

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 first issue of 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 chssteam@gsu.edu.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Grantee Profile: Tahoe Forest Health System

The Georgia Health Policy Center recently spoke to Eileen Knudson, R.N., director of behavioral health at Tahoe Forest Hospital about their efforts to increase early identification of mental health needs and access to behavioral health services through integration of behavioral health into primary care clinics.

[Read More](#)

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC UPDATES

Rural Health Care Coordination Program (Care Coordination)

[Laying the Groundwork: Building Data Practices and Capacity to Support and Sustain Your Care Coordination Initiative - Recording Available!](#)



The recording and materials from the recent Care Coordination webinar, **Laying the Groundwork: Building Data Practices and Capacity to Support and Sustain**

Your Care Coordination Initiative, held on Dec. 17, 2020 are posted to our [grantee website](#). Feel free to share with any key staff or partners that were not able to attend.

Delta State Rural Development Network Program (Delta States)

[Rural Network Development Delta States: Partnering with Universities Webinar - Recording Available!](#)



The recording and materials from the recent Delta States webinar, Partnering with Universities, held on Dec. 8, 2020 are posted to our [grantee website](#). Feel free to share with any key staff or partners who were not able to attend.

Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program (Outreach)

Upcoming Grant Deliverable - Draft Close-Out Report

The draft close-out report will be due on March 15, 2021. The template for the report will be sent in mid-February. Information from the report will be included in the 2018–2021 Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program Sourcebook, a publicly available document, that describes all Outreach grantees, their projects, and the results of their efforts



Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program (Rural Quality)

[Rural Quality Grant Program: Sustainability Formative Assessment Webinar - Recording Available!](#)



The recording and materials from the recent Rural Quality grant program webinar, **Positioning for the Future: Conducting a Sustainability Formative Assessment**, held on Dec. 16, 2020 are posted to our [grantee website](#). Feel free to share with any key staff or partners who were not able to attend.

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2021

As we move into the new year, be on lookout for an announcement of learning opportunities to take place in 2021.

- **Delta States (January 2021):** An orientation to strategic planning and the FORHP-required template, including tips for planning and collaborating virtually with your partners.
- **Care Coordination: (March 2021):** An orientation to strategic planning and the FORHP-required template, including tips for planning and collaborating virtually with your partners.
- **Outreach (March 2021):** A webinar focused on operationalizing sustainability.

- **Quality (March 2021):** A webinar focused on telehealth and its role in delivering quality care.

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 Quality Improvement



The Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) technical assistance (TA) team will launch quarterly peer group calls for all Direct Services grantees. You should have received an email asking you to register for peer groups beginning in January 2021. Thanks to all who provided feedback by responding to the grantee survey. Peer group topic areas were determined based on your input. Going forward these groups will meet quarterly and will be driven by the interests and needs of those participating in each group. If you have questions regarding participation, please reach out to your technical assistance provider. Stay tuned for more information on the upcoming calls in January 2021.

ARTICLES AND NEWS

- [How to Sustain Behavioral Health Care in Primary Care Practice](#)
This article provides data presented by the Behavioral Health Integration Collaborative, a group established by the American Medical Association and seven other medical associations. Leaders from practices utilizing fee-for-service and value-based care models shared their experiences from planning for and sustaining the integration of behavior health care. Findings presented include how primary care practices that integrate behavioral health can increase monthly revenue and improve patient outcomes.
- [Chronic Disease Management in the COVID-19 Era](#)
This article in *The American Journal of Managed Care* outlines various strategies that health care facilities can develop and implement to assist with the management of chronic diseases during the COVID-19 era. Strategies include developing a real-time clinical registry to identify and monitor both high-risk and rising-risk patients; developing both synchronous and asynchronous virtual care delivery

tools to reduce in-person visits for patients with chronic diseases; and incorporating social networks (virtual group visits, etc.) in telehealth chronic disease management interventions.

- [Report: 20% of Covid-19 Patients Develop Mental Health Issues](#)

This article in *The Daily Yonder* shares results from a recent report that found that one in five COVID-19 patients develop mental health challenges within 90 days of recovery.

- [HHS Finalizes Anti-Kickback and Stark Reforms that Simplify Compliance and Promote Value-Based Care](#)

The article outlines two rules that will assist with governing fraud and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The first rule was published by the Department of Health & Human Service's Office of Inspector General and primarily focuses on the Anti-Kickback Statute. The second rule was published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and addresses the Physician Self-Referral Law (the Stark Law). The two rules will potentially assist with promoting care coordination and value-based care.

- [Zooming into the Next Phase of Care Delivery: 10 Emerging Trends in a Post COVID-19 World](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the United States to reconsider health care delivery and develop innovative ways to deliver health care services. Authors highlight 10 major care-delivery trends accelerated by COVID-19. A few trends include health care for rural populations being more virtual to ensure accessibility of services; remote patient-monitoring becoming an integral part of patient care going forward; and chronic disease management, hospital-level emergent care, and inpatient-level care increasingly take place in the patient's home.

- [Rural Hospitals Are Dying. This One Saved Itself—and Its Community](#)

This *TIME* article features a struggling rural hospital in South Georgia and the CEO that helped turn it around with the help of a seasoned CEO from another rural hospital. After implementing a swing bed program and taking in patients from out of town, the rural hospital improved financially, allowing the hospital to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOURCES

- [Data Dashboards Tip Sheet](#)

Grantees from the 2019-2022 cohort of Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program participated in a videoconference

peer call in late September 2020 focused on data dashboards and their application to grantees' quality improvement (QI) initiatives. The purpose of the call was to facilitate connections and learning across the cohort; discuss priority measures and data incorporated into them; and share approaches to data utilization for QI.

From that call, GHPC's TA team produced a brief tip sheet capturing a summary of insights and ideas from the call. This includes a series of reflective questions that programs can use in thinking about developing or strengthening their use of data dashboards. Click [here](#) to download the tip sheet.

- [Advancing CHW Engagement in COVID-19 Response Strategies](#)
The National Community-Based Workforce Alliance published a playbook for local health departments to assist with COVID-19 Response Strategies for community health workers. The playbook provides a framework for key areas of engagement as well as strategic recommendations for advancement.
- [GHPC Provides How-To Guide for Sustaining Telehealth Programs](#)
GHPC highlights the stories of ingenuity and innovation emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic in the latest online series installment, [Provider Telehealth Innovations & How-To Guide for Thinking Sustainably](#). GHPC's [how-to-guide for sustainability planning](#) helps providers and organizations think how to move a telehealth program from initial "response mode" into a longer-term sustainable strategy.
- [Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) in Rural Communities Toolkit](#)
The toolkit comprises of evidence-based models and resources to support organizations implementing programs addressing SDOH in rural communities. The toolkit provides modules on evidence-based approaches, program implementation, evaluation, and sustainability, as well disseminating strategies for SDOH programs in rural communities. Additionally, the toolkit highlights programs that have already been implemented in rural communities.
- [New Plan to Treat Opioid Use Disorder Could Help Rural Communities Combat Addiction](#)
Research at the University of Kentucky gives hope for a holistic approach to treating addiction in rural areas, merging intravenous drug infections treatments with mental health and social services support.
- [Free Rural Health COVID-19 Communications Toolkit](#)
The National Rural Health Association through donated services of partner Legato Healthcare Marketing, is providing free access to a communications toolkit. This resource including social media

messages, news releases, radio scripts, infographics, and print ads is designed to allow customization and branding for your organization. The materials are based on CDC messaging and guidance from a national rural health taskforce.

- [The State of Obesity 2020: Better Policies for a Healthier America](#)
For the first time, the United States's obesity rate has exceeded 40%, with rural communities having higher rates of obesity than suburban and metro areas. This report by Trust for America's Health provides data and trends arounds obesity in the United States. Additionally, the report outlines the connection between food insecurity and obesity, current obesity-related policies and programs, and recommendations to address the nation's obesity crisis.
- [Rural Crosswalk: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19](#)
Recently updated Nov. 6, 2020, the PDF document highlights COVID-19 related provisions that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued or carried out during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency that impacts rural health care delivery systems including rural health clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and Critical Access Hospitals. The document includes provisions concerning telehealth and other virtual services, workforce, payments, and data reporting.

UPCOMING EVENTS



[A Pathway for Rural Health to Thrive in a Post COVID-19 World](#)

Feb. 9, 2021; 12:00–1:00pm (Central)

Join the Center for Optimizing Rural Health as they host a webinar on strategies to ensure rural health thrives after the COVID-19 era. Benjamin Anderson, MBA, MHCDS, Vice President, Rural Health and Hospitals will be the guest speaker.



[National Rural Health Association's \(NRHA's\) Rural Health Policy Institute](#)

Feb. 9-11, 2021 Washington, D.C.

Join NRHA's 32nd Annual Rural Health Policy Institute and guide the future of rural health policy with NRHA leadership. This institute offers the opportunity to advocate for issues you care about with new and returning members of Congress and the administration.



[AcademyHealth](#)

2021 Health Datapalooza and National Health Policy Conference

Feb. 16-18, 2021 VIRTUAL

Health data and policy innovation are an integral part of all efforts to transform health care. Recognizing the consequential relationship that exists between health data and health policy advancements, AcademyHealth is virtually convening the two communities to share their work, exchange ideas, collaborate, and tackle the most critical health issues facing the country today.



[2021 Health Equity Conference](#)

May 4, 2021; New Orleans, LA

Join NRHA at its annual Health Equity Conference. Consider submitting a presentation proposal or research poster to contribute to this event in 2021. Presentations were due by Dec. 3, 2020 and posters are due by Feb. 11, 2021.

Our mailing address is:

Community Health Systems Development Team
55 Park Pl NE Fl 8
Georgia Health Policy Center At Gsu
Atlanta, GA 30303-2529

[Add us to your address book](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Community Health Systems Development Team · 55 Park Pl NE Fl 8 · Georgia Health Policy Center At Gsu · Atlanta, GA 30303-2529 · USA

