Weekly Update

July 19th, 2021

Check out our newest podcast episode!

VRHA News
National News

OMB Notice of Decision on Updates to MSAs

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced the adoption of 2020 Standards for Delineating Core Based Statistical Areas. Five of the 6 proposed changes from the Notice published on January 19, 2021 were finalized in the announcement.

NRHA is supportive of OMB's decision to not accept Recommendation 1 of the 2020 Standards for Delineating Core Based Statistical Areas to increase the minimum urban area population to qualify as an MSA from 50,000 to 100,000. In our comments to OMB, NRHA noted that a more gradual approach to addressing MSA and MiSA designations would be favorable to rural health care providers and the communities they serve and that OMB did not provide sufficient justification for the proposed policy change of doubling the threshold. We requested that OMB research the potential unintended consequences of such a significant shift in policy before accepting the recommendation.

Post-COVID Rural Healthcare Outlook w/ Alan Morgan, CEO NRHA (Part II)

Second part of a two-part blog series with NRHA Partner Medhost, focusing on vaccinating the rural health care workforce and improving technology infrastructures. “In the effort to keep rural communities healthy, the first area of focus concerning vaccination in a rural context must be rural health care workers,” Morgan says, encouraging leaders to initiate conversations. NRHA recently launched the association’s rural COVID-19 vaccination toolkit to assist in vaccine access and education efforts.
Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy is issuing the first Surgeon General’s Advisory of this Administration to warn the American public about the urgent threat of health misinformation. Health misinformation, including disinformation, have threatened the U.S. response to COVID-19 and continue to prevent Americans from getting vaccinated, prolonging the pandemic and putting lives at risk, and the advisory encourages technology and social media companies to take more responsibility to stop online spread of health misinformation.

**Calendar**

**Healthcare Discovery Symposium**  
July 20-22, 2021  8:30 am - 3:30 pm

This free virtual event is an exciting and informative multi-day series that provides insight into various healthcare services, featuring special interest presentations, a non-clinical corporate panel, and career development opportunities including mock interviews, and resume building.

**US Hepatitis Academic Mentorship Program Virtual Summit**  
July 27, 2021  9:45 am - 1:30 pm

The US-HAMP (United States Hepatitis Academic Mentorship Program), a program of the Kentucky Rural Health Association would like to invite you to the US-HAMP Summit on July 27, 2021. This will be a virtual event for Key State Leaders. Please refer to HAMP attachment for agenda/program about US-HAMP.

**COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force Meeting**  
July 30, 2021  2:00 - 6:00 pm

Addressing future pandemic preparedness, mitigation, and resilience needed to ensure equitable response and recovery in communities of color and other underserved populations. This meeting is open to the public and will be live-streamed at [www.hhs.gov/live](http://www.hhs.gov/live). Information about the meeting will be posted on the HHS Office of Minority Health website: [www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/healthequitytaskforce/](http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/healthequitytaskforce/) prior to the meeting.

**Center for Substance Abuse Treatment National Advisory Council Meeting**  
August 12, 2021  1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Agenda items will include an update on CSAT activities; a discussion with SAMHSA leadership; and a discussion of recovery and recovery support. Registration required.

**Resources**

**Rural Migrant Health**
This recently updated topic guide focuses on the healthcare barriers and health of migrant and seasonal agricultural workers and now includes information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Access to Affordable Care in Rural America: Current Trends and Key Challenges**

Describes geographic and demographic challenges that contribute to healthcare access and health disparities in rural areas. Covers patterns of insurance coverage between rural and urban areas, healthcare provider shortages, and rural hospital vulnerability and closures. Discusses programs and services supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to reduce barriers to care in rural communities, including telehealth, healthcare workforce programs, and Rural Health Clinics and community health centers.

**Rural Communities at Risk: Widening Health Disparities Present New Challenges in Aftermath of Pandemic**

Describes the health status, health disparities, and socioeconomic disparities of vulnerable rural communities. Analyzes the relationship between rural community vulnerability and the stability of the rural health safety net. Includes information on racial health disparities within rural communities.

**Provider Relief Fund Reporting Portal and Technical Assistance Webinar**

The Provider Relief Fund Reporting Portal is now open for reporting on the use of funds. Providers who received one or more PRF payments exceeding $10,000, in the aggregate, during a Payment Received Period must come in and report.

For additional assistance, reference the following resources:

- [Register to attend](#) the next technical assistance webinar: Tuesday, July 20, 3 p.m. ET
- [Stakeholder Toolkit](#)
- [Stakeholder One-pager](#)

These resources and more may be found on the HHS Reporting and Auditing webpage. Real-time assistance is available by calling the Provider Support Line at (866) 569-3522; for TTY dial 711. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday.

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**Funding Opportunities**

**RADx-UP CDCC Community Collaboration Mini-Grant Program** *NEW*

Open to community serving organizations, faith-based organizations, and tribal nations and organizations to help advance capacity, training, support, and community experience with COVID-19 testing initiatives. The **RADx-UP CDCC Rapid Research Pilot Program** is also open to universities and non-profits both within and outside of the RADx-UP network and will support the implementation of novel or emerging testing technologies in communities.
Promoting Vaccine Confidence in Local Communities through Partnership with Regional Health Offices *NEW*

Funding for local public health agencies and other eligible organizations to establish partnerships with community stakeholders to increase vaccine confidence among populations with low vaccination rates, including rural communities. 

Application Deadline: August 17, 2021

Teaching Health Center Planning and Development Program *NEW*

Planning and development grants to establish new accredited or expanded community-based primary care residency programs in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine-pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, and/or geriatrics. The program is designed to support the expansion of the primary care physician and dental workforce in rural and underserved communities.

Application Deadline: August 30, 2021

Teaching Health Center Planning and Development -Technical Assistance *NEW*

A cooperative agreement with a single entity to provide technical assistance for HRSA’s Teaching Health Center Planning and Development Program (THCPD) award recipients to support the creation of new accredited community-based primary care residency programs in rural and underserved communities.

Application Deadline: August 30, 2021

Service Area Competition Funding for Health Center Program (Areas Served with a Project Period Start Date of April 1, 2022) *NEW*

Funding to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services to an underserved area or population. Areas with an April 1, 2022 project period start date are eligible to apply.

Application Deadline: September 7, 2021

Wilderness and Austere Medicine Fellowship *NEW*

A year-long training experience for physicians to develop clinical skills and leadership capacity to provide high quality healthcare in resource limited settings and prepare for leadership positions in the field of wilderness and austere medicine.

Application Deadline: September 15, 2021

Appalachian Community Fund Technical Assistance Grants *NEW*

Funding for technical assistance needs for community-based organizations that address underlying causes of economic and social distress in the Appalachian region.

Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.

Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) *NEW*
Provides low interest loans to intermediaries that re-lend to businesses to improve economic conditions and create jobs in rural communities.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.**

**APhA Foundation Incentive Grants**

Offers pharmacists seed money to implement or support an innovative patient care service within their pharmacy practice. Pharmacists in rural areas have received funding in previous rounds.

**Application Deadline: August 23, 2021**

**Medline Community Impact Grant Program**

The Medline Community Impact Grant Program supports nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and its territories that address prevalent health challenges, stimulate health equity, and improve population health in under-resourced areas. Health outcomes for people living in vulnerable communities, and already disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health (the economic and social conditions that influence health status), are at an even greater health risk. Medline will provide grants of up to $25,000 for community-centered solutions to health challenges that offer immediate impact on these vulnerable communities. (Healthcare providers are not eligible to apply.)

**Application Deadline: August 27, 2021**

**MultiPlan Rural Health Grant**

Grants to help **healthcare providers in rural areas** introduce or expand services, education, screenings and other programs aimed at improving the health of people in their communities.

**Application Deadline: August 27, 2021**

**integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (iTHRIV) Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies Program**

Designed to help researchers transition from early-stage seed grants and proof-of-concept studies to translational research and clinical applications. Successful applicants will receive funding for one year starting in February 2022. Proposals can include the full range of translation from the laboratory to the clinical area. Areas of particular interest include: Innovative uses of data science to improve health, research focused on health disparities, team science collaborations across two or more iTHRIV partner institutions.

**Application Deadline: August 30, 2021**

**integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (iTHRIV) Community Organization and Research Institution Partnership**

This funding opportunity is specifically interested in applications that seek to reduce health disparities and improve health among communities that experience poorer health outcomes and have historically been excluded from opportunities to engage in research (e.g. racial/ethnic minorities, rural communities, women, low-income families). Projects may target direct health outcomes (e.g. improved screening rates, glycemic control,
physical activity, diet, etc.) and/or social determinants of health. Projects should address needs that are identified through a community health prioritization process or targeted needs assessment that includes appropriate primary and/or secondary data.

Application Deadline: August 30, 2021

Rural Health Fellows Program

A year-long, intensive fellowship program designed to develop a community of rural health leaders.

Application Deadline: September 3, 2021

Rural Healthcare Provider Transition Project (RHPTP)

Technical assistance for rural healthcare providers to build capacity in value-based care (VBC), with emphasis on efficiency, quality, patient experience, and safety. The program's goal is to guide small rural hospitals and rural health clinics that are not currently participating in VBC to prepare for participation in a health system focused on value.

Application Deadline: September 10, 2021

Foundation for Rural Service Community Grant Program

Grants to support a variety of local efforts to build and sustain a high quality of life in rural communities across America. Focus areas include business development, community development, education, and telecommunications.

Application Deadline: September 15, 2021

Business and Industry CARES Act Loan Guarantee Program

A USDA program for lenders to guarantee their loans to rural businesses and agricultural producers to supplement their working capital to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Application Deadline: September 15, 2021

Massachusetts General Hospital Fellowship Program in Rural Health Leadership

A full-time fellowship for early-career clinicians who have an interest in partnering with rural communities to improve health. The fellowship includes a Master's Degree in Public Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and focused clinical time in Rosebud, South Dakota at an Indian Health Service site.

Application Deadline: September 30, 2021

EMS Leadership Academy and Rural Scholarships

A two-part, 60-hour leadership program designed to prepare participants to lead and manage EMS agencies. Scholarships are available for rural EMS providers.

Application Deadline: October 20, 2021
The Home Depot Foundation: Community Impact Grants Program

The Home Depot Foundation’s Community Impact Grants Program provides support to nonprofit organizations and public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve their communities. The Program focuses on support for organizations that serve veterans in local communities, as well as organizations that serve vulnerable and underserved communities. Grants of up to $5,000 are made in the form of The Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services.

Requests will be accepted on a rolling basis through Dec 31, 2021

Dissemination and Implementation Research in Health (R01, R03, and R21)

Funding for research that seeks to identify, develop, test, evaluate, and/or refine strategies to disseminate and implement evidence-based practices into public health, clinical practice, and community settings. This program is featured in the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences Selected List of Funding Opportunities Relevant to Rural Cancer Control.

Application Deadline: May 7, 2022

AHRQ Small Research Grant Program (R03)

Supports different types of health services research projects, including pilot and feasibility studies; secondary analysis of existing data; small, self-contained research projects; development of research methodology; and development of new research technology. Rural and frontier areas are considered a priority population.

Application Deadline: July 6, 2022

AHRQ Health Services Research Demonstration and Dissemination Grants (R18)

Supports the dissemination and implementation of research projects related to AHRQ’s mission to produce evidence to make healthcare safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable. AHRQ’s priorities include an interest in rural and frontier healthcare delivery.

Application Deadline: September 30, 2022

Long-Term Effects of Disasters on Health Care Systems Serving Health Disparity Populations (R01- Clinical Trial Optional)

Grants for research focused on understanding the long-term effects of natural and/or human-made disasters on healthcare systems serving health disparity populations. Health disparity populations include, but are not limited to, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and underserved rural populations.

Application Deadline: September 7, 2023

Co-infection and Cancer (R01 and R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

Grants for research on the roles of co-infection and cancer to inform prevention and treatment strategies for infection-related cancers. Applicants are encouraged to investigate
co-infection and its relation to causes of risk among racially/ethnically diverse populations and those from urban and rural areas who are poor and medically underserved, and populations who may have a disproportionate burden of infection-related cancers.

**Application Deadline: January 7, 2023**

**Comprehensive Care for Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus from Populations with Health Disparities (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)**

Funding for research focused on developing and testing strategies that adapt/implement recommended guidelines of comprehensive clinical care for individuals with Type 2 diabetes from health disparity populations.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Telehealth Strategies for Individuals with HIV and Substance Use Disorders**

Notice of Special Interest for research to explore and develop telehealth methods and strategies for diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and population analysis in individuals living with HIV and substance use disorder.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**The Role of Work in Health Disparities in the U.S. (R01 Clinical Trials Optional)**

Grants for innovative population-based research in how work or occupation influences health outcomes and health status among health care disparity populations and how work functions as a social determinant of health.

**Application Deadline: September 8, 2024**

**DATA 2000 Waiver Training Payment Program**

One-time direct payment of $3,000 to Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics for each eligible provider who possesses a DATA 2000 waiver to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**SEARCH - Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households**

Funding for financially distressed rural communities of less than 2,500 people to assist with feasibility studies, design assistance, and technical assistance on water and waste disposal projects.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.**

**Healthy Food Financing Initiative Technical Assistance**

As part of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), the Reinvestment Fund provides technical assistance for early stage healthy food access projects in underserved areas with a focus on management, financial health, and operations.
Application Deadline: Accepted on an ongoing basis

**American Electric Power Foundation Grants**

Supports nonprofits working in the areas of hunger, housing, health and safety, human services, education, and the environment in American Electric Power's eleven state service area.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) J-1 Visa Waiver Program**

Offers a J-1 Visa waiver to foreign physicians who commit to serving for 3 years in rural Appalachian areas, allowing them to remain in the United States.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Appalachian Community Fund Technical Assistance Grants**

Funding for technical assistance needs for community-based organizations that address underlying causes of economic and social distress in the Appalachian region.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Scholarship**

Scholarships for nurse practitioners working in safety-net settings to pursue a post-master's certificate as a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Southeast Rural Community Assistance Loan Fund Program**

Community development loans to local governments, public service authorities, user associations, nonprofit organizations, and other community entities for the development and/or construction of large-scale community projects.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Virginia AHEC Scholars Program**

A multidisciplinary certificate program for health professions students in Virginia that offers opportunities for hands-on training, experience in rural and underserved communities, and networking with other students and professionals.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Virginia EMS Scholarship**

Scholarships to support qualified applicants seeking to earn an initial or advanced EMS credential within Virginia.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Evidence for Action: Investigator-Initiated Research to Build a Culture of Health**
Grants for research that expands the evidence needed to build a Culture of Health. A Culture of Health is broadly defined as one in which good health and well-being flourish across geographic, demographic, and social sectors; public and private decision making is guided by the goal of fostering equitable communities; and everyone has the opportunity to make choices that lead to healthy lifestyles.

**Application Deadline: Accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Virtual Living Room - Using Technology to Address the Critical Healthcare Needs of Veterans in Rural Areas**

A grant program that combines rural technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs resources, and local support to provide solutions to improve healthcare access for veterans in rural areas.

**Application Deadline: Accepted on an ongoing basis**

**COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund**

The US Department of Health and Human Services, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has announced a new program covering costs of administering COVID-19 vaccines to patients enrolled in health plans that either do not cover vaccination fees or cover them with patient cost-sharing. Since providers cannot bill patients for COVID-19 vaccination fees, this new program, the COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund (CAF), addresses an outstanding compensation need for providers on the front lines vaccinating underinsured patients. The CAF is funded through the Provider Relief Fund Program and will accept eligible claims from providers dated on or after December 14, 2020.

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Pioneering Ideas Brief Proposals**

Grants for innovative projects that are working to build a culture of health, ensuring that everyone has access to the care they need and all families have the opportunity to make healthier choices.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**Angel Flight East COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment and Vaccine Transport**

A volunteer pilot network that transports personal protective equipment and COVID-19 vaccines for distribution to areas in need.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**HUD Section 242: Hospital Mortgage Insurance Program**

Loan and mortgage insurance program to help acute care hospital facilities with remodeling, expansion, modernization, equipment, refinancing, and acquisition. Small, rural Critical Access Hospitals are eligible to apply.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**

**COVID Tech Connect Smart Device Donation Program**
A smart device donation program for hospitals, care facilities, and hospice centers to allow critically ill COVID-19 patients to connect with their loved ones. Priority is given to those in greatest need, including facilities in **rural areas**.

**Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.**