

May 1, 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

To view current State of Iowa guidance on the below topics, click on links below. This information is found on [coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov).

- [Iowa Farmers Markets During COVID-19](#)
- [Iowa Guidance for Spiritual and Religious Gatherings During COVID-19](#)
- [Iowa Public Health COVID-19 Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Iowa Restaurant Reopening Criteria/Operation Restrictions During COVID-19](#)

**The Check-Up, April Issue.** The Check-Up is a newsletter designed to keep interested Iowans up-to-date on the progress of health care transformation initiatives. The Check-Up also features updates on activities of the Iowa Department of Public Health's Office of Health Care Transformation within the Bureau of Policy and Workforce Services. The April Check-Up can be found on this link: <http://idph.iowa.gov/ohct>. This link also provides information on the work of the Office of Health Care Transformation at the Iowa Department of Public Health.

**New COVID-19 Uninsured Program Portal.** The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), launched a new COVID-19 Uninsured Program Portal, allowing health care providers who have conducted COVID-19 testing or provided treatment for uninsured COVID-19 individuals on or after February 4, 2020 to submit claims for reimbursement. To read more, see [HHS Launches COVID-19 Uninsured Program Portal](#). Providers can access the portal at [COVIDUninsuredClaim.HRSA.gov](https://COVIDUninsuredClaim.HRSA.gov).

**HHS Launches New COVID-19 Workforce Toolkit.** On April 22, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) released a new toolkit to help state and local healthcare decision makers maximize workforce flexibilities when confronting COVID-19 in their communities. The toolkit contains a number of "Resource Collections" on topics that have been of particular interest to rural providers including scope of practice expansions, licensure, EMS resources, and volunteer workforce needs, among other workforce and training resources. To read more, see [HHS New COVID-19 Workforce Toolkit](#).

**COVID-19 Data from the U.S. Census Bureau.** Updated regularly, the site provides access to demographic and economic data that may be useful in decision-making, including state and local data on at-risk populations, poverty, health insurance coverage, and employment. See [COVID-19 Data from the U.S. Census Bureau](#).

**USDA Food Program Resources.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is granting program flexibilities across 15 nutrition programs. To read more, see [USDA Food Program Resources](#).

## **Recent News:**

Apr 29, 2020 -- [In Fading Steel Towns, Chronically Ill Patients Hope Video Visits Stay after the Pandemic Goes](#) explores how telemedicine has been a lifeline for chronically ill patients in rural Pennsylvania, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Patients and providers hope access to telemedicine will continue after the public health crisis, as the option allows rural residents to easily receive care without having to travel far distances.

Apr 28, 2020 -- [SBA: Business Loan Program Temporary Changes; Paycheck Protection Program: Requirements: Promissory Notes, Authorizations, Affiliation, and Eligibility](#): Notice of interim final rule and comment request from the Small Business Administration related to applications submitted under the Paycheck Protection Program through June 30, 2020, or until funds are exhausted. Provides clarification on loan eligibility for hospitals owned by governmental entities, among other things. The interim final rule is effective on April 28, 2020. Comments are due by May 28, 2020.

Apr 27, 2020 -- [Rural Health CEOs Take to Hardware Stores and Delivery Trucks in the Coronavirus Pandemic](#): Three CEOs of rural hospitals in Texas and Indiana personally picked up masks at local hardware stores after coronavirus put a strain on their regular supply. Highlights efforts their communities are making to help out and ensure healthcare workers and residents have the supplies and resources they need.

Apr 26, 2020 -- [CMS Reevaluates Accelerated Payment Program and Suspends Advance Payment Program](#): The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced it is reevaluating the amounts that will be paid under the Accelerated Payment Program and suspending the program to Part B suppliers. Explains that additional funding will be available to hospitals and healthcare providers through other programs.

Apr 23, 2020 -- [IHS Statement on Allocation of Final \\$367 Million from CARES Act](#): The Indian Health Service (IHS) announced how they will allocate the final \$367 million in funds provided by the CARES Act to respond to COVID-19. The funding will support the expansion of telehealth, medical equipment needs, Tribal Epidemiology Centers, sanitation efforts, and the distribution of test kits to facilities across IHS.

## **Webinar Opportunities:**

[Telehealth 101: Intro and Q&A](#) – **Fridays at 3:00 pm CST.** The HRSA/FORHP- supported South Central Telehealth Resource Center (TRC) will provide the basics of telehealth and telemedicine each Friday through May 8. [Get more resources and find your regional TRC online.](#)

[HHS All Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Leaders Call](#) – **Thursday, May 7 at 2:30 pm CST.** The Indian Health Service (IHS) will provide updates in this hour-long call.

[Applying for the Vulnerable Rural Hospital Assistance Program](#) - **Monday, May 11 at 12:00 pm CST.** The [Center for Optimizing Rural Health](#), provides targeted in-depth technical assistance to rural hospitals and their communities through the [FORHP-funded Vulnerable Rural Hospital Assistance Program](#). During this webinar, the Center will explain the program and its application process that begins on May 11.

[AgriSafe: Behavioral Health Planning for Farming in the Era of COVID-19](#) – **Tuesday, May 12 at 12:00 pm CST.** The AgriSafe Network presents this hour-long webinar to help farm families learn how to recognize signs of physical and emotional distress and incorporate daily coping tactics.