

May 22, 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:

**Allocation to Rural Health Clinics for COVID-19 Testing:** On Wednesday, the Health Resources and Services Administration allocated \$225 million to more than 4,500 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). Recipients of the distribution include each RHC with a unique, [active CMS Certification Number \(CCN\)](#) listed in either the CMS Provider of Service file (March 2020) or the CMS Survey & Certification's Quality, Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR) before May 7, 2020. Each of these RHCs received a flat amount of just under \$50,000. This state-by-state breakdown is an estimate, pending final validation. To read more, see [Allocation to Rural Health Clinics for COVID-19 Testing](#).

## Resources:

**CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide comprehensive guidelines for local health departments determining who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease and providing support to people (contacts) who may have been infected through exposure to the patient. To read more, see [CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing](#).

**AHRQ COVID-19 Resources:** The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the lead Federal agency charged with improving the safety, quality, and value of patient care delivered by America's health care system. AHRQ is providing guidance and resources in response to COVID-19, including a [surge capacity planning tool for hospitals](#). To read more, see [AHRQ COVID-19 Resources](#).

**CDC COVID-19 Updates:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides daily updates and guidance, and ongoing [Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\)](#). To access, see [CDC COVID-19 Updates](#).

**COVID-19: Maternal and Child Health During COVID-19:** Provides information and resources regarding pregnancy, maternal, and neonatal health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes examples, tools, and policies from hospitals nationwide on mitigating risk in labor and delivery, visitation policies, utilizing remote resources, racial disparities, and more. To read more, see [COVID-19: Maternal and Child Health During COVID-19](#).

**ECHO Diabetes in the Time of COVID-19:** A series of 16 free Continuing Medical Education (CME) accredited webinars offering specialty support for primary care providers when addressing the needs of patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. To access, see [ECHO Diabetes in the Time of COVID-19](#).

## **COVID-19's Current Impact on Rural Healthcare Delivery: Q&A with Brock Slabach:**

Brock Slabach, the National Rural Health Association's Senior Vice President for Member Services, discusses the impact of COVID-19 on rural America's healthcare organizations. To read, see [COVID-19's Current Impact on Rural Healthcare Delivery: Q&A with Brock Slabach](#).

## **Recent News:**

May 19, 2020 -- Rural domestic violence shelters in Texas have seen a decrease in clients and callers due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and shelters worry because they know it isn't a reflection of what is actually happening. Discusses how an inability to be discreet and limited personal contact with others makes it more difficult for victims to seek help, especially in rural areas. To read, see [Home Wasn't Safe. Then COVID-19 Made It Seem like the Only Option](#).

May 19, 2020 -- The Small Business Administration has published an additional interim final rule, supplementing the previous rules for the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The new rule is effective May 19, 2020 and increases certain PPP loan amounts. Comments on the change are due by June 18, 2020. To read more, see [SBA: Business Loan Program Temporary Changes; Paycheck Protection Program-Loan Increases](#).

May 18, 2020 -- Analyzes the infection rate for the nation's 1,977 rural counties and lists the 25 rural counties with the highest rates of coronavirus infections. Identifies food-processing facilities, prisons, and nursing homes as sources of infections in the rural hotspot counties. To read more, see [The 25 Rural Counties with Highest Infection Rates](#).

May 16, 2020 -- Williamson Memorial Hospital in rural West Virginia closed down in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, as it was unable to climb out of bankruptcy. Describes how hospital closures can affect the local economy and limit access to care, especially during a global pandemic. To read more, see [In a Time of Pandemic, Another Rural Hospital Shuts Its Doors](#).

May 15, 2020 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the extension of three nationwide waivers, allowing child nutrition program operators to continue to feed children while promoting social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some efforts to feed children in need include setting up drive-thru pick-up locations and delivering meals via school buses. To read more, see [USDA Extends Flexibilities, Paves the Way for Meals for Kids to Continue through Summer](#).

May 14, 2020 -- For rural people with substance use disorders, it can be difficult to access behavioral health treatment, and pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic only makes it harder. With lockdowns, financial stress, isolation, and the closures of healthcare practices, rural

residents lose their care and support systems. To read more, see [COVID-19 Epidemic Severely Undermines Access to Substance Abuse Help in Rural America](#).

May 14, 2020 -- The coronavirus pandemic is hitting many rural communities hard. In response, medical schools and teaching hospitals work to set up testing sites, educate patients and physicians, and provide essential care. To read more, see [Rural and at Risk for COVID-19](#).

May 14, 2020 -- Rural Toole County quickly became Montana's hot spot for coronavirus infections and county officials worry the disease will breach the local correctional facility. Discusses how an outbreak in the prison could overwhelm medical resources in the area and describes efforts by the county and the Montana Department of Corrections to respond in the event this happens. To read more, see [Under COVID Cloud, Prisons in Rural America Threaten to Choke Rural Hospitals](#).

### **Webinars:**

[ECHO Institute: Best Practices in Adoption of Telehealth](#) – **Wednesday, May 27 at 9:00 am CST**. ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is a telementoring program that brings healthcare providers together with subject matter experts using videoconference technology. Sessions in this learning series will teach best practices in performing telemedicine consultations for remote care of patients during COVID-19 and beyond.

[Application Assistance for RCORP-Planning Funding](#) – **Wednesday, May 27 at 2:00 pm CST**. Applicants to the [Rural Communities Opioid Response Program-Planning \(RCORP-Planning\)](#) funding opportunity, can get assistance during this 90-minute webinar. **Call-In Number: 1-888-469-0646; Participant Code: 4761843**. Those who cannot make the call can access a recording at 1-888-704-1108; passcode 52720.

[AgriSafe: COVID-19 Weekly Think Tank](#) – **Thursday, May 28 at 11:00 am CST**. The AgriSafe Network holds a weekly discussion with rural health and safety professionals to identify risks that farmers, farm workers, and ranchers face as it relates to COVID-19.

[Primary Care Management of Suicidal Ideation](#) – **Tuesday, June 2 at 2:00 pm CST**. In an online session specifically for rural primary care providers, the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center will discuss operational components of implementing suicide screening and referral to services. Mental health professionals are predicting an increase in suicidal ideation as a result of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).