

September 18, 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:

Samra Hiros, MPH

State Office of Rural Health

E-mail: Samra.Hiros@idph.iowa.gov.

Phone: (515) 423-7900



Resources:

Delay or Avoidance of Medical Care Because of COVID-19-Related Concerns — United States, June 2020: Results of a web-based survey administered from June 24-30, 2020, exploring delays in routine or emergency medical care, due to closure of facilities or fear of exposure to COVID-19. Features demographic statistics with breakdowns by urban or rural location. To read more, see [Delay or Avoidance of Medical Care Because of COVID-19-Related Concerns — United States, June 2020](#).

CMS Coronavirus Stakeholder Calls: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) hosts recurring online sessions to share information related to COVID-19. These sessions are open to members of the health care community and are intended to provide updates, share best practices among peers, and offer attendees an opportunity to ask questions of CMS and other subject matter experts. To read more, see [CMS Coronavirus Stakeholder Calls](#).

In the News:

Sep 16, 2020 -- [HHS Strategy to Distribute COVID-19 Vaccine](#): On Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its strategy to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine after one has received approval from the Food and Drug Administration. It focuses on four key tasks necessary to ensure access and the requirements for each. The primary task is to engage with state, tribal, territorial, and local partners, other stakeholders, and the public to communicate public health information, before and after distribution begins.

Sep 16, 2020 -- [Rural 'Red-Zone' List Shortens Significantly for First Time in Two Months](#): Analyzes new COVID-19 infection rates in counties across the U.S. and finds that rural counties on the red-zone list dropped significantly for the first time in more than two months. Includes an interactive map and a chart detailing rural red-zone counties by state.

Sep 15, 2020 -- [COVID Exodus Fills Vacation Towns with New Medical Pressures](#): Rural vacation destinations have seen an influx of outsiders relocating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Describes how an increase in residents could cause strain on the towns' hospitals and healthcare providers. While the population increase helps some rural hospitals rebound, healthcare facilities may have to rebalance services if the population shift becomes permanent.

Sep 10, 2020 -- [Energy, Water and Broadband: Three Services Crucial to Health Equity](#): Blog post discusses the inequities in rural, tribal, and low-income communities, as well as communities of color, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Describes how these populations

are less likely to have access to clean water, broadband, affordable energy; includes examples of communities working to make these more accessible.

Webinar Opportunity:

[Rural Health Clinics: Cost Reporting in 2020](#) – **Monday, September 21 at 1:00 pm CST.** The National Association of Rural Health Clinics (NARHC) will host a one-hour webinar to explain new factors for Rural Health Clinics (RHC) to consider, such as COVID-related Provider Relief Fund allocations, when filing the next cost report. The webinar is free, but attendees must register in advance.

[VA COVID-19 Training](#) – **Wednesday, September 23 at 1:00 pm CST.** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will hold a session examining the long-term effects of severe COVID-19 from a rehabilitation physician's perspective. The session is designed for clinicians of all disciplines and open to both VA and non-VA clinicians. Continuing education credit is available for those who [preregister in the TRAIN public health training network](#). Learn more about the [VA's COVID-19 Guidance for Community Providers](#).

[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.

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.**