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**VIRGINIA  
RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

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**February 26, 2024**



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**VRHA News**

## **Advocacy Alert!** **2024 General Assembly**

The Virginia General Assembly has just entered the Crossover period for the 2024 Assembly Session. **This is a key time to contact your Senator and Delegate and talk to them about the issues that effect health and healthcare in rural Virginia.** Please call, email, or visit their offices to share the VRHA 2024 Policy Priorities.

Here are links to contact the [Senate](#) and [House](#) as well as information to look up your Senator and Delegate if you are not sure who they are.

[View 2024 Policy Priorities](#)

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## **Virginia News**

### **[VTN Annual Telehealth Benchmarking Survey](#)**

#### **Do you use telehealth in your practice?**

Take this [brief survey](#) from the Virginia Telehealth Network to help shape policies and guide future telehealth initiatives in Virginia. **Deadline to complete the survey is March 15, 2024.**

For more information about this survey and to view last year's results, visit <https://www.ehealthvirginia.org/telehealth-survey/>.

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## **National News**

### **[Seeking Public Comment on Generic Drug Shortages and Competition Amongst Powerful Middlemen](#)**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are seeking public comment regarding market concentration among large health care group purchasing organizations (GPOs) and drug wholesalers, as well as information detailing their contracting practices. The joint [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) seeks to understand how both GPOs and drug wholesalers impact the overall generic pharmaceutical market, including how both entities may influence the pricing and

availability of pharmaceutical drugs. The joint RFI is asking these questions to help uncover the root causes and potential solutions to drug shortages.

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### **[Chartis Report: 418 Rural Hospitals at risk of Closure](#)**

A new report from Chartis analyzed 16 vulnerability indicators and found nine were statistically significant in predicting hospital closures, including: case mix index, Medicaid expansion, average daily census swing, occupancy, government control status and years of negative operating margin. The hospital's average length of stay and change in net patient revenue also factored into its risk of closure. **10-15% of rural hospitals in Virginia are at risk for closure.**

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## **Resources**

### **[Rural Health Insights for Each State & Congressional District](#)**

Provides access to state and congressional district data on healthcare infrastructure, healthcare workforce by profession, health outcomes, and social determinants of health.

### **[2022 National Profile of Local Health Departments](#)**

Provides a study of local health department infrastructure and practice. Discusses topics including leadership, workforce, emergency preparedness and response, public health policy, information technology, financing, and more. Includes analysis by degree of urbanization throughout.

### **[State Medicaid & CHIP Telehealth Toolkit](#)**

Toolkit to support state policymakers in expanding the use of telehealth to deliver Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program services. Provides information on telehealth flexibilities under Medicaid and CHIP; billing best practices; strategies for telehealth in value-based care; best practices from states during the COVID-19 public health emergency; strategies to promote the delivery of accessible and culturally competent care via telehealth; evaluation strategies to understand how telehealth affects quality, outcomes, and cost, and more. Offers state policy and operational considerations; information about common telehealth modalities; frequently asked questions for states to

consider as they explore whether to expand the use of telehealth; Medicaid managed care and fee-for-service state checklists; and other planning tools. Includes information about using telehealth to deliver services to medically underserved and rural communities.

### **[U.S. Department of Agriculture Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#)**

Offers overview of 7 equity strategies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) including promoting rural prosperity, access to USDA programs, nutrition security, wildfire prevention, increasing access to federal funding, tribal sovereignty, civil rights enforcement, and more. Highlights equity progress updates and accomplishments. Discusses rural throughout.

### **[Community Health Center Climate Resilience Learning Collaborative](#)**

Learning collaborative for clinical and administrative health center representatives to identify challenges related to a changing climate, specifically extreme heat. Health center teams will engage in interactive activities to enhance preparedness and develop strategies to build resilience to extreme heat.

### **[In Search of Rural: How Varying Definitions Shape Housing Research](#)**

Describes the effect of rural definitions on rural housing research. Categorizes rural definitions by type, and compares data produced by applying 11 rural definitions to 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Discusses definition impacts on estimated rural demographics and housing stock, characteristics, and challenges. Includes state-by-state estimates of rural population share for each definition.

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## **Funding Opportunities**

### **[Capital Magnet Fund](#) \*NEW\***

Grants to finance affordable housing and community revitalization efforts that benefit low-income people and communities.

**Application Deadline: March 14, 2024**

### **[Healthy Eating Research: Supportive and Equitable Policies and Programs Enabling All U.S. Children and Adolescents to Thrive](#)** \*NEW\*

Funding for research on supportive family policies and programs with a potential to impact equitable access to nutritious food in communities, nutrition security, diet quality, and improved nutrition and health outcomes.

**Letter of Intent (Required): April 3, 2024**

**Application Deadline: July 10, 2024**

**Licensure Portability Grant Program \*NEW\***

Funding for state licensing boards to develop and implement state policies that will reduce statutory and regulatory barriers to telehealth, with the ultimate goal of addressing workforce shortages and improving access to care in underserved and **rural** areas.

**Application Deadline: April 8, 2024**

**Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment \*NEW\***

Grants to implement screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment services for children, adolescents, and adults in primary care and community health settings with a focus on screening for underage drinking, opioid use, and other substance use.

**Application Deadline: April 12, 2024**

**Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Assistance Program \*NEW\***

Grants for projects designed to address and prevent sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in **rural** communities.

**Application Deadline: Apr 12, 2024**

**First Responders - Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act Grants \*NEW\***

Funding to support first responders and members of other key community sectors on training, administering, and distributing naloxone and other Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved overdose reversal medications or devices. Funding is set aside for recipients serving **rural** communities.

**Application Deadline: April 15, 2024**

**Provider's Clinical Support System - Universities \*NEW\***

Funding to support graduate-level education for students in medical, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, and other eligible advanced practice nursing programs with a focus on treating opioid use disorders and prescribing medications for opioid use disorder in office-based settings upon graduation.

**Application Deadline: April 15, 2024**

**[Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part C Capacity Development Grants](#) \*NEW\***

Funding to assist eligible entities to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and to increase their capacity to develop, enhance, or expand access to high quality HIV primary healthcare services for low-income, uninsured, underinsured, and people in underserved and **rural** communities.

**Application Deadline: April 16, 2024**

**[Drug-Free Communities Support Program](#) \*NEW\***

Awards funding to coalitions working to reduce substance abuse among youth and to establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, organizations, and governmental entities.

**Application Deadline: April 17, 2024**

**[The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Competitive Grants](#)**

**\*NEW\***

Funding to support projects that will increase the purchase of fruit and vegetables among low-income consumers who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by providing incentives at the point of purchase.

**Application Deadline: May 14, 2024**

**[Rural Healthcare Provider Transition Project](#) \*NEW\***

Technical assistance and training 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: August 15, 2024**

### **American Hospital Association Next Generation Leaders Fellowship**

A fellowship program designed to empower healthcare leaders to bring about lasting change in the hospital and health systems in which they serve. **Rural** applicants are encouraged.

**Application Deadline: March 29, 2024**

### **Rural Health Care Telecommunications (Telecom) Program**

Assistance to healthcare providers for eligible expenses related to telecommunications and voice services for the use of telemedicine and telehealth.

**Application Deadline: April 1, 2024**

### **Grants to Expand Substance Abuse Treatment Capacity in Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts**

Grants to enhance and expand substance use disorder treatment services in existing drug courts, recognizing the need for treatment instead of incarceration for individuals with substance use disorders.

**Application Deadline: April 1, 2024**

### **Rural Health Care Program – Healthcare Connect Fund**

Provides assistance to healthcare providers for eligible expenses related to broadband connectivity at a flat discounted rate of 65%. Participants can apply as a member of a consortium or a stand-alone entity.

**Application Deadline: April 1, 2024**

### **State Maternal Health Innovation**

Funding to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity in states, including for populations experiencing disparities in maternal health outcomes.

**Application Deadline: April 2, 2024**

### **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (ANE-SANE) Program**

Grants to increase the number of registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and forensic nurses trained and certified as sexual assault nurse examiners, with a

preference for projects that will substantially benefit rural or underserved populations or help meet public health nursing needs in state or local health departments. The program goal is to train providers to conduct sexual assault forensic examinations, which provide for better physical and mental healthcare for survivors, including trauma-informed care, and better evidence collection.

**Application Deadline: April 2, 2024**

### **PCORI Engagement Award: Capacity Building**

Funds projects that encourage the integration of patients, caregivers, clinicians, and other stakeholders as members of the patient-centered clinical effectiveness research process.

**Letter of Intent (Required): April 4, 2024**

**Application Deadline: July 10, 2024**

### **Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program**

Grants to state designated entities to assist Critical Access Hospitals with quality and performance activities, including: stabilizing **rural** hospital finance; integrating emergency medical services (EMS) into their healthcare systems; incorporating population health; and fostering innovative models of healthcare.

**Application Deadline: April 16, 2024**

### **Staff Sergeant Fox Suicide Prevention Grants**

Community-based grants for eligible entities to provide, or coordinate the provision of, suicide prevention services to eligible veterans and their families. Priority is given to **rural** communities, tribal lands, and medically underserved areas.

**Application Deadline: April 26, 2024**

### **Technology Development to Reduce Health Disparities (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)**

Funding to develop and translate medical technologies aimed at reducing disparities in healthcare access and health outcomes. Medical technologies should be effective, affordable, culturally acceptable, and deliverable to those who need them. Priority health disparity populations include racial and ethnic minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, sexual and gender minorities, and medically underserved populations in **rural** and urban areas.



**Application Deadline: May 2, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Research on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Risks for Abuse and Injury Among Vulnerable Children and Youth](#)**

Notice of Special Interest to fund research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and risks for abuse and injury among vulnerable children and youth. Emphasis is placed on disparity populations related to abuse and neglect prior to the pandemic, as well as populations that have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus. Disparity populations include LGBT youth and children seen at **rural** emergency departments.

**Application Deadline: May 8, 2024**

**[AHRQ Safety Program for Telemedicine](#)**

Free learning cohorts of healthcare professionals who use telemedicine as a care delivery model. The 2024 cohort will begin in June 2024 and will focus on appropriate antibiotic use while maintaining patient satisfaction and reducing potential side effects in patients seen via telemedicine. Providers and practices from **rural** communities are encouraged to apply.

**Application Deadline: May 23, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Research on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Risks for Abuse and Injury Among Vulnerable Children and Youth](#)**

Notice of Special Interest to fund research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and risks for abuse and injury among vulnerable children and youth. Emphasis is placed on disparity populations related to abuse and neglect prior to the pandemic, as well as populations that have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus. Disparity populations include American Indians, Alaska Natives, LGBT youth, and children seen at **rural** emergency departments.

**Application Deadline: May 31, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Dissemination and Implementation Research to Advance Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Preventive Interventions in School Settings](#)**

Notice of Special Interest for dissemination and implementation research to support innovative approaches to overcoming barriers to the adoption, adaptation, integration, scale-up, and sustainability of evidence-based interventions to support children's mental, emotional, and behavioral health in school settings. Health disparity populations, including individuals living in **rural** areas, are a priority.

**Application Deadline: June 5, 2024**

#### **[AHRQ Health Services Research Projects](#)**

Support for specified health services 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: July 8, 2024**

#### **[AHRQ Small Research Grant Program](#)**

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 8, 2024**

#### **[Berkeley Public Health Online Rural Health Innovation Program](#)**

Scholarships for public health leaders working in rural communities to attend the online MPH program at Berkeley and participate in a **rural** health curricula cohort.

**Application Deadline: August 8, 2024**

#### **[Virginia Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program](#)**

Offers a J-1 Visa waiver to foreign physicians who commit to serving for 3 years in an underserved area of Virginia, allowing them to remain in the United States.

**Application Deadline: August 31, 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**

**[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**

**[Effectiveness of Implementing Sustainable Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices in Low-Resource Settings to Achieve Mental Health Equity for Traditionally Underserved Populations \(R01\)](#)**

Grants for research to develop and test the effectiveness of strategies for implementation and sustainable delivery of evidence-based mental health treatments and services to improve mental health outcomes for underserved populations in under-resourced settings. Under-resourced settings and populations include members of minority groups, other individuals experiencing disparities in mental health outcomes, and people living in a geographic area with a shortage of healthcare services.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

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**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**Innovative Mental Health Services Research Not Involving Clinical Trials**

Funding for innovative research that will inform and support the delivery of high-quality, continuously improving mental health services to benefit individuals with, or at risk for developing, a mental illness. Research on innovative service delivery models that seek to reduce disparities in service access, quality, and outcomes for racial and ethnic minority groups, individuals limited by language or cultural barriers, sexual and gender minorities, individuals living in **rural** areas, socioeconomically disadvantaged persons, and other underserved groups is encouraged.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**Health Care Models for Persons with Multiple Chronic Conditions from Populations that Experience Health Disparities: Advancing Health Care towards Health Equity (R01 - Clinical Trials Optional)**

Funding for research to study the effective adaptation, integration, and implementation of recommended guidelines of care of persons with multiple chronic conditions from populations that experience health disparities.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**Innovative Mental Health Services Research Not Involving Clinical Trials (R01)**

Funding for innovative research that will inform and support the delivery of high-quality, continuously improving mental health services to benefit individuals with, or at risk for developing, a mental illness. Research on innovative service delivery models that seek to reduce disparities in service access, quality, and outcomes for racial and ethnic minority groups, individuals limited by language or cultural barriers, sexual and gender minorities, individuals living in **rural** areas, socioeconomically disadvantaged persons, and other underserved groups is encouraged.

**Application Deadline: September 7, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Research to Improve Pre-Pregnancy Care and Enhance Healthy Birth Intervals](#)**

Notice of Special Interest for research that assesses the social and behavioral processes that facilitate or hinder the achievement of healthy interbirth intervals and to identify public health interventions that promote healthy birth outcomes.

**Application Deadline: September 8, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Social, Behavioral, and Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Underserved and Vulnerable Populations](#)**

Notice of Special Interest for research in understanding the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to help prepare more effectively for future public health emergencies. Populations that experience health disparities are a particular focus.

**Application Deadline: September 8, 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 disparity populations and how work functions as a social determinant of health.

**Application Deadline: September 8, 2024**

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

**Application Deadline: September 8, 2024**

**[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Disparities Affecting Healthcare Utilization and Health Outcomes Among Childhood Cancer Survivors](#)**

Notice of Special Interest for research to understand and address the full spectrum of factors that contribute to disparities in survivorship care, healthcare utilization, and health outcomes among childhood cancer survivors. Proposed projects must include populations commonly experiencing disparities based on race or ethnicity, sex, sexual or gender minority status, insurance status, **rural** residence, socioeconomic disadvantage, or other demonstrated differences.

**Application Deadline: October 9, 2024**

**[Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program](#)**

Funding for community-driven projects that address climate challenges and reduce pollution while strengthening disadvantaged communities.

**Application Deadline: November 21, 2024**

**[Stimulating Research to Understand and Address Hunger, Food, and Nutrition Insecurity](#)**

Notice of Special Interest for research on interventions that address nutrition security and the mechanisms of food insecurity on a variety of health outcomes. Priority populations include racial/ethnic minority populations, lower income populations, and **rural** and remote populations including tribal communities and insular areas.

**Application Deadline: November 29, 2024**

**[Stand Down Grants](#)**

Provides funding for events that offer homeless veteran populations a variety of social services designed to help them to reintegrate into their communities, such as housing, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

**Application Deadline: September 30, 2025**

For ongoing funding opportunities, [visit our website](#)

**[Virginia Rural Health Association](#)**

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