HRSA Examined:
The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
April 2019

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Senior Advisor
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Agenda

- Overview of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)
- Key Priorities and Issues
- FORHP Program Overviews and Updates
  - Programs for States and Hospitals
  - Programs Targeting Rural Communities
  - Opioid Programs
  - Telehealth Programs
  - Policy Analysis and Research
- Resources
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

• Authorized in Section 711 of the Social Security Act
• Created in 1987 to address the problems for rural hospitals that arose from the implementation of the Prospective Payment System (PPS)
• Serves as the voice for rural within the Department of Health and Human Services
• Administers grant programs, makes policy recommendations, and facilitates research on rural health
FORHP Organizational Set Up

Community-Based Division
- Programs for Rural Communities
  - Expanding the Community Health Gateway
- Public Health Programs
  - Black Lung and Radiation Exposure

Policy Research Division
- Policy and Regulatory Analysis
- Research

Hospital State Division
- Grants Focusing on Performance and Quality Improvement for Small Rural Hospitals
- State Offices of Rural Health

Office for the Advancement of Telehealth
- Telehealth Network Grants
- Telehealth Resource Centers
- Licensure and Portability

FY 2018: Addition of Rural Communities Opioid Response Program
Focus Areas for FORHP

- Opioids
- Soaring drug prices
- Affordability
- Shift to value
Rural Basics: What is Rural?

Rural Defined:

- **Census Bureau**: Urban Areas
- **OMB**: Metropolitan Statistical Areas
- **FORHP**: Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes
  - [https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health](https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health)
Rural Basics: The Rural Safety Net

Critical Access Hospitals

Rural Health Clinics

Federally Qualified Health Centers
Tracking Rural Hospitals
Closures, Financial Risk, Services

Figure 2. Closed rural hospitals, 2010 - 2018

Legend
- CAH (29)
- Rural PPS (56)
- FORHP Rural Health Areas
- Non-Rural Health Areas
Growing Gaps and Disparities

In 2014, a higher rate of potentially excess deaths occurred among rural Americans than urban Americans from:

- **Heart disease**
  - More than 25,000 excess deaths
  - 42.6% in rural areas; 27.8% in urban areas
  - Approx. **50% higher** in rural areas than urban

- **Cancer**
  - More than 19,000 excess deaths
  - Overall cancer deaths declined 1.5%/year between (2003-2012);
  - Declined less in rural vs. urban areas

- **Unintentional injuries**
  - More than 12,000 excess deaths
  - 57.5% in rural areas; 39.2% in urban areas
  - Approx. **50% higher** in rural areas than urban (age-adjusted between 1999-2014)

- **Chronic lower respiratory disease**
  - More than 11,000 excess deaths
  - 54.3% in rural areas; 30.9% in urban areas
  - Approx. **50% higher** in rural areas than urban
The Opioid Epidemic and Rural America

Though opioid abuse and opioid-related death has been on the rise nationally, rural communities face unique challenges:

- Opioid-related overdose deaths in rural areas increased more than 10% from 2015 to 2016.
- Rural residents are most likely to be prescribed, and overdose on, prescription painkillers.
- Rural residents with opioid use disorder tend to be younger, less wealthy and educated, more likely to be uninsured.
- More than 60% of rural counties lack a single physician that can prescribe buprenorphine, < 10% of opioid treatment programs in rural areas.
Rural Behavioral Health

- Workforce shortages
- Limited access to health care facilities that focus on behavioral health
  - Only 88 Rural Psychiatric Hospitals in the U.S.
- Few small rural hospitals have an inpatient psychiatric unit.
  - Approx. 83 CAHs have added a Psychiatric Distinct Part Unit (DPU)
- Approximately 6% of independent and 2% of provider-based RHCs offer mental health services.
- FQHCs increasingly offering some access through ongoing investment and expansion
Rural Recruitment and Retention

• The National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network
  • State-Level Resources
  • New Training Module Series

• Tools for Enhancing Retention
Rural Relevant Quality Measurement

Engaging the National Quality Forum

• Initial Project
    • *Rural Health Final Report*

• Subsequent projects
  • *Creating a Framework to Support Measure Development for Telehealth* (2017)
    • *Creating a Framework to Support Measure Development for Telehealth*

• MAP Rural Health Workgroup
  • *Rural Health Workgroup*
Hospital and State Programs

• 2019 Focus
  • Quality Improvement
  • Refining outcome measures for Strengthening rural hospitals
  • New EMS Program within Flex

Programs
• State Offices of Rural Health
  • Resource for all rural HRSA grantees: www.nosorh.org
• Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant (Flex)
  • Supporting critical access hospitals to ensure access to high quality care in rural communities
• Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program
  • Hardware/software and training related to implementing value-based care
# FORHP Indirect Hospital Support: Grants to States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant</th>
<th>Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Supports Critical Access Hospitals to ensure access to high quality care in rural communities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 45 states (all states with CAHs receive funds)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• FY 2019 estimated awards: $28.7 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supports state efforts to promote quality and performance improvement, including around emergency medical services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supports purchases of hardware, software and training related to implementing value-based care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 46 states (all states with hospitals with 49 beds or fewer); 1,592 participating hospitals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• FY 2019: states to receive ~ $12,000 per participating hospital</td>
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Interested hospitals should contact their [State Office of Rural Health](#)
Direct Hospital Support: In-depth on-site assistance

**Small Rural Hospital Transitions Project**
- Helps small rural hospitals through on-site assistance to bridge gaps between the current health care system and the newly emerging system of health care delivery and payment.
- Targets hospitals with fewer than 50 beds in persistent poverty counties.
- Visit [Rural Health Innovations](#) for more information.
- Serves seven hospitals per year

**Delta Region Community Health Systems Development**
- HRSA collaboration with the Delta Regional Authority to help underserved rural communities in the region identify and better address their health care needs and to help small rural hospitals improve their financial and operational performance.
- For more information: Rachel Moscato, rmoscato@hrsa.gov

**New: Vulnerable Rural Hospital Assistance Program**
- Provides targeted in-depth assistance to vulnerable rural hospitals, nationwide, that are struggling to maintain health care services within the community on strategies on how they could continue to provide essential services locally.
- Texas A&M University, Center for Optimizing Rural Health
State Offices of Rural Health

• Source for information on rural health issues and resources from state and federal level
• Provide *technical assistance* to rural communities.
• Encourage *recruitment and retention* of health professionals in rural areas.
• Coordinate activities within the state to avoid duplication of effort and activities.
• Host grant writing workshops with FORHP representatives

[Link to browse nosorh members by state]
Community-Based Division

• Programs

• Sec. 330a of Public Health Service Act (PHS)
  ➢ Rural Health Outreach
  ➢ Rural Network Development
  ➢ Rural Network Planning
  ➢ Quality Improvement
  ➢ Delta States Network Grant
  ➢ Rural Health Opioid Program

• Black Lung Clinics Program

• Radiation Exposure Screening Education

• NEW: Rural Maternity and Obstetrics Program
CBD Direct Services

**Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program (Outreach)**
- The program supports projects that demonstrate creative or effective models of outreach and service delivery in rural communities
- 3-year award

**Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program (Quality)**
- Supports rural providers engaged in quality improvement initiatives through evidence-based quality improvement models, test of change focused on improvement and use of health information technology to collect and report data.
- 3-year award

**Delta States Rural Development Network Grant Program (Delta States)**
- To fund organizations located in the eight Delta States (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee) to address unmet local health care needs by providing resources to help rural communities develop partnerships to jointly address health problems that could not be solved by single entities working alone
- 3-year award
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBD Direct Services (cntd.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Lung Clinics Program</strong> (BLCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To assist clinics to conduct outreach and provide services, including primary care and pulmonary rehabilitation, to current and former coal miners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3-year award</td>
</tr>
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### Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (Network Planning)

- To assist in the development of an integrated healthcare network, if the network participants do not have a history of formal collaborative efforts.

- Supports one year of planning with the primary goal of helping networks create a foundation for their infrastructure and focusing member efforts to address important regional or local community health needs.

### Rural Health Network Development Grant Program (Network Development)

- Provides support for mature networks of rural providers to integrate administrative, clinical, technological and financial functions to improve health care delivery.

- 3-year award

### Rural Maternity and Obstetrics Program

- Details to come...
## CBD Upcoming Funding Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program (Outreach)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding applications available in Winter 2020. Awards in Summer 2021.</td>
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## Rural Communities Opioid Response Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>RCORP-Planning</th>
<th>RCORP-Implementation</th>
<th>RCORP-MAT Expansion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To strengthen the capacity of multi-sector consortiums to address</td>
<td>To strengthen and expand SUD/OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery service</td>
<td>To enhance access to medication-assisted treatment within small rural clinic and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>opioid use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery.</td>
<td>delivery.</td>
<td>hospital settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period of performance</strong></td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award amount</strong></td>
<td>Up to $200K</td>
<td>Up to $1 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Awards</strong></td>
<td>95 (FY18); 120 (projected-FY19)</td>
<td>75 (projected-FY19); 34 (projected-FY20)</td>
<td>24 (projected-FY19)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Domestic public or private, non-profit or for-profit, entities. Additional</td>
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<td>applicant and consortium specifications as described in NOFO.</td>
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<td>All services must exclusively target rural areas.</td>
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= opportunities competitive later this year
# RCORP Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RCORP-Technical Assistance</th>
<th>RCORP-Evaluation</th>
<th>RCORP-Centers of Excellence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>To assist rural consortiums with addressing opioid use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery service and workforce needs.</td>
<td>To evaluate the impact of RCORP initiatives through data collection and analysis, and to develop evaluation tools and resources for rural communities.</td>
<td>To support the dissemination of best practices related to the treatment for and prevention of SUDs within rural communities, with a focus on the current opioid crisis, and the development of methods to address future SUD epidemics.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Period of performance</strong></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award amount</strong></td>
<td>$3 million per year</td>
<td>$3 million per year</td>
<td>$6.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Award recipient</strong></td>
<td>JBS International</td>
<td>1 award--TBA</td>
<td>Up to 3 awards--TBA</td>
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= opportunities competitive later this year
RCORP Timeline (Projected)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2021</th>
<th>FY 2022</th>
<th>FY 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY18- FY19</td>
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<td>FY19-FY22</td>
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<td>FY20-FY22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95 Planning awards (1 year)</td>
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<td>1 Technical Assistance cooperative agreement (4 years)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FY18 – FY21</td>
<td>FY19-FY20</td>
<td>FY19 – FY21</td>
<td>120 Planning awards (1 year)</td>
<td>FY19 – FY21</td>
<td>FY19 – FY21</td>
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<td>FY19-FY22</td>
<td>75 Implementation awards (3 years)</td>
<td>FY19-FY22</td>
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<td>24 MAT Expansion awards (3 years)</td>
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<td>FY19 – FY21</td>
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<td>FY19 – FY21</td>
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<td>3 Centers of Excellence cooperative agreements (3 years)</td>
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<td>FY 20 – FY22</td>
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<td>34 Implementation awards (3 years)</td>
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Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT)

**Mission:** Promote the use of telehealth technologies for health care delivery, education, and health information services

**Definition:** The use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration. Technologies include video conferencing, the internet, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications.

**Activities:** Administer eight grant programs, coordinate and collaborate on telehealth activities, monitor telehealth policy
Rural Health Issues: Telehealth

Telehealth is an Important Tool to Increase Access in Rural Communities

Challenges
- Broadband
- Licensure
- Payment
- Low Utilization

HRSA Investments
- New sites and services
- Infrastructure/Technology
- Workforce
- Technical Assistance
Telehealth Resource Centers: Assistance available to anyone interested in learning how to implement telehealth

https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/
The Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to maximize telehealth’s ability to improve health outcomes, care delivery, and cost effectiveness.
Telehealth Network Grant Program

• **Purpose is to demonstrate how telehealth networks are used to:**
  ✓ Expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of health care services;
  ✓ Improve and expand the training of school nurses and providers; and/or
  ✓ Expand and improve the quality of health information available to children’s parents for decision-making.

• **7 cohorts supported:**
  o Traditionally focused on all age populations
  o All clinical healthcare settings
  o Chronic Disease Management services
  o Key measure: Patient Travel Miles Saved

• **Next Competitive FY2020**
Policy Research Division

- Reviews policy and regulations to assess impact on rural providers and beneficiaries

- Funds health services research and disseminates findings to rural stakeholders

- Maintains a clearing house through the Rural Health Information Hub for rural health policy and program information including publications and maps

- Staffs the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health & Human Services to inform the Secretary of HHS
Another Voice for Rural Policy

• National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services

• Issues Policy Briefs and Makes Recommendations to the HHS Secretary

• Focuses on Both Rural Health and Rural Human Services Issues

https://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/rural/publications/
Resources
Rural Health Research

Makes FORHP-funded research to rural stakeholders at the national, state, and location level with the goal of informing and raising awareness of key policy issues

https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/
Value Based Care in Rural

Inform rural health care providers and stakeholders about the impacts of changes in the health care delivery system and provide technical assistance to rural providers in identifying new approaches to health care delivery for their communities

• Tools & Resources
• Explanation of Programs & Demonstrations
• Profiles in Innovation

https://ruralhealthvalue.public-health.uiowa.edu/
One Stop for Rural Health and Human Services Information

A gateway to information on rural health for residents who live in rural areas as well as other rural health stakeholders

www.ruralhealthinfo.org
Focus on …

• Rural-focused Funding opportunities
• Policy and Regulatory Developments Affecting Rural Providers and Communities
• Rural Research Findings
• Policy Updates from a Rural Perspective

To sign up: Email Michelle Daniels at: mdaniels@hrsa.gov
Questions?
Contact Information

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Phone: 301-443-8349

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

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