



The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), serves as the primary federal agency responsible for directly supporting rural communities through policy, research, and innovative service delivery. FORHP advises the Secretary of Health and Human Services on the impact various policies may have on the delivery of health care to residents of rural communities. The Office also directly serves rural communities across the country to increase access to health care on Administration priorities such as growing and training the workforce and expanding maternal and behavioral health services.

Since its establishment in 1987, FORHP has supported innovative efforts to address health care needs and to achieve health equity in rural communities. In FY 2024, FORHP invested over \$365 million to continue to support HRSA's goal to achieve equity for rural Americans by funding efforts to strengthen health care delivery systems, advance maternal health care, reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use disorder, and improve the financial viability of rural hospitals.

### **SUPPORTING RURAL HOSPITALS**

*Rural hospitals play a critical role in the rural health infrastructure, providing essential care to small, isolated, or remote communities.*

#### **FUNDING: \$53.6 million to support small rural hospitals across the country with funding to states**

##### ■ **Program Activities:**

- \$30.7 million through the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program to work with states to assist Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) improve financial and quality performance.
- Within Flex, there is a nearly \$2 million initiative for eight states to strengthen the quality workforce in rural emergency medical service agencies over five years.

##### ■ **Impact:**

- Through the Flex Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project, 71% of CAHs improved in at least one quality measure.

##### ■ **Program Activities:**

- \$20.9 million through the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program to enable states to support small, rural hospitals through investments in hardware, software, and training.

*HRSA funds several free technical assistance programs to help rural hospitals improve and/or maintain continued access to health care services.*

#### **FUNDING: \$17 million to build capacity for small, rural hospitals to provide high quality, efficient care**

##### ■ **Program Activities:**

- Help hospitals and improve health care delivery located within the Mississippi Delta Region, as well as hospitals nationally to strengthen operations.
- Support rural hospitals improve financial and operational performance by funding \$5.4 million through two new programs, Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program and Appalachian Region Healthcare Support Program.

##### ■ **Impact:**

- 80 small rural hospitals and rural health clinics received technical assistance to improve their finances and the quality of the care they provide.

#### **FUNDING: \$5 million to support technical assistance around the new Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) provider type**

- **Program Activities:**
  - Help hospitals explore REH to see if it is a feasible option for a rural community that cannot support inpatient services.
- **Impact:**
  - 112 rural hospitals received technical assistance through the REH Technical Assistance Center.

### **ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

*Through grants, technical assistance to over 250 community-based organizations and building the evidence base, HRSA strengthens the capacity of rural communities to plan for, and provide, behavioral health care services, inclusive of mental health and opioid and substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery services.*

**FUNDING:** \$145 million through the [Rural Communities Opioid Response Program \(RCORP\)](#)

- **Program Activities:**
  - \$15 million to expand or establish new treatment sites and recovery services to promote sustained, long-term recovery for rural individuals.
  - \$95 million to support the continuation of behavioral health and substance use disorder services in rural communities, including the establishment and expansion of new medication-assisted treatment services as well as services supporting children and adolescents, opioid-exposed infants, and their families.
  - \$10 million for three Rural Centers of Excellence on SUD to continue to support the identification and dissemination of best practices related to OUD/SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery.
  - \$15 million to evaluate the impact of RCORP initiative and provide technical assistance to RCORP grant recipients.
- **Impact:**
  - RCORP funding has reached more than 1,900 counties across 47 states and two territories.
  - In FY 2022, RCORP grant recipients provided direct SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services to 2,133,874 rural residents, and ensured that 112,373 rural individuals received medication-assisted treatment for SUD. As a result of RCORP funding, 337 new behavioral health providers are providing services in rural communities.

### **EXPANDING RURAL HEALTH WORKFORCE**

*HRSA continues to make historic investments in the health care workforce. The need for a well-trained, quality health workforce that reflects the diversity of communities in which health professionals practice is greater than ever.*

**FUNDING:** Over \$11 million through the [Rural Residency Planning and Development \(RRPD\) Program](#)

- **Program Activities:**
  - Expand the physician workforce in rural areas through the development of new rural residency programs or Rural Track Programs in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, preventive medicine, psychiatry, or obstetrics and gynecology.
- **Impact:**
  - Through the RRPD Program, 47 programs have achieved accreditation (9 of these programs achieved accreditation in FY2024) and are projected to create 587 residency positions.
  - After achieving accreditation under the RRPD Program, 43 grant recipients participated in the 2024 National Resident Matching Program and matriculated 159 residents for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

**FUNDING:** \$47.2 million through the [Rural Public Health Workforce Training Network \(RPHWTN\) Program](#)

■ **Program Activities:**

- Expand public health capacity by supporting culturally competent and inclusive healthcare job development, training, and placement in rural and tribal communities through the establishment of formal networks addressing the four (4) workforce training tracks.

■ **Impact:**

- The RPHWTN Program expanded health care capacity in rural communities in Year 1 and 2 (August 1, 2022 – July 31, 2024) trained 5151 rural health professionals through cross training and certificate including but not limited to community health workers, peer recovery specialists, doulas, EMTs, paramedics, health IT specialists, certified nurse assistants, dental assistants, respiratory therapists.

**FUNDING:** \$4 million through the [Rural Behavioral Health Workforce Centers](#)

■ **Program Activities:**

- Supported the continuation of four awards in rural counties of the Northern Border Regional Commission states (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York) to improve behavioral health care services through educating and training future and current health professionals and community members in treatment and interventions for behavioral health disorders, including substance use disorder (SUD). This federal-state partnership is helping to develop the next cadre of peer support specialists through individuals in recovery from SUD/OD.

**INCREASING ACCESS TO CARE**

*HRSA works to increase access to high quality healthcare for rural populations through grants to community-based providers.*

**FUNDING:** Nearly \$101 million through [Rural Health Outreach Programs](#) to increase access to high quality health care and expand the delivery of services in rural areas

■ **Impact:**

- Outreach grants provided direct services to over 540,000 unique individuals in the most recent data collection year (2023)

**FUNDING:** \$29 million to improve access to quality care in the Mississippi Delta Region

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$12 million through the Delta States Rural Development Network Program (Delta States) to provide direct health care services and technical assistance to address health disparities related to the leading causes of avoidable death in rural Delta communities.

■ **Impact:**

- During Year 1 (August 2023 – July 2024) of the current project period (August 2023 – July 2026), the Delta States cohort provided direct and indirect services to a total combined and unduplicated population of 228,811 people across the 214 counties/ parishes that they serve.

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$10 million through the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program to provide technical assistance to enhance the healthcare delivery of small rural hospitals and rural health clinics in the Mississippi Delta.
- 40 small rural hospitals, rural health clinics and FQHCs received technical assistance to improve their finances and improve access to care.

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$2.8 million through the Delta Region Rural Health Workforce Training Program to enhance healthcare delivery by creating training programs for administrative support professionals in rural healthcare facilities in the Delta Region.
- Currently, 123 trainees are enrolled in certificate and degree programs designed to build skills to fill critical business operations roles in hospitals with an additional 75 trainees expected to enroll in FY 2024.

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$2.8 million to the Delta Health Systems Implementation Program to improve healthcare delivery by implementing projects to improve the financial sustainability of rural hospitals.
- 8 small rural hospitals received direct funding to complete projects to enhance and improve their financial stability that is sustainable post-Federal investment.

**FUNDING: \$12 million through the [Black Lung Clinics Program \(BLCP\)](#)**

■ **Program Activities:**

- Reduce the morbidity and mortality of active and retired coal miners associated with occupationally related lung disease, such as Progressive Massive Fibrosis, through the delivery of quality medical, outreach, educational, and benefits counseling services; includes \$125,000 in funding for the Black Lung Data and Resource Center Program. The Resource Center assists with data collection and analysis and focuses on strengthening the operational efficiencies of clinics through technical assistance.

■ **Impact:**

- In FY23, the BLCP served a total of 7,381 miners in Appalachia and the western United States. The program reported 2,331 findings consistent with Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis, and 296 findings consistent with Progressive Massive Fibrosis.

**FUNDING: \$4 million to increase capacity and improve access to quality care in the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Area**

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$900,000 through the Rural Northern Border Region Healthcare Support Program, which provides technical assistance to enhance behavioral health, improve workforce recruitment and retention, and assist in health care value efforts, education, and training.

■ **Impact**

- Since 2022, 28 healthcare organizations throughout the NBRC area have received technical assistance. Three educational webinars have also been made available to the public through this program – Value Based Care Webinar Education Series, Project Management Webinar Education, and Innovative Approaches to Rural Healthcare in the Northern Border Region.

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$3.1 million through the Rural Northern Border Region Outreach Program to promote the delivery of health care services to rural underserved populations. HRSA made 13 awards to organizations located in Maine, New York, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

**FUNDING: \$1.8 million through the Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program (RESEP)**

■ **Program Activities:**

- RESEP grantees implement cancer screening and education programs, share information on radiogenic diseases and the importance of early detection, screen eligible individuals for cancer and other radiogenic diseases, and provide appropriate referrals for medical treatment.

■ **Impact:**

- RESEP grantees reached 19,630 individuals via their outreach and education activities, including face-to-face encounters and nearly a thousand people were clinically served with screening, referrals, and RECA claim filing assistance.

*More than 31 million people rely on HRSA-funded health centers for care, including 1.2 million rural residents.*

**ADVANCING MATERNAL HEALTH CARE**

**FUNDING: \$12 million through the [Rural Maternity and Obstetrics Management Strategies \(Rural MOMS\) Program](#)**

■ **Program Activities:**

- Increase access to maternal and obstetrics care in rural communities.

- **Impact:**
  - The awardees have enhanced and expanded care coordination of high-risk pregnancies, telehealth, patient navigation, and direct service initiatives to improve access to maternity care and support services.

**FUNDING: \$2.2 million through the Delta Region Maternal Care Coordination Program**

- **Program Activities:**
  - To expand access to and coordinate health care services before, during, and after pregnancy in the Delta region.
- **Impact:**
  - This first of its kind program is focused on strengthening maternal care and reducing disparities in the Delta Region.
  - Awardees will collectively serve women to improve and increase access to care for pregnant women and new mothers during and after pregnancy in 38 rural Delta counties across three Delta Region states, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee.

**SUPPORTING RURAL RESEARCH, POLICY ANALYSIS, AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

**FUNDING: \$6.9 million the [Rural Health Research Program](#)**

- **Program Activities:**
  - Support policy-oriented health services research to increase the amount of publicly available, high quality, rural focused research to build the evidence base and inform program and policy development.
  - HRSA continues to track access to care, rural hospital financial viability, and [rural hospital closures](#).
- **Impact:**
  - 55 rural research products were released in FY 2024, and 20 of those products were articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

**FUNDING: \$11 million to the [50 State Offices of Rural Health](#)**

- **Program Activities:**
  - Provide technical assistance to rural communities to leverage state and federal resources, funding, and information.

**RESOURCES**

- [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy](#)
- [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Rural Health Information Hub](#)
- [Rural Health Research Gateway](#)
- [FORHP Rural Eligibility](#)
- [HRSA Data Warehouse for Rural Health Investments and Grants](#)