

August 21, 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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## Resources:

**Addressing Rural Health Disparities in a Pandemic:** Public Health Review podcast in which 3 speakers discuss the impact of COVID-19 on rural health infrastructure and workforce. Describes how to improve conditions in rural communities, increase access to quality healthcare, and implement innovative strategies for health workforce recruitment and retention. To read more, see [Addressing Rural Health Disparities in a Pandemic](#).

**From the Frontline of COVID-19: Impact on a Critical-Access Hospital:** Podcast exploring the impact of COVID-19 on a Critical Access Hospital pharmacy's operations. Discusses the role of pharmacists in caring for COVID-19 patients at CAHs and offers lessons learned. To read more, see [From the Frontline of COVID-19: Impact on a Critical-Access Hospital](#).

**Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic - United States, June 24-30, 2020:** Reports on the number of adults experiencing elevated adverse mental health conditions associated with COVID-19. Features statistics on self-reported incidence of anxiety or depressive disorder, trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic, and substance use, with breakdowns by rural or urban residence. To read more, see [Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic - United States, June 24-30, 2020](#).

**Telemedicine: What Should the Post-Pandemic Regulatory and Payment Landscape Look Like?** Discusses changes to telemedicine regulation and payment policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, examining the effects of these temporary changes in relation to the broader issues that telemedicine policy addresses. Explores possible long-term options for insurers and regulators and offers policy recommendations. To read more, see [Telemedicine: What Should the Post-Pandemic Regulatory and Payment Landscape Look Like](#).

## In the News:

Aug 19, 2020 -- Discusses that while the rate of new COVID-19 infections in rural counties has decreased, certain rural counties in the South, Southwest, Western Indian Country, and Midwest accounted for three-quarters of new cases in rural counties. Includes an interactive map of COVID-19 cases from August 8 to August 15, 2020. To read more, see [Rural Red Zone: Decline in New COVID-19 Cases Is Tempered by Continued Problems in Hard-Hit Counties](#).

Aug 18, 2020 -- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released Healthy People 2030, the nation's 10-year plan for addressing our most critical public health priorities and challenges. Healthy People 2030 features 355 measurable objectives with 10-year targets,

including those related to opioid use disorder and youth e-cigarette use, as well as emerging public health threats like COVID-19. To read more, see [HHS Releases Healthy People 2030 with National Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Objectives for the Next Decade](#).

Aug 18, 2020 -- Discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected rural patients in need of non-emergent procedures, such as knee replacements and Lasik eye surgery. Now that elective surgeries are once again permitted, hospitals are experiencing an influx of surgical bookings, creating a long waitlist for rural patients who already experience more barriers to care. To read more, see [Postponed Surgeries Pinch Hospitals and Rural Patients](#).

Aug 14, 2020 -- The COVID-19 pandemic has put extra pressure on physicians and other healthcare workers; in response, some health systems are using connected health platforms to connect stressed employees with virtual behavioral health services. Discusses how telehealth addresses physician burnout and improves work-life balance, and will continue to do so after the pandemic. To read more, see [Healthcare Looks to Telehealth to Address Physician Burnout, Stress](#).

Aug 13, 2020 -- In rural West Virginia, emergency service calls decreased early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, but in May, calls skyrocketed due to an increase in motor vehicle accidents, elderly health problems, and drug overdoses. Describes how the additional cost of COVID-19 personal protective equipment has impacted emergency medical service finances and discusses the toll the job takes on the mental health of personnel. To read more, see [These Rural First Responders Are Fighting More Than a Global Pandemic](#).

### **Other News/Funding Opportunity:**

#### **Rural Health Network Development Planning Program: Application Deadline: Nov 16, 2020**

Grants to promote the planning and development of integrated rural healthcare networks in order to achieve efficiencies; expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of essential healthcare services; and strengthen the rural healthcare system as a whole. To learn more about funding opportunity, see [Rural Health Network Development Planning Program](#).

The Network Planning Program offers rural health care providers the opportunity to better address community needs and respond to challenges such as supporting providers in the transition from volume-based to value-based care. The intent is for rural health networks to expand access to care, increase the use of health information technology, explore alternative

health care delivery models, and continue to achieve quality health care across the continuum of care.

The eligibility criteria for this program has been reauthorized to include all domestic public and private, nonprofit and for-profit entities with demonstrated experience serving, or the capacity to serve, rural underserved populations. Urban-based organizations applying as the lead applicant should ensure there is a high degree of rural control in the project. The applicant organization must represent a network that includes at least three or more health care provider organizations and, at least 66% (or two-thirds) of network members must be located in a [HRSA-designated rural area](#).

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FY21 Network Planning can be viewed here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=hrsa-21-021>

Interested applicants may attend a live webinar on Wednesday October 07, 2020 from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. CST. Connection information is below and included in the NOFO.

TA Webinar Network Planning FY21

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

Audio Conference details

- Dial-in: 1-800-790-3724
- Participant Code: 7731478