is scheduled on **Tuesday October 13, from 2-3:30 pm CST. Deadline: December 1, 2020.**