Rural Health Challenges in the Era of COVID
National Rural Health Day

November 19th, 2020

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Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People
2020 & Rural Health

Community Health Access and Rural Transformation (CHART) Model Fact Sheet

Aug 11, 2020  |  Innovation models

Executive Order on Improving Rural Health and Telehealth Access

Health Affairs
Rural Health Challenges in the Era of COVID

Source: CDC COVID Data Tracker: https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#/pop-factors_newcases
Rural Health Challenges in the Era of COVID

- Limited Inpatient and ICU Capacity
- Workforce Shortages
- Supply Line Gaps
- Financial Vulnerability
- Ensuring Resiliency
Rural Health Challenges in the Era of COVID

Existing Rural Disparities Exacerbated by the Pandemic

In 2019, CDC noted a higher rate of potentially excess deaths occurred among rural Americans than urban Americans from the 5 leading causes of death.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/ss/ss6810a1.htm#F1_down; Percentage of deaths that were potentially excess* among persons aged <80 years from the five leading causes of death, by urban-rural county classification — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2017
Addressing Rural COVID Challenges

• Support for RHC COVID-19 Testing
• Provider Relief Payments to Rural Hospitals & Providers
• Funding to Support Tribes
• Expansion and Support for Telehealth
Addressing Rural COVID Challenges

Regulatory Flexibilities During the Public Health Emergency

- Telehealth and Virtual Services
- Expansion of Service Sites
- Paperwork
- Workforce
- Payment
- Data Reporting

Key NIH Action Items from:
• National Cancer Institute (NCI)
• National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)
• National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)

Other Key Action Items:
• Elevation of Telehealth in HHS
• Rural Maternity Pilot
• Healthy Rural Hometowns Initiative
Looking Beyond COVID:
The Health Rural Hometown Initiative (HRHI)

Potentially Excess Deaths from the Five Leading Causes of Death in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties — United States, 2010–2017

Rural Action Plan

- Healthy Rural Hometown Initiative

The Healthy Rural Hometown Initiative is a five-year multi-program effort to identify strategies to address the underlying factors that drive growing rural disparities related to heart disease, cancer, unintentional injury, chronic lower respiratory disease, and stroke. This initiative has two phases. The first is to align and target community-focused funding streams within FORHP to address the underlying factors that affect growing rural disparities related to these five causes of excess death. Beginning in FY 2020, HRSA is implementing strategies to target approximately 20 percent of its rural community-based programs to focus on these disparities and encourage other recipients to include human service providers and state Medicaid stakeholders in their networks to both improve health and reduce long-term costs associated with treatment.
Rural Health - Opportunities for Collaboration

Looking to 2021 and Beyond

- Build on existing work with NHLBI, NCI and NCATS
- Identify potential collaborations on Healthy Rural Hometowns Initiative
- Collaborations on Rural Research
Resources

https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/

https://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

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