



The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), improves rural health care through two major areas of activity. FORHP advises the Secretary of Health and Human Services on the impact various policies may have on the delivery of healthcare to residents of rural communities. FORHP also administers a variety of state and community-driven grant programs that support local health providers and patients.

FORHP has provided billions of dollars in funding to increase health care access, strengthen health networks, and focus on care quality improvements for Critical Access Hospitals and small rural hospitals. FORHP is also supporting HRSA's goal to achieve health equity by funding efforts to strengthen health care delivery systems, reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use disorder, and provide COVID-19 pandemic relief in rural communities.

By increasing access to quality services and training a more skilled health workforce, these investments from FORHP have allowed communities across the country to improve health outcomes and address health disparities.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

FUNDING: Nearly \$9.5 billion through various Coronavirus relief laws

- **Goals:** To ensure that funds and resources are provided to rural communities to respond to the pandemic
 - **FORHP Activities through the American Rescue Plan (ARP)**
 - \$460 million to support approximately 4,600 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for COVID-19 testing and mitigation activities
 - \$398 million to 1,540 small rural hospitals for COVID-19 testing and mitigation activities
 - \$98 million to support 1,975 RHCs to improve vaccine confidence and counter vaccine hesitancy in rural communities
 - **Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccines**
 - [The Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Distribution Program](#) distributes COVID-19 vaccines directly to RHCs to increase the availability of COVID-19 vaccines in rural communities.
 - **COVID-19 Funding Outside of FORHP**
 - Support ARP payment allocation for \$8.5 billion for health care providers serving rural residents.

ADDRESSING OPIOID USE DISORDER

FUNDING: Approximately \$106 million through the [Rural Communities Opioid Response Program \(RCORP\)](#)

- **Goals:**
 - To strengthen capacity of rural communities to plan for, and provide, opioid and substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery services
 - To build the evidence base for OUD/SUD interventions in rural settings
- **Program Activities:**
 - \$78 million for three-year projects to implement OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services in rural communities and regions
 - \$7.5 million for three-year projects to address the growing challenges surrounding psychostimulant misuse in rural communities
 - \$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, recovery housing, and synthetic opioids
 - \$9 million to evaluate the impact of RCORP initiative and provide technical assistance to RCORP grant recipients

■ **Impact:**

- Since FY 2018, the approximately \$404 million RCORP investment has reached more than 1,500 counties across 47 states and two territories
- FY 2019 RCORP grant recipients provided direct SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services to 366,871 rural residents, and ensured that 23,605 rural individuals received medication-assisted treatment for SUD.

SUPPORTING RURAL HOSPITALS

FUNDING: \$48.5 million to support small rural hospitals across the country with funding to states

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$27.7 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 \$2 million initiative for eight states to improve quality and sustainability of rural emergency medical service agencies over three years.

■ **Impact:**

- Through the Flex Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project, 64.4% of CAHs improved in at least one quality measure

■ **Program Activities:**

- \$20.8 million through the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program to enable states to support small, rural hospitals through investments in hardware, software, and training.

FUNDING: \$11.6 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

INCREASING ACCESS TO CARE

FUNDING: \$36.4 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 approximately 1.9 million unique individuals in the most recent data collection year (2018)
- Over 50% of grantees reported health status improvement in at least one clinical measure

FUNDING: \$24.5 million to improve access to quality care in the Mississippi Delta Region

- **Program Activities:** \$12.5 million through the Delta States Rural Development Network Program to provide direct health care services and technical assistance to address health disparities in rural Delta communities
- **Program Activities:** \$12 million as cited above to the Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program

FUNDING: \$11.4 million through the Black Lung Clinics Program

- **Program Activities:** Reduce the morbidity and mortality of active and retired coal miners associated with occupationally-related lung disease through the delivery of quality medical, outreach, educational, and benefits counseling services; includes \$125,000 in funding for the Black Lung Center for Excellence Program

FUNDING: \$7.5 million through the third cohort of the Rural Residency Planning and Development Program

- **Program Activities:** Expand the physician workforce in rural areas through 10 new residency programs or Rural Training Tracks in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Surgery and Psychiatry

FUNDING: \$2.1 million to increase capacity and improve access to quality care in the Norther Border Regional Commission (NBRC) area

- **Program Activities:** \$1.36 million to help underserved rural NBRC communities identify and better address their health care needs
- **Program Activities:** \$760,000 to improve behavioral health care workforce education and training

INCREASING ACCESS TO CARE (continued)

FUNDING: \$5.3 million through the Rural Maternity and Obstetrics Management Strategies (RMOMS) Program

- **Program Activities:** Through collaboration with the Maternal Child Health Bureau, improve maternal obstetrics care in rural communities

FUNDING: \$1.6 million through the Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program

- **Program Activities:** Develop and support screening and education for individuals affected by uranium mining

FUNDING: \$1 million through the Rural Telementoring Training Center Program

- **Program Activities:** Train academic medical centers and other centers of excellence to create telementoring learning for providers in rural and underserved areas

SUPPORTING RURAL RESEARCH, POLICY ANALYSIS, AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

FUNDING: \$7.2 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
 - HRSA continues to track access to care, rural hospital financial viability, and [rural hospital closures](#).
- **Impact:**
 - 313 rural research products were released in FY 2021, including 236 focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and 27 published in peer-reviewed journals.

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

- **Program Activities:** To link communities with 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](#)