

April 17, 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](https://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:

**On April 10, 2020, HHS began delivery of the initial \$30 billion in relief funding to providers:** in support of the national response to COVID-19 as part of the distribution of the \$100 billion provider relief fund provided for in the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#). The Administration is working rapidly on targeted distributions of the remaining \$70 billion that will focus on providers in areas particularly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, rural providers, providers of services with lower shares of Medicare reimbursement or who predominantly serve the Medicaid population, and providers requesting reimbursement for the treatment of uninsured Americans. For more information, visit [hhs.gov/provider-relief](https://hhs.gov/provider-relief).

[Summary of Medicare Emergency COVID-19 Waivers for Health Care Providers](#). CMS has temporarily waived several Medicare regulations to support hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities during the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The new waivers focus on reducing supervision and certification requirements so that practitioners can be hired quickly and perform work to the fullest extent of their licenses. [This Fact Sheet](#) summarizes the new changes in addition to previous waivers that impact all types of providers, including Critical Access Hospitals, Rural Health Clinics, physicians, skilled nursing facilities, and others.

## Resources:

### Information in Multiple Languages

Resources, such as the Governor's briefings on COVID-19 and informational materials, are available in print, video, captioned, and translated materials. See <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/covid-19/language-access>

### Borne the Battle: VA Podcast for Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched this weekly podcast in 2016 to engage and reach out to veterans. Recent recorded episodes provide updates related to the Coronavirus, including how to manage debt and get access to benefits. For podcast, see [here](#)

### Announcement of upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity:

The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA), Federal Office of Rural Health Policy will announce an upcoming notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) that will be available to Tribal organizations. Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)

Act, HRSA received \$15 million to allocate to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, Urban Indian Health Organizations, and health service providers to Tribes:

- The [funding](#) will provide support for the Tribes to prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19 in rural communities. The simplified announcement will post on [Grants.gov](#) when available and will require that Tribes submit a concise proposal outlining their specific COVID-19 related needs and funding requirements. HRSA will provide proposal examples within the NOFO for the Tribes.
- For this NOFO, the System for Award Management (SAM) registration will be relaxed for applicants at the time of submission in Grants.gov. Current registrants in SAM, with active registrations expiring before May 16, 2020, will be provided a one-time extension of 60 days. New applicants are able to submit an application without a valid SAM registration. Applicants can reach out to [RuralCOVIDNOFO@hrsa.gov](mailto:RuralCOVIDNOFO@hrsa.gov) with any questions or concerns regarding their submission.
- HRSA will hold a technical assistance webinar to outline how Tribes can request funding for their specific activities that may include: purchase of test kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), hiring and/or training health care personnel and telehealth related activities. [Sign up now](#) to receive a notification when the NOFO posts.

### **Webinar Opportunities:**

[HRSA Telehealth Learning Series: COVID-19](#) – **Monday, April 20 at 1:30 pm CST** The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will hold a 60-minute webinar focusing on telehealth in the time of COVID-19. For more information, contact Nancy Rios at [NRios@hrsa.gov](mailto:NRios@hrsa.gov).

[Telehealth Learning Series for SUD Treatment and Recovery](#) – **Tuesday, April 21 at 12:00 pm CST**. Live, one-hour sessions each week feature providers with expertise in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and recovery support using videoconferencing. The series is hosted by the Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network and the HRSA/FORHP-supported National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.

**On Tuesday, April 21, 2020: 9:00 am - 11:00 am** (10am - 12 pm EST), **the Bipartisan Policy Center's Rural Health Task Force** will release a new report that offers practical and politically viable solutions for fixing the current health care crisis in rural communities. The recommendations aim to stabilize hundreds of rural hospitals that are at risk of closing and create pathways for transforming these facilities into models of care that best meet a community's needs. Members of the task force will discuss how these policy proposals will also stem closures of obstetric units, promote the uptake of value-based care, provide incentives for clinicians to stay in rural areas, and remove barriers to telehealth. To register for the *Confronting Rural*

*America's Health Care Crisis: BPC Rural Health Task Force Recommendations* webcast, click on [Register Now](#).

[SAMHSA: Peer Recovery Support Across Crisis Services](#) – **Thursday, April 23 at 1:00 pm CST**. This hour-long webinar from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will discuss peer-run respite programs, warm lines, and peer support services within hospital emergency departments.

[NOSORH Rural Health Data Institute](#) – **Register by May 1**. The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) will hold **a series of 90-minute webinars each week from May 12 to June 30**. Designed for those with limited knowledge of how to use data, the learning sessions will move through the process of collecting data, cleaning it up, and analyzing it in a way that everyone can understand. The Institute is open to rural health professionals, including clinical, administrative, and academic personnel.

**Other:**

[Call for Papers: COVID-19 and Rural Mental Health Challenges and Opportunities](#)

Apr 14, 2020 -- The Journal of Rural Mental Health announced a call for papers that focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of tele-mental health (tele-MH) services in rural areas. Some potential topics include experiences with various tele-MH technologies, infrastructure challenges, reimbursement issues, and the differences between in-person and remote environments.