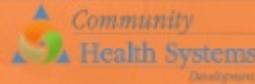


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RURAL HEALTH LINK: THE RURAL HEALTH SERVICES QUARTERLY DIGEST



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 - Montana Journey to Wellness Consortium

Montana Journey to Wellness Consortium is using its Direct Services grant to expand and refine the Summit Medical Fitness Center's existing program to more underserved, rural communities. The Journey to Wellness program targets individuals looking to make lasting changes in their lifestyle and overall wellness.

The Georgia Health Policy Center recently spoke to Brad Roy, the director of the Summit

ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Virtual Program Meeting \(July 14-15, 2021\) - Rural Care Coordination & Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement programs](#)

We look forward to seeing you at our Virtual Program Meeting on July 14-15, 2021, from 12:30-5:00 p.m. ET for grantees of the Quality Improvement and Rural Care Coordination programs. This meeting is being brought to you by your technical assistance (TA) team at the Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) and the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP). The objectives of this virtual meeting are to:

- build capacity to support the implementation of your grant-funded initiatives
- connect you to federal partners and resources
- open opportunities for sharing and learning with your peers

You are encouraged to invite core members of your team, including partners, to attend the conference. We ask that you commit a minimum of two attendees from your grant-funded initiative to attend both half-day sessions.

Each individual that plans to attend will need to register for the meeting and create a password on the meeting platform Whova. If you have not yet, you can register using this [link here](#).

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC UPDATES

Rural Health Care Coordination Program (Care Coordination)



Strategic Plan Reviews

On our monthly TA calls over the summer, your project officer and TA provider will discuss your consortium's strategic plan, including the process, important learnings, work plan revisions, and next steps.

Year 1 Annual Performance Improvement Measurement System Reporting

A reminder that your Year 1 Performance Improvement Measurement System (PIMS) reporting period will begin on September 1 and is due September 30. The reporting period will reflect the first year of your grant (Sept. 1, 2020 to Aug. 31, 2021).

Delta States Rural Development Network Program (Delta States)



New Rural Health Workforce Funding Opportunity!

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), in collaboration with the Delta Regional Authority, released a notice of funding opportunity for the [Delta Region Rural Health Workforce Program](#). Funding will support education and training for current and future health professionals in the rural counties and parishes

of the [Mississippi River Delta Region and Alabama Black Belt region](#), and will focus on critical administrative support occupations including medical coding and billing, claims processing, information management, and clinical documentation. Applications are due **July 9, 2021**.

[Click here](#) to apply to the funding opportunity.

Technical Assistance Opportunity: Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program

The Delta Regional Authority in partnership with HRSA have implemented the [Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program](#). The purpose of this program is to provide critical access hospitals, rural health clinics, small rural hospitals, and other healthcare organizations in the Delta Region with intense technical assistance to enhance healthcare delivery. In-depth and long-term technical assistance will be provided for increasing the use of telehealth to address gaps in clinical care delivery and improve access to care; providing social services to address broader socio-economic challenges faced by patients; identifying workforce recruitment and retention resources targeted to rural communities, and more. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and can be submitted anytime during the year.

[Click here](#) for more information | [Click here](#) to apply to the program

Delta States Webinar on Virtual Engagement and Online Meeting Design - Recording Available!

Thank you for joining our recent webinar on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, *Virtual Engagement and Online Meeting Design*. The webinar slides and recording are available for download on the Delta States Program page of the grantee website. If you have any program staff or partners who could not attend, please feel free to share with them.

[Click here](#) to access the recording, located in the **Webinars** section.

Delta COVID-19 Supplement Kick-Off Webinar

FORHP held the *Delta COVID-19 Vaccination Supplement Kick-off Webinar* on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. Diane Hall, senior scientist for policy and strategy in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Office of the Associate Director for Policy and Strategy, provided insights on what the CDC is doing in rural communities to address COVID-19, what resources and tools are available for grantees to consider during the development of a supplement work plan, and strategies to engage the community in vaccine confidence. FORHP's Delta States program coordinator also reviewed the upcoming deliverable requirements and additional programmatic components for the supplemental award. You can view the recorded webinar [here](#), located in the Webinar section.

Delta States Partnership Meeting

The presentations and recordings from the recent *Delta States and Network Development Partnership Meeting: Building Resilient Rural Communities*, June 8-9, 2021, will be posted on the [Delta States Program page](#) under program meetings. Your TA provider will notify you when they have been posted

Learning Opportunity this Summer

Be on the lookout for information regarding a peer learning opportunity that will focus on the innovations and successes during COVID-19 shared at the program meeting.

Year 1 PIMS Reporting

A reminder that your Year 1 PIMS reporting period will begin on August 1 and is due August 31. The reporting period will reflect the first year of your grant (Aug. 1, 2020, to July 31, 2021).

Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program (Rural Quality)



Peer Learning & Discussion: Data Collection

Thank you for attending our recent peer-learning opportunity, *Optimizing Data Collection for your QI Initiative*, on June 23, 2021, co-hosted by your TA team at the Georgia Health Policy Center and Stratis Health. This interactive peer call was an opportunity for Rural Quality grantees to connect with one another regarding how others are operationalizing data collection, challenges they face, lessons learned and adaptations that grantees have made. A summary of highlights from that call will be shared later and posted to the [grantee site](#).

Year 2 PIMS Reporting

A friendly reminder that your Year 2 PIMS reporting period will begin on August 1 and is due by August 31. The reporting period for PIMS should reflect data from the most recent grant year (Aug. 1, 2020, to July 31, 2021).

Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program (Outreach)



Welcome, 2021 Outreach grantees!

We are happy to welcome the new cohort of Outreach grantees. We are conducting intake calls in June and July. The purpose of intake calls is to get to know each grantee better so we can tailor our support to fit their specific situation.

To learn more about the grant and awardees [click here](#).

The recording and materials from the June 10 kick-off webinar are posted on the [grantee website](#) located in the Webinars section.

Peer Groups for Care Coordination, Delta States, Outreach, and Quality Improvement Grantees

The GHPC TA team launched quarterly peer group calls for all Direct Services grantees. Peer groups began meeting in early 2021. The sixteen peer group topic areas were determined based on grantee input. Topics include behavioral health, community health worker programs, chronic disease, communications and outreach, and social determinants of health.

Peer groups continue to meet quarterly and are driven by the interests and needs of those participating in each group. We invite you to join a peer group! During the intake call, your TA provider will share more information regarding the topics, the schedule of each peer group call, and how you can sign up. In the meantime, you can click [here](#) to register for one (1) peer group. After registering, the peer group facilitator will send you the date and time of the next peer call in July.

[Burnout among Healthcare Providers during COVID-19: Challenges and Evidenced-Based Interventions](#)

The coronavirus pandemic has forced health care, public health, and community-based organizations to adopt the use of telehealth, redesign workflow, shift priorities, juggle COVID-19 response with core functions, and ultimately face an increased workload, all of which may exacerbate burnout among providers, and other employees. This article highlights potential strategies to address provider burnout. [Click here](#) to access the article.

[Health & Human Services: Generating Sustained Health and Equity Improvements](#)

As health care organizations are discovering and implementing ways to address the social determinants of health to improve patient health outcomes, the push for multisector collaboration has come to the forefront. This article describes the characteristics of health and human services integration efforts and provides evidence of the impact of these integration efforts and implementation barriers, including financial sustainability. [Click here](#) to access the article.

[Lessons Learned from Inadequate Implementation Planning of Team-Based Chronic Disease Management](#)

Utilizing a team-based approach in the delivery of care yields numerous benefits, including improved patient outcomes. However, inadequate planning for implementing a team-based approach can negatively impact the quality of care a patient receives. This article highlights lessons learned from the Chronic Disease Management initiative; a team-based chronic disease management program focused on patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [Click here](#) to access the article.

RESOURCES, NEWS AND OTHER UPDATES

[Funding Opportunity: Emergency Broadband Benefit Program](#)

Created in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program assists families and households with affording internet service. The program provides a discount of up to \$50 per month toward broadband service and associated equipment rentals for eligible households and \$75 per month for households on tribal lands. Additionally, there is a one-time discount of up to \$100 for laptops, tablets, or desk computers. To qualify for the program, a member of the household must meet at least one of the eligibility criteria:

- Income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or participates in specific assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, or Lifeline
- Receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school breakfast or lunch programs
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since Feb. 29, 2020, and a total household income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers
- Meets the eligibility criteria for participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program

This is a great funding opportunity to disseminate to members of the communities you are serving! [Click here](#) for more information. [Click here](#) to apply for the program.

[A Collection of Resources to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence](#)

- [American Medical Association COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: 10 Tips for Talking with Patients](#) includes tips on telling stories that make an impact, preparing staff to answer questions, and tailoring messages

- [CDC Recommendations on Talking about COVID-19 Vaccines with Friends and Family](#) includes information on exploring their concerns, asking permission to share information, and helping them find their own reason to get vaccinated
- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Resources for Disproportionately Affected Communities](#) includes resources for individuals and organizations working with displaced populations, corrections or detention centers, homebound persons, and people living with disabilities
- [Community Health Worker Guide for Addressing COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy](#) includes information on how the vaccine works, common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, and real questions from community members
- [The GHPC COVID Collection: COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout in Rural Communities: Challenges, Innovations, and Unmet Needs](#) includes information on successful innovations and strategies being implemented in rural communities

Podcast: Making Progress Toward Physical, Behavioral Health Integration

To better meet the needs of patients, more primary care offices are moving towards the integration of behavioral health. In this podcast, Brett Hart, Centene's chief behavioral health officer, and Indira Pahlia, Centene's chief operating officer for behavioral health, discuss historical and new barriers to behavioral health integration. Hart and Pahlia also share innovative strategies that have aided in the integration of behavioral health for Centene. [Click here](#) to access the podcast.

Webcast: Guiding Patients Through the Social Determinants of Health

As health care organizations integrate addressing the social determinants of health (SDOH) in clinical workflows, it is equally critical that patients also understand this new process and how social determinants impact their health outcomes. In this webcast, Alisahah Cole, MD, system vice president for population health innovation and policy at CommonSpirit Health, shares a patient-centered approach to SDOH screening and CommonSpirit Health's national initiative to address SDOH and patient outcomes, the Total Health Roadmap Universal Screening Model. [Click here](#) to access the webcast.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Virtual: 2021 Annual NACCHO Conference

June 29-July 1, 2021

Please join the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) as they host the 2021 NACCHO 360 Conference. The conference will explore how local public health professionals and stakeholders can develop collaborative approaches to identify and strengthen cross-sector relationships, refine and create new data-and-information-sharing systems, and more. Registration is currently open.

[Register](#)

Virtual: COVID-19 Updates for Primary Care Clinicians

July 24, 2021, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. ET

Please join the Rural Medical Education Collaborative



as they host a webinar discussing recent updates concerning COVID-19 prevention and treatment and address challenges facing rural and underserved communities. Experts will discuss new therapeutic options for inpatient and outpatient settings, current guidelines for treatment, long-term follow-up, and COVID-19 vaccines

[Register](#)



[Virtual: 2021 AHA Leadership Summit](#)

July 28-29, 2021

Please join the American Hospital Association (AHA) as they host the 2021 AHA Leadership Summit. The summit will discuss transformational strategies and innovative approaches to achieve sustainability while delivering greater value and health equity. Critical focus areas include leading for resilience and transformation, post-pandemic recovery and rebuilding, behavioral health integration, and more.

[Register](#)

[2021 Community Health Institute and Expo](#)

August 22-24, 2021
Orlando, Florida



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers

Please join the National Association of Community Health Centers as they host the 2021 Community Health Institute and Expo. The expo will discuss ideas and partnerships to improve financial sustainability, and attendees will have the opportunity to network and share best practices to stay vibrant and viable in the health care marketplace.

[Register](#)