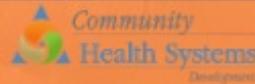


RURAL HEALTH LINK: THE RURAL HEALTH SERVICES QUARTERLY DIGEST



This newsletter is brought to you by the Community Health Systems Development Team at the Georgia Health Policy Center, funded through a contract with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP).

Welcome to the **Rural Health Link: Rural Health Services Quarterly Digest**. This newsletter will share program updates, the technical assistance (TA) schedule of events, as well as a variety of resources focused on rural health services. Each issue will also feature a grantee spotlight article. We welcome your feedback. If you have any comments or recommendations for future content, please reach out to us at chsdtteam@gsu.edu.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT



Grantee Profile -

Health Care Partners Foundation (Colorado and New Mexico)

The Georgia Health Policy Center recently spoke to Rita Torres, the CEO of Health Care Partners Foundation, about efforts to build a comprehensive suite of tools to enhance continuity of care and transitions following the release of incarcerated individuals back into the community.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC UPDATES

Rural Health Care Coordination Program (Care Coordination)



Spring is for strategic planning!

Your strategic plan is due on June 1 through the Electronic Handbook. Your technical assistance (TA) provider is available to assist you in developing your process to engage partners, gather information and input, and facilitate key conversations.

Grantee Meeting

The Georgia Health Policy Center TA Team, in collaboration with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), is planning to host a virtual meeting this summer for grantees in the Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement and Rural Health Care Coordination grant programs. It is anticipated this meeting will take place in mid-July. More details, including final dates, are forthcoming. Stay tuned for more information.

Delta States Rural Development Network Program (Delta States)



Strategic Planning Learning Opportunity

An interactive learning opportunity will be shared in March 2021 to support you with the completion of your strategic plan. Your TA provider is also there to offer support where needed! Consider how you can engage your TA provider in facilitating your planning process. This will help prepare you to submit your strategic plan deliverable due May 14, 2021.

Virtual Engagement Resource Guide

This guide will help you plan meetings and conferences. It offers tips and recommendations for engaging a virtual audience. The guide will be out in April 2021.

Grantee Directory

The Grantee Directory has been finalized and uploaded to Rural Health Information Hub. You can access the Directory [here](#).

Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program (Rural Quality)



[Rural Quality Grant Program: Telehealth Policy Webinar - Recording Available!](#)

Thank you for joining our recent webinar on Thursday, March 11, 2021 - Telehealth Policy Updates & Opportunities: A National and State Perspective. The webinar slides and recording will be available for

download on the [Rural Quality program page](#) of the grantee website. If you have any program staff or partners that were unable to attend, please feel free to share with them.

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Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program (Outreach)



As you prepare to closeout Year 3 of your grant-funded program or request a no-cost extension, below is a list of key deliverables and important dates to keep in mind:

Key Year 3 Program Dates at-a-Glance

Deliverable/Item	Deadline	Submission Type (Electronic Handbook - EHB or Email)	Deadline Impacted by a No-Cost Extension?
No-Cost Extension Request <i>*if needed</i>	March 26, 2021	EHB <i>*Prior Approval 'No Cost Extension <u>without Funds</u>'</i>	Not Applicable
Performance Improvement Measurement System (PIMS) Reporting	May 31, 2021	EHB	No
Final Closeout Report	July 30, 2020	EHB	Yes
Final Assessment Plan	July 30, 2020	EHB	Yes

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Be on the lookout for an announcement of learning opportunities to take place in the second quarter of 2021.

- Care Coordination (March 2021): To support the completion of your strategic plan, an **Interactive Guide to Strategic Planning** will be shared with you. This guide can be used to orient your team and partners to the template, the process, and the purpose.
- Outreach (March 23, 2021): A Rural Health Care Services Outreach Closeout webinar was held on March 23, 2021. During the closeout webinar, two grantees discussed the outcomes of their three-year funded initiatives, and FORHP provided information about the grant closeout process. The webinar slides and recording will be available for download on the [Outreach program page](#) of the grantee website.
- Rural Quality (June 2021): A webinar on integrating behavioral health into the primary care setting will be held in June 2021. More information regarding the webinar's purpose and how you can register will be sent to you by your TA provider.

If more relevant topics emerge based on what we are hearing and learning from you, we will update the learning opportunity topics accordingly.

PEER GROUPS FOR CARE COORDINATION, DELTA STATES, OUTREACH, AND RURAL QUALITY GRANTEEES

Thank you for your participation in the January peer group calls! These peer group calls are driven by your interests and needs as you implement your grant-funded initiatives. They are a forum to pose questions, asks, and offers with peers. If there are ever any specific topics or issues you would like to explore on a future call, please reach out to your dedicated TA provider or peer group facilitator. The next round of peer group calls will take place in April. Stay tuned for more information!

ARTICLES

[Theory of Change for Aligning Health Care, Public Health, and Social Services in the Time of COVID-19](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has further pushed for the alignment of the health care, public health, and social services systems to better meet the needs of individuals living in the United States. The authors of this article are from the Georgia Health Policy Center and coordinate the Aligning Systems of Health initiative with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The article outlines a cross-sector alignment theory of change which includes four core components that should be considered for sustaining progress towards improving the health and well-being in communities, especially among those most at risk for inequities. The four core components are:

- Purpose: The focus of the cross-sector effort, informed by and supportive of community voice
- Data: Shared data that is meaningful to all partners and enables sectors to effectively coordinate activities and measure shared progress
- Financing: Long-term financing that supports partnerships with incentives and accountability
- Governance: Robust governance structures that include local representation and voice

Click [here](#) to access the full article.

[Community Pharmacists' Contributions to Disease Management During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Pharmacists have been an integral part of the health care delivery system. The advent of COVID-19 has highlighted the critical role community pharmacists play in preventing and managing common diseases. The authors outline the key roles community pharmacists have played in COVID-19 responses, including providing testing services, administering vaccines, and point-of-care testing for chronic disease management. Further, the authors describe how community pharmacists can contribute to delivering upstream preventive health care measures while addressing social determinants of health in underserved communities.

Click [here](#) to access the full article.

[Implementing a Social Determinants Screening and Referral Infrastructure During Routine Emergency Visits](#)

Addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) has been the focal point in eliminating health disparities and improving health outcomes within communities across that nation. In particular, health care organizations have been utilizing SDOH screening tools as a

strategy to address social determinants of health that are impacting their patients' health outcomes. The authors outline the development and evaluation of a process created by an academic-community partnership that identifies the social needs of emergency department patients and links patients to community-based organizations. The process also integrates clinical and community-based data.

Click [here](#) to access the full article.

[The Impact of a Community Resource Navigator Program on Patient Trust](#)

Community health workers and patient navigators have been utilized in various health care and public health settings to address the complex needs of patients and provide valuable services in the communities they serve. In this article, the authors describe and evaluate the Community Resource Navigator Program, developed by the Center for Patient Partnerships and housed within the University of Wisconsin Law School. The authors found that program participants felt improvements in their connection with their health care provider, perception of the health system, and ultimately their quality of life and overall health. Further, participants shared that they felt that the clinic was doing more for them and not just taken care of their medical needs, which helped build trust.

Click [here](#) to access the full article.

RESOURCES, NEWS, AND OTHER UPDATES

[Best Practices for Designing and Implementing Substance Use Disorder-Focused Health Homes](#)

The Center for Health Care Strategies drafted a report outlining best practices for designing and implementing substance use disorder (SUD)- focused health homes. The report pulls experiences from five states (Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Rhode Island, and Vermont) with approved SUD-focused Medicaid health home programs that specifically address opioid use disorder. The report shares design considerations, an overview of each opioid health home program, lessons learned from implementation, and the effect on patient outcomes.

Click [here](#) to access the report.

[Building Effective Health System-Community Partnerships: Lessons from the Field](#)

The Center for Health Care Strategies drafted a brief outlining lessons from building effective health system-community partnerships. The brief lists and describes key strategies for effective community engagement to better address the community's health and social needs. Further, the brief highlights the experiences from two sites that participated in the Center for Health Care Strategies' Community Partnership Pilot – Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis and the Los Angeles Department of Health Services Whole-Person Care Program.

Click [here](#) to access the brief.

[Compendium of Rural Oral Health Best Practices](#)

The National Rural Health Association produced a compendium on best practices for rural oral health. The compendium comprises of innovative and promising models and programs to address oral health issues in rural communities, including:

- Workforce development and training
- Integration of care
- Telehealth
- Clinical
- Policy and national models

Click [here](#) to access the compendium of best practices.

[School-Based Health: The Blueprint](#)

Created by the School-Based Health Alliance, the Blueprint provides readers with the tools, guides, and other resources to plan and implement a school-based health center (SBHC) or program. The toolkit also provides examples of successful SBHCs and programs. The toolkit offers various resources on the following topics:

- The planning process (checklists, readiness assessments, engaging stakeholders, etc.)
- Building partnership (contract templates, MOUs, MOAs, bylaws, etc.)
- Communication (marketing, advocacy, outreach, etc.)
- Business (operations improvement plan, sustainability plan, billing, etc.)
- Faculties (design guidelines, considerations, supply lists, etc.)
- Health information (release of information, HIPPA, FERPA, etc.)
- Care management (mental health screenings, oral health, clinical assessments, etc.)
- Program evaluation and quality (performance measures, academic reporting, quality improvement plans, etc.)
- Policies and procedures (emergency preparedness, best practice protocols, mental health emergencies, etc.)

Click [here](#) to access the toolkit.

UPCOMING EVENTS



[Virtual: 2021 Critical Access Hospital Conference](#)

April 8-9, 2021 from 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. CT

Please join the Eide Bailly Alliance as they host their annual Critical Access Hospital Conference. This year's conference will focus on cost reporting and provide attendees with strategies to enhance their overall financial performance. The conference will host two key sessions that focus on the Medicare cost report and the revenue cycle.

[Register](#)



[Virtual: 2021 Collective Impact Action Summit](#)

April 27-29, 2021

Please join FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions as they host their first annual Collective Impact Action Summit. The summit will highlight innovative thinking and lessons learned on the role of cross-sector collaboration in contributing to COVID-19 response and rebuilding, advancing racial justice, and addressing other currently pressing challenges. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions and network with other attendees.

[Register](#)



[Virtual: Health Equity Conference](#)

May 4, 2021 from 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. ET

Please join the National Rural Health Association as it hosts the Health Equity Conference. The conference will focus on health equity issues in rural America. Concurrent sessions will cover topics around oral health, rural behavioral health utilization, food insecurity, improving care and reducing health disparities through cultural competence, broadband access on American Indian reservations, and more. Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in networking sessions.

[Register](#)



[Virtual: Annual Rural Health Conference](#)

May 5-7, 2021

Please join the National Rural Health Association as it hosts the 44th annual Rural Health Conference. Concurrent sessions will cover topics around infectious disease response, behavioral health models in rural health clinics, cancer care delivery in rural safety net settings, financing opportunities to support rural healthcare, models for integrating community and health, maternal health, overcoming medication-assisted treatment barriers in rural communities, and more.

[Register](#)