September 4, 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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Update:

The FDA has broadened the use of Remdesivir to include all hospitalized patients (adult or child) with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Please see the following information regarding this:

- [News release](#)
- [Fact sheets for health care providers](#)

Deadline for COVID-Related Provider Relief Fund Extended to September 13: Providers participating in state programs for Medicaid, Medicaid managed care, Children's Health Insurance Program, dental providers, and certain Medicare providers may still apply for emergency funding related to the pandemic. To read more, click [here](#).

Resources:

America at a Glance: Social Isolation and Loneliness During the First Wave of COVID-19: Explores how COVID-19 and related stay-at-home orders contributed to feelings of social isolation and loneliness among people with disabilities. Compares feelings of social isolation and loneliness among urban and rural groups before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses the possible impact of technological accommodations on these feelings. To read more, see [America at a Glance: Social Isolation and Loneliness During the First Wave of COVID-19](#).

Health Conditions and an Older Population Increase COVID-19 Risks in Rural America: Examines the influence of age and pre-existing health conditions on the likelihood of hospitalization or death from COVID-19 infection in rural America. Compares COVID-19 case rates and deaths by metropolitan status. Includes county-level maps on estimated risks among those infected with COVID-19 and current incidence. To read more, see [Health Conditions and an Older Population Increase COVID-19 Risks in Rural America](#).

Lessons Learned: Pediatric Tele-Mental Health in a Rural Medical Center in the Age of SARS-CoV-2: Explores a study on the use of telemedicine to expand mental healthcare access to rural children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses implementation concerns such as a need to protect patient privacy and expand internet-based infrastructure. To read more, see [Lessons Learned: Pediatric Tele-Mental Health in a Rural Medical Center in the Age of SARS-CoV-2](#).

Rural EMS COVID-19 Preparedness Checklist: Provides a checklist for rural response agencies to evaluate their current level of preparedness and identify areas that need additional action to better respond to COVID-19. Covers planning, strategy, personal protective equipment

and supplies, workforce and recruiting, and funding. To read more, see Rural EMS COVID-19 Preparedness Checklist**.**

CDC COVID-19 Updates: *New this week*: MMWR Weekly COVID-19 Briefing is now a podcast series with the latest scientific information published in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Rural Crosswalk for COVID Waivers and Flexibilities: Last week, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published a summary of all current COVID-19-related waivers and flexibilities that affect Rural Health Clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and rural hospitals generally. It also describes the significance of each provision for these rural providers and facilities. To read more, see Rural Crosswalk for COVID Waivers and Flexibilities.

USDA Economic Research Service COVID-19 Charts:

- Cumulative Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 Residents by County Economic Type and Metro Status on August 7, 2020
- Cumulative Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 Residents by County on August 7, 2020
- Cumulative Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 Residents in Metro and Nonmetro Areas, March 1 to August 7, 2020
- Two-week Moving Average of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 Population since March 1, 2020: Comparing Rural Counties with 20 Percent or More Employment in Meatpacking to All Other Rural Counties in the United States

In the News:

Aug 27, 2020 -- Highlights challenges rural homeless youth face while trying to complete their schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Describes difficulties rural homeless, homeless families, and organizations face when trying to determine who qualifies for shelter and services. To read more, see Homeless People in Rural America Struggle to Find Help.

Aug 26, 2020 -- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released guidance for nursing homes and clinical laboratories to assist in efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. New guidance requires nursing homes to test all residents and staff, includes a new survey tool and steps facilities must take to meet testing requirements. To read more, see CMS Posts Guidance for Implementing New Testing Requirements in Nursing Homes and Labs.

Funding Opportunity:

[Maternal Telehealth Access Project: Collaboration and Innovation for Equity and Healthy Families](): Grants for organizations to strengthen their COVID-19 response by delivering or supporting the delivery of equitable maternal health support and services through telehealth. The goal of the program is to ensure that women at highest risk receive quality maternal care services before, during, and/or after pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Application Deadline: Sep 14, 2020.**

Rural Health Network Development Planning Program NOFO:

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy has released the FY 21 Rural Health Network Development Planning Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The purpose of the Network Planning Grants Program is to promote the development of integrated health care networks in order to: achieve efficiencies; expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of basic health care services; and strengthen the rural health care system as a whole. This program brings together key parts of a rural health care delivery system, particularly those entities that may not have collaborated in the past, to work together to establish or improve local capacity and coordination of care. The program supports one year of planning to develop and assist integrated health care networks in becoming operational. Click here to learn more and apply.

Webinar Opportunity:

VA COVID-19 Training – **Wednesday, September 16 at 1:00 pm CST**. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will hold a session on caring for patients who do not have COVID-19 during the pandemic. 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 VHA TRAIN. Learn more about the VA's COVID-19 Guidance for Community Providers

OMH on COVID-19 Response in Minority Communities – **Thursday, September 17 at 11:00 am CST.** Registration is now open for a virtual symposium hosted by the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) to highlight state, Tribal, territorial, and community-based efforts to address COVID-19 among racial and ethnic minority populations.

COVID-19 Back-to-School Resources for Mental Health – The Mental Health Technology Transfer Center has a series of webinars and other resources useful for helping students and staff cope with changes in schooling.