

December 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:

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Resources:

Barbara McAneny, MD, Discusses New Challenges Facing Native American Populations during COVID-19: Highlights the challenges facing the Navajo Nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discusses delayed cancer care, personal protective equipment shortages, lack of broadband, and social determinants of health, among other factors, as challenges facing the Navajo Nation. Also, addresses the future vaccine rollout. To read more, see [Barbara McAneny, MD, Discusses New Challenges Facing Native American Populations during COVID-19.](#)

COVID-19 Mortality Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons — 14 States, January–June 2020: Reports on age-adjusted COVID-19-associated mortality for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) and non-Hispanic White populations, based on data from 14 states. Includes data by sex and by age group. To read more, see [COVID-19 Mortality Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons — 14 States, January–June 2020.](#)

How Might Internet Connectivity Affect Health Care Access? Describes how a lack of internet access may negatively impact access to healthcare. Features data and statistics on internet access, with information broken down by race/ethnicity, age, poverty level, insurance status and type, and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan location. Discusses COVID-19 and how social distancing measures have led to increased implementation of telehealth, resulting in additional challenges accessing healthcare among people with little to no internet connectivity. To read more, see [How Might Internet Connectivity Affect Health Care Access?](#)

In the News:

Dec 15, 2020 -- [Rural Hospitals Gear up for Vaccine Distribution, Official Says:](#) Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine has begun and while phase one of the rollout prioritizes healthcare workers, some officials worry rural hospitals and health clinics will have to wait longer than urban facilities or lack access to equipment necessary to store the vaccines.

Dec 14, 2020 -- [First the Hospitals Closed, Then COVID-19 Came. This Is How the Rural South Is Coping:](#) Discusses how rural hospital closures have impacted healthcare access and emergency care services in the South, including rural areas in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Shares how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues for rural residents in their communities.

Dec 14, 2020 -- [Rural Counties Report Record Number of Deaths for 6th Straight Week:](#) Analyzes new COVID-19 infection rates of all U.S. counties between December 6-12, 2020. Findings show rural counties reported a record number of new COVID-19 deaths for the sixth week in a row. Describes how the rate of increase in infections leveled off since mid-November, but a third of all counties have new infection rates of more than 500 new cases per week per 100,000.

Dec 12, 2020 -- [Rural Health Systems Challenged by COVID-19 Surge](#): In rural Washington, a town's healthcare system is in crisis. With hospitals full of COVID-19 patients, victims of car accidents, heart attacks and head injuries are transferred to other facilities by helicopter or ambulance. Tired healthcare workers find hope in the vaccine, but rural areas may wait longer to get the much-anticipated doses.

Webinar Opportunity:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be providing a COVID-19 vaccine update. Registration is required.

Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases and Lead for the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force will present. Michelle Putnam, Deputy for Partnerships and Risk Management, CDC COVID-19 Emergency Response, for the Partnership Strategy Unit will moderate. Dr. Messonnier will provide updates on the current status of COVID-19 vaccines.

Date: Monday, December 21, 2020

Time: 2:00—3:00 p.m. CST.

Register here: [COVID-19 Response Vaccine Update](#)

The call will be recorded and posted with previous Partner Update webinars [here](#).