

September 25, 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:

Building Farm Resilience During COVID-19: A collection of resources to help farmers and farm communities manage financial and emotional stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Also addresses health and safety for farmers, farmworkers, and customers. To read more, see [Building Farm Resilience During COVID-19](#).

The Impact of Coronavirus on Households Across America: Examines the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on U.S. households. Covers health, economic, and work-related impacts and related issues such as broadband access. Includes a section on problems specific to rural households. A separate report will be released focusing specifically on rural impacts of COVID-19. To read more, see [The Impact of Coronavirus on Households Across America](#).

New Data Show One-in-Six Children Were Poor Before COVID-19 Pandemic: Reports on child poverty rates from 2007 through 2019 for cities, suburban areas, and rural areas. To read more, see [New Data Show One-in-Six Children Were Poor Before COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

New Report on Post-Acute Care in Rural America: This week, the National Rural Health Resource Center released findings from their May 2020 Virtual Summit, which focused on the issues, challenges, and strategies related to the integration of acute and post-acute care in rural areas. The report covers the current state of rural post-acute care, including the impact of COVID-19, and explores strategies and tactics to address key issues, such as payment, workforce, and community care coordination. To read more, see [New Report on Post-Acute Care in Rural America](#).

In the News:

Sep 23, 2020 -- [HHS: Agency Information Collection Request; 60-Day Public Comment Request](#): The Department of Health and Human Services is seeking comments and burden estimates on the HHS Teletracking COVID-19 Portal (U.S. Healthcare COVID-19 Portal). The data collected through daily reporting by hospitals informs the Federal Government's understanding of disease patterns and furthers the development of policies for COVID-19 prevention and control. Comments are due by November 23, 2020.

Sep 23, 2020 -- [HRSA: Revised Geographic Eligibility for Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Grants](#): The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is seeking comments on proposed modifications to the methodology for designating areas eligible for rural health grant programs. Comments are due by October 23, 2020.

Sep 22, 2020 -- [America's 200,000 COVID-19 Deaths: Small Cities and Towns Bear a Growing Share](#): As the U.S. surpasses 200,000 deaths due to the coronavirus, an analysis finds that the share of COVID-19 deaths in non-metropolitan areas has grown dramatically over time. Describes how hot spots in urban areas have tapered off, but rural areas are continuing to see the disease spread.

Sep 18, 2020 -- [How the Pandemic Forced Mental Health Care to Change for the Better](#): During the COVID-19 pandemic, many barriers to telehealth services were removed due to new regulatory changes, benefitting both mental healthcare providers and their patients. Describes how telehealth can increase access to mental health services in rural areas as clinicians can work across state lines and discusses how the public could benefit from the telehealth expansions remaining in place after the pandemic.

Sep 17, 2020 -- [CMS Announces New Guidance for Safe Visitation in Nursing Homes During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#): The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new guidance for nursing homes on safely facilitating visitations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations include encouraging nursing homes to utilize outdoor visitation and only allowing indoor visitation if there have been no new cases of COVID-19 in 14 days.

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.

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.**