

January 8, 2021

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:

Rural COVID-19 Innovations: Learn about how rural communities are innovating in the face of COVID-19. A collection of best practices, lessons learned, and other examples addressing healthcare and health-related concerns. To read more, see [Rural COVID-19 Innovations](#).

HHS ASPR Outpatient Therapeutics Mini-Series: This mini-series, supported by HHS ASPR, will provide a deep dive on new and emerging COVID-19 outpatient therapeutics, including monoclonal antibodies. The goal of this mini-series is to equip clinicians with the appropriate knowledge, resources, and tools needed to initiate and scale administration of these therapies and reduce strain on the U.S. healthcare system. Sessions occur Wednesdays at 11:00 AM CT. To register and access previous recordings, visit [HHS ASPR Outpatient Therapeutics Mini-Series](#).

Synergistic Disparities and Public Health Mitigation of COVID-19 in the Rural United States: Describes how public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize racial, economic, and geographic disparities, especially among rural and poor populations. Covers public health mitigation measures, including disease surveillance, physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, and public health communication. Discusses the ethical demands of public health practice during and following a public health emergency. To read more, see [Synergistic Disparities and Public Health Mitigation of COVID-19 in the Rural United States](#).

Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Calls/Webinars: Up-to-date guidance for clinicians from subject matter experts on key emergency preparedness and response topics. Many recent calls are focused on COVID-19 vaccination and related concerns. Slides and webinar recordings for past COCA calls are available. To read more, see [Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\) Calls/Webinars](#).

The Coronavirus Pandemic Highlights Why Family Caregivers Need to Be Integrated into the Health Care Team and Shows Us How to Make It Happen: Describes the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on family caregiving. Identifies approaches to help integrate family members into care teams. Discusses the use of telehealth, virtual visits, and other digital technology such as patient portals which can include family caregivers. To read more, see [The Coronavirus Pandemic Highlights Why Family Caregivers Need to Be Integrated into the Health Care Team and Shows Us How to Make It Happen](#).

COVID-19 Response Practices in Transit: Provides descriptions and examples of practices implemented by rural, tribal, and urban transit agencies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes discussion on practices for protecting passengers and workers; cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilating vehicles and infrastructure; operational considerations; passenger communications; and technology and innovation. To read more, see [COVID-19 Response Practices in Transit](#).

In the News:

Jan 5, 2021 -- [Program Patches a Hole in Rural Water-Plant Safety: PPE for Operators](#): Features the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) and their efforts to keep rural water-treatment employees healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic so local communities could continue to access potable water. Through a partnership, RCAP provided 105,000 N95 masks to water, wastewater, and solid waste treatment facilities in rural and tribal areas.

Jan 4, 2021 -- [Last Responders' Brace for Surge in COVID Deaths Across US](#): Discusses how the increase in COVID-related deaths has overwhelmed "last responders," or workers at morgues and funeral homes. Describes how funerals and grieving rituals have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically for Native communities who have been among the hardest hit with COVID illnesses and deaths.

Jan 4, 2021 -- [Its Freezer Kaput, This NorCal Hospital Had Two Hours to Give out 600 Vaccine Shots](#): At a hospital in Northern California, a freezer that held 830 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine stopped working and medical staff had two hours to use them before they would no longer be viable. Details how medical professionals quickly distributed all of the doses to the county jail and the local community.

Jan 4, 2021 -- [Meet the Nurse Who's Running a Texas COVID-19 Clinic All on Her Own](#): Features a nurse practitioner that manages the only health clinic in northern rural Grimes County, Texas, highlights her efforts to overcome challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and keep the clinic open. Describes how federal relief funding and temporary telehealth provisions helped her continue operations.

Jan 4, 2021 -- [Telemedicine is Sweeping Puerto Rico, and It's Here to Stay](#): Examines how Puerto Rico is benefitting from the expansion of telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in rural communities with limited access to healthcare. Discusses how the pandemic and recent earthquakes have made it more difficult to access care, but telemedicine allows patients to seek care from wherever they are.

Jan 3, 2021 -- [When Teachers Brought Free Lunch to Kids amid COVID-19, They Saw Poverty up Close](#): In some rural school districts where teachers and administrators volunteered to deliver food to needy families during the COVID-19 outbreak, educators encountered poverty firsthand. Highlights federal programs that helped families pay for groceries and the continued efforts by school districts across the country to ensure students did not go hungry.

Dec 30, 2020 -- [Doctor Drives Three Hours to Get COVID-19 Vaccine to Rural Michigan Hospital](#): Features a doctor who drove almost three hours to deliver a cooler holding 130 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to a hospital in rural Michigan. Smaller hospitals and facilities face challenges receiving and storing the vaccines, but the vaccines bring hope to healthcare workers who have been fighting the disease for months.