

AHA RURAL HOSPITAL and HEALTH SERVICES

Resources and References

Some 57 million rural Americans depend on their hospital as an important source of care as well as a critical component of their area's economic and social fabric. Below is the most current policy and advocacy priorities along with the latest stories highlighting the good work of rural health leaders. The resources and references have a special emphasis on thriving under COVID-19. From innovations in AI to telehealth to new payment models, hospitals and health systems in rural areas are brainstorming bold new ideas.

NEW

Exploring Options to Deploy Capitated Payments to Enhance Primary Care in Rural Settings

This report prepared by the AHA Board Task Force on the Future of Rural Health explores examples of capitated payment agreements that serve to increase the use and improve the quality of primary care services in rural communities. These arrangements are deployed at several levels of care management and delivery in the public and private sectors, with payment to parties such as managed care organizations (MCOs), Community Health Workers (CHWs) and physicians. Most of these models are enmeshed in larger, multi-agreement payment models and serve as an example of how to leverage capitated payments for specific services in conjunction with other payment methodologies such as fee-for-service, pay-for-value, and global budgeting. Read the case example [here](#).

Teaching Hospitals' Impact in a Transforming Health Care Landscape

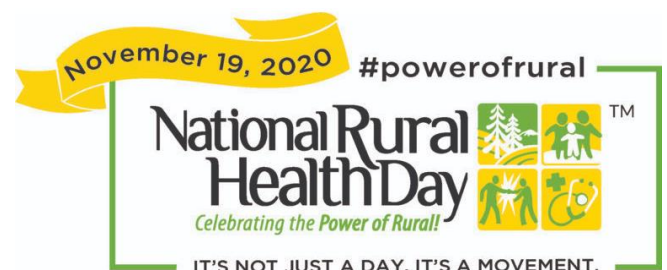
A new [AHA TrendWatch report](#) examines teaching hospitals' impact on a transforming health care landscape. The document gives an overview of graduate medical education and identifies key issues in training the physician workforce, including: residency caps that limit funding for training programs; a shortage of residents pursuing certain specialties, including primary care; changes in patient demographics; and new challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes a focus on rural teaching initiatives. Read it [here](#).

Creating Value by Bringing Hospital Care Home

As hospitals consider how and where they deliver care to patients, many are seeing the hospital-at-home model as a promising approach to improve value. This issue brief explores how hospitals can provide acute-level care in patients' homes, and highlights case examples of hospitals that successfully improved value through their home hospital programs. Includes rural efforts. Read the issue brief [here](#).

NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH DAY

AHA observes National Rural Health Day, shares lessons learned from COVID-19. In honor of today's [National Rural Health Day](#), the AHA has posted a [series of blogs](#) showcasing rural hospitals' and health systems' achievements in preserving local access to care in their communities and outlining the association's rural legislative priorities for Congress. [AHA case examples](#) also featured best practices and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the innovative spirit and resourcefulness of rural hospitals and health systems. In addition, AHA is honoring the heroic work of our rural providers in a [slide show](#) highlighting the courageous staff at rural hospitals and health systems who are facing unique challenges and continuing to serve patients where they are.



Blogs

Chair File: We Need to Protect Rural Hospitals and Access to Care. For the 20% of Americans who rely on rural hospitals for their care, the blue and white "H" is among the most reassuring signs they'll ever see. It signals that expert care, help and healing is available *and nearby*. Even if that hospital is located dozens of

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

miles away from the patient or family it serves, it is close enough to make a difference — to be a reliable partner in health care. Read more from AHA Board Chair Mindy Estes, M.D. [here](#).

AHA Blog: 4 health care lessons for rural communities. On Nov. 19, National Rural Health Day, Michelle Hood, AHA executive vice president and chief operating officer and president for the AHA's Health Forum, shared her experiences leading health care organizations in some of America's most rural communities. [Read more](#).

AHA blog: What's next for rural hospitals? Additional COVID-19 relief and beyond. In this AHA blog, AHA Executive Vice President Tom Nickels discusses the resources hospitals and health systems need and what additional relief Congress should deliver during the COVID-19 public health emergency and beyond. [Read more](#).

AHA blog: Improving access to maternal care in rural communities. As we celebrate National Rural Health Day on Nov. 19, it's important to recognize the work rural hospitals are doing to improve access to maternal care for mothers living in rural communities, writes Priya Bathija, AHA's vice president of strategic initiatives. [Read more](#).



An American Hospital Association Blog

AHA blog: Building rural payment and delivery models during COVID-19 and beyond.

Oct 21, 2020 - 01:51 PM by Erika Rogan, Ph.D.

In the [second in a series](#) of three blogs, we identify the building blocks that will help rural hospitals thrive after conclusion of the national public health emergency. While work is underway on new payment and delivery models for rural hospitals, additional, targeted actions by Congress and the administration are needed to support these hospitals and their communities, writes Erika Rogan, AHA senior associate director of policy. [Read more](#).

AHA Blog: Rural hospitals innovate during COVID-19

Aug 07, 2020 - 11:33 AM by John Supplitt

In this [first in a series](#) of three blogs, we highlight leaders' reactions and initiatives. AHA's Rural Health Services team has [documented](#) the work of rural hospital leaders through case examples, podcasts and webinars. Here are just some of the many examples of ways leaders are improving quality of patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Podcasts



ADVANCINGHEALTH
A podcast by the American Hospital Association

As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, AHA has captured seven inspirational stories and lessons learned of how rural hospitals and health systems are working to increase access points, deliver care, improve safety and meet the needs of the residents of their communities. We have

interviewed the CEOs from several case examples and in their own words, they share their planning, implementation and lessons learned so that others may benefit from their experiences. They are provided as podcasts as part of the AHA Advancing Health series.

Partnering to improve rural birth outcomes

September 15, 2020

Many rural hospitals have been challenged with maintaining obstetric services but are now partnering with others to improve birth outcomes for mothers and babies. In this podcast highlighting successful maternal and child health efforts, care team members from Kearney County Hospital in Lakin, Kan., discuss the importance of a growing OB unit and the impact of Kearney County's Pioneer Baby program. [Listen here](#).

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).



Living and Learning through COVID-19

September 4, 2020

Samaritan Health Services, Lincoln County, Oregon is comprised of two critical access hospitals. Lesley Ogden, M.D., CEO shares her experience of having lived with and learned from a 7 month battle with COVID-19 and the significance of emergency disaster planning, community collaboration, flex staffing, supply chain challenges for PPE and testing, and that cultural awareness leads to cultural competency. Listen to the podcast [here](#).



Doula program enhances the birthing experience

August 20, 2020

Statistics show that doula services — which provide help and suggestions on comfort measures such as breathing, relaxation, movement and positioning — are effective in reducing stress and anxiety in expectant mothers, while improving birthing experience and outcomes. In this podcast, two experts from Brookings (S.D.) Health System discuss the impact of the volunteer doula program at New Beginnings Birth Center. [Listen here](#).



Rural Philanthropy as a Long-Term Strategy

July 29, 2020

On this podcast, Joy Lewis, AHA vice president for strategic policy planning, and Allen Smart, principal at Winston-Salem, N.C.-based PhilanthropywoRx, discuss the imperative for rural hospital leaders to develop long-term strategies where community engagement and philanthropy meet for the good of communities' health.



For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

Applying for Federal Funds to Expand Telehealth and to Include Home Monitoring

July 9, 2020

AHA has tracked the stories of several rural community hospitals as part of our coverage of COVID-19. On this podcast we hear from Brian Evans, CEO of Clarke County Hospital in Osceola, Iowa and Corey Martin, senior director at the Iowa Hospital Association, who applied for and received federal funds to expand telehealth services to include home monitoring.



Preparing for a COVID-19 Surge and its Aftermath – Marshall Medical Center

May 13, 2020

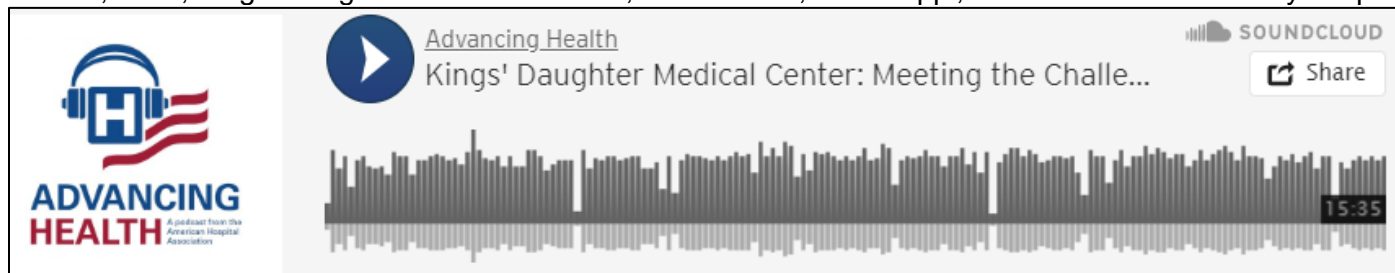
For this podcast we hear the story of hospital heroes from the perspective of Siri Nelson, CEO of Marshall Medical Center located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Northern California. Marshall is a full service, 125-bed not-for-profit hospital with a Level 3 trauma center serving El Dorado and its neighboring counties.



Kings' Daughters Medical Center: Meeting the Challenge of COVID-19

May 6, 2020

For this podcast, we honor our hospital heroes and focus on surviving the surge from the perspective of Alvin Hoover, CEO, King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven, Mississippi, a 99-bed sole community hospital.



Surviving the Coronavirus Surge – Margaret Mary Healthcare, Batesville, Ind.

Apr 29, 2020

For this podcast, we honor our hospital heroes and focus on surviving the surge from the perspective of Tim Putnam, CEO, Margaret Mary Healthcare, Batesville, Indiana, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital.

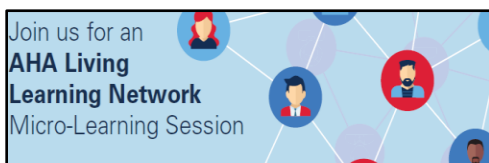


For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

CASE STUDIES

- A [case study](#) from **Samaritan Health Services** in Lincoln County, Oregon located on the Pacific coast documents how two critical access hospitals have lived and learned the significance of emergency disaster planning, community collaboration, flex staffing, supply chain challenges for PPE and testing and that cultural awareness leads to cultural competency.
- A [case study](#) from **Opelousas General Health System** in St. Landry Parish explains how its associated community health consortium confront the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural Louisiana.
- A [case study](#) from **St. James Parish Hospital** demonstrates how local government and community partners accelerate coordinated communications efforts to slow the virus' spread in rural Litcher, Louisiana.
- A [case study](#) from **Wilson Medical Center**, Neodesha, Kan., identifies consumer conscious approaches to testing and caring for patients and community collaboration to acquire PPE.
- A [case study](#) from **Marshall Medical Center**, Placerville, Calif., outlines four stages of planning and implementation the hospital has undertaken to prepare for COVID-19.
- A [case study](#) on key lessons learned from **Katherine Bethea Shaw Hospital** in Dixon, Ill., which used its ambulance garage as its drive-through site to rapidly test patients for COVID-19.
- A [case study](#) from **Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District** (SoHum Health), in Garberville, Calif., tells how it is proactively addressing social determinants of health for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A [case study](#) from **Margaret Mary Hospital** in Batesville, Ind., a not-for-profit, critical access hospital describes how it is handling its COVID-19 surge.
- A [case study](#) from **King's Daughters Medical Center** in rural Mississippi, reveals how it is implementing a variety of strategic and operational shifts in anticipation of an April surge of COVID-19 patients.
- A [case study](#) on how **Riverwood Healthcare Center** in Aitkin, Minn., explains how they deployed a virtual care model for patients amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

WEBINARS



Effective Strategies to Coordinate a Rural Community Response during COVID-19

Opelousas General Health System (OGHS), a rural referral center in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, presented how they mobilized a communications and response system, effectively responded to gaps

in community needs and support, and helped tackle existing health disparities in the region further exacerbated by COVID-19 through their participation in the Healthy St. Landry Alliance. The alliance was recently featured in the [AHA Members in Action Case Study](#) for their coordinated community response. [The replay is available here.](#)



Institute for Diversity and Health Equity

An affiliate of the American Hospital Association

IFDHE webinar: supporting inclusive care through unconscious bias training

Keith Stinson, emergency department nursing director at Chatham Hospital in rural North Carolina, and Kimberlydawn Wisdom, M.D., senior vice president and chief wellness and diversity officer at Henry

Ford Health System in Detroit, discuss innovative staff training methods addressing the dynamics of unconscious biases, how to avoid uncomfortable interactions, and successful strategies for heightening bias awareness in the workplace. View the webinar from the Institute for Diversity and Health Equity [here](#).



Ensuring access to maternal care in rural communities - Oct. 13.

Maternal mortality rates are significantly higher in rural areas as women face barriers in accessing prenatal, obstetrical and postpartum care. The AHA will host a virtual workshop on which leaders from the University of Minnesota

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

Rural Health Research Center share the unique challenges encountered in rural communities. Also, hear how Lexington Regional Health Center in Nebraska is increasing access to optimal maternal care. The replay is available [here](#).



A panel of 4 experts discussed federal policy emerging from Congress and the Administration under COVID-19 focusing on rural health priorities and took questions from the audience. They reviewed emergency funding, Medicare and Medicaid payment improvements, telehealth, regulatory relief, 340B drug pricing, access to PPE and steps toward

recovery. Listen to the recording of the May 1, webinar [here](#).



AHA webinar on rural hospitals' efforts to manage COVID-19 - Replay

The AHA April 14 hosted a webinar with speakers from two rural hospitals sharing their real-time experiences and promising practices as they deliver care to COVID-19 patients. The webinar included an opportunity for questions and answers. A replay of this highly evaluated program is available at <http://sponsored.aha.org/2020-04-14-Managing-COVID19-in-RuralCommunities-webinar-replay.html>.

Webinar replay: Alliance for Health Policy rural health leaders discuss COVID-19

The Alliance for Health Policy's April 22 webinar features rural health experts discussing how rural hospitals and health care entities are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, with insights from Scott Graham, CEO of Three Rivers & North Valley Hospitals in Washington state, Jacob Warren, director at the Center for Rural Health and Health Disparities at Mercer University, and Mike Brumage, medical director at Cabin Creek Health Systems. View the replay here (<http://www.allhealthpolicy.org/covid-19-webinar-series-session-11-rural-health-system-response/>).

EVENTS AND EDUCATION



Navigating a New Reality, Health Care Leaders Confront the Future. [A Virtual Conference on COVID-19](#)

from Recovery to Rebuilding – September 14-16, 2020. The content vault from

'Navigating a New Reality' virtual conference is available on demand. Those who missed the event can view this [video](#) highlighting key themes addressed during the conference and [register](#) to access program content through Dec. 31. Content themes for the three-day [event](#) include:

Using the Road to Recovery to Build the Health Care System We Need. This session includes a moderated panel of hospital/health system executives from diverse organizations that are effectively planning ahead to facilitate financial recovery with a strategic focus, including capital strategy, expense management, growth and investment towards a new future. This session features Julie Petersen, CEO, Kittitas Valley Healthcare, Ellensburg, WA which is a hospital district with a CAH.

Readiness for Future Pandemic Surges. This session will examine how hospitals and health systems are stepping up to the challenge to prepare for the next surge and features Lesley Ogden, MD, CEO, Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital and Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital, which are CAHs located in Lincoln County, Oregon.



For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

The American Hospital Association's 2021 [Rural Health Care Leadership Virtual Conference](#), February 17-18, brings together top practitioners and thinkers to share strategies and resources for accelerating the shift to a more integrated and sustainable rural health system. We'll examine the most significant operational, financial and environmental challenges including the impact of COVID-19 on rural hospitals and their communities, and present innovative approaches that will enable you to transform your organization's care delivery model and business practices.

FEATURED STORIES



Consortium, including health system, tackles health disparities in rural Louisiana during pandemic

Louisiana-based Opelousas General Health System, with a consortium of more than 25 local health care providers, government agencies and community groups, developed a coordinated communications pipeline to address residents' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read about](#) how the Healthy St. Landry Alliance quickly identifies disparities and provides support and services.



Minnesota hospital deploys telehealth to combat COVID-19 in rural communities

Like many rural hospitals, Riverwood Healthcare Center in Aitkin, Minn., has increased virtual health visits with patients, improving access in a safe way and transforming health care delivery. [Read more](#) to discover lessons learned by the hospital, including using project management skills, scheduling daily huddles and training clinicians in advance of their transition.



S.D. pediatricians lead efforts to help parents

To meet the needs of parents with babies during the COVID-19 pandemic, pediatricians and staff at South Dakota's Monument Health Spearfish Clinic are coordinating diaper donations. [Read more](#) about how screenings during appointments revealed this community need.



Rural health system faces financial cliff due to COVID-19

Kittitas Valley Healthcare in Ellensburg, Wash., was among the nation's first hospitals to feel the impact of COVID-19. As the rural delivery system and its critical access hospital pivoted to care for COVID-19 patients, it postponed orthopedics and general surgery services; the financial hit was felt almost immediately. "Our revenues and volumes fell off a cliff," says CEO Julie Petersen. [Read the full story here.](#)



Rural health system takes notes on cities first hit by COVID-19

Community HealthCare System in Onaga, Kan., like many rural hospitals, wanted to be prepared when COVID-19 finally reached them. So, health care teams watched how urban hospitals responded and maintained supplies of personal protective equipment and ventilators according to what they observed. [Read more](#) about the health system's preparations and creative solutions.

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).



Small-town community and hospital confront COVID-19 together

When COVID-19 arrived in the small town of Cynthiana, Kentucky the residents of this hardworking community refused to let fear set in. They leaned on [Harrison Memorial Hospital](#) to provide accurate and easy-to-understand information about the virus and its potential spread, education and resources to stay safe and a sense of calm to help people cope. In return, the community responded. [Read](#) about how the community returned the favor.



Arizona hospital uses social media to help with behavioral health care during pandemic

Summit Healthcare, a nonprofit medical center in rural Navajo County in Arizona, launched a video series on the hospital's YouTube channel about managing stress during these unprecedented and unnerving times. [Read more](#) about the resource that uses a Navajo story to make the resource highly relevant to its audience.



A small, rural hospital shows impact of COVID-19 on its community

At small rural hospitals, the challenges of fighting COVID-19 can be particularly intense. Staff on the front lines at [Margaret Mary Health \(MMH\)](#) in Batesville, Ind., shared "[A View from the Frontlines of the COVID Pandemic](#)" with their community. MMH has had 37% of lab tests come back positive for COVID-19, much higher than the 20% the state of Indiana had observed, on average.



A CAH shares tips for managing COVID-19

Wilson Medical Center, a Neodesha, Kan.-based hospital, transformed its care delivery following the state's stay-at-home order because of the pandemic. [Read more](#) about what the leaders and staff learned.



Wellness pod nurtures health care workers

Cody Regional Health in Wyoming created a wellness pod for hardworking staff to care for themselves while fighting COVID-19. The wellness area includes a meditation room, eight bedrooms, laundry and shower facilities, on-site access to licensed therapists, games and an exercise area. [Read more](#).



Trustees share messages with rural hospital staff

At Coffey Health System in Burlington, Kans., the board of trustees took time to create a video of heartfelt messages to show its appreciation to hospital staff working particularly hard during the COVID-19 emergency. [Read more](#) about the overwhelming response.

NEWSLETTERS & UPDATES

November 25, 2020

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).



Rural Health Update

Rural Health Update and COVID-19 Resources and References

This newsletter updates readers on general and rural specific advocacy and policy actions as well as those that are COVID-19 related. It has

a focus on COVID-19 data collection and reporting, newly published rules, our celebration of National Rural Health Day and additional tools, grants and funding resources. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

October 22, 2020



Rural Health Update

Rural Health Update and COVID-19 Resources and References

This newsletter updates readers on general and rural specific advocacy and policy actions as well as those that are COVID-19 related. It

reviews significant policy initiatives taken by the Administration, educational opportunities for rural hospitals including podcasts and webinars, and the redesigned AHA Rural Health Care Leadership Experience. It also includes several excellent tools and resources curated from both federal agencies and the private sector. The AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems address the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

September 24, 2020



Rural Health Update

Rural Health Update and COVID-19 Resources and References

This newsletter updates readers on general federal advocacy and policy actions as well as those that are COVID-19 related. It reviews the

We Care, We Vote initiative, significant policy initiatives taken by the Administration, educational opportunities for rural hospitals including podcasts and webinars, and an updated compendium of COVID-19 resources and references. It also includes several excellent tools and resources curated from both federal agencies and the private sector. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

August 25, 2020



Rural Health Update

Rural Health Update and COVID-19 Resources and References

This newsletter updates readers on federal advocacy and policy actions in general as well as those that are COVID-19 related. It reviews

several educational opportunities for rural hospitals including podcasts, webinars and an updated compendium of COVID-19 resources and references. It also includes several excellent tools and resources curated from both federal agencies and the private sector. The AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems address the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

July 30, 2020



Rural Health Update

Rural Health Update and COVID-19 Resources and References

This newsletter updates readers on federal advocacy and policy actions in general and COVID-19 related. It reviews several

educational opportunities for rural hospitals including podcasts, webinars and an updated compendium of COVID-19 resources and references. It also includes several excellent tools and resources curated from both federal agencies and the private sector. The AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems address the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

June 25, 2020

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).



Rural Health Special Edition

COVID-19 Update for Rural Hospitals and Health Systems

As cities and states begin the process of re-opening, AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems combat

and recover from the COVID-19 public health pandemic. The AHA is urging Congress to provide more funding and additional assistance to hospitals to help address the challenges COVID-19 has wrought. In this edition of the Rural Health Services special newsletter, you'll find the latest resources to help you navigate the new normal. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

May 28, 2020



Rural Health Special Edition

COVID-19 Update for Rural Hospitals & Health Systems

The AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems address the COVID-19 pandemic in their communities.

Many states are removing restrictions under new local, state and federal guidelines, and hospitals are resuming non-emergency procedures. In Washington, D.C., the AHA is advocating on behalf of rural hospitals and health systems and working to convince Congress that it must provide additional funding and resources during these challenging times. In this newsletter, you'll find a wealth of new assets to help you meet your communities' needs amid the shifting COVID-19 landscape. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

April 30, 2020



Rural Health Special Edition

COVID-19 Update for Rural Hospitals & Health Systems

The AHA remains committed to helping rural hospitals and health systems successfully navigate the global pandemic facing our

nation. We recognize the challenges you are facing and AHA continues working with Congress to quickly pass legislation to help alleviate burden on providers, fast-track federal assistance dollars and increase the availability of needed resources during these times. We also continue to urge the Administration to distribute emergency funds swiftly, and provide further flexibilities so that hospitals can respond to patient care needs. We also remain inspired by the stories of front-line workers on the ground risking their lives to care for patients and communities in bold new ways. Included are case studies, additional resources and funding opportunities to help you and your counterparts in rural areas. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

April 9, 2020



Rural Health Special Edition

Resources to Help Rural Hospitals and Health Systems Navigate COVID-19

The AHA is hard at work advocating for the needs of rural hospitals and health systems amidst the COVID-19 pandemic,

working with Congress and the administration to ensure the frontlines of health care – hospitals, physicians and nurses – remain a priority for federal assistance. During these unprecedented times we know that there are many challenges, especially for rural hospitals. But we're inspired to see so many rural hospitals stepping up to meet this moment in our history. Included are some case studies featuring rural hospitals that may help you quickly implement your own solutions to help care for patients and your community, as well as additional resources that you may find helpful. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

April 1, 2020



Rural Health Special Bulletin

Summary of CARES Act Provisions to Help Rural Hospitals; CMS to Host April 2 Call on Medicare Accelerated Payment Program

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27, provides resources and flexibility for rural hospitals. The legislation will help rural hospitals and critical access hospitals that are in dire financial need due to this pandemic. View the AHA's [two-page fact sheet](#) outlining provisions to help rural hospitals. The AHA has [urged](#) the Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to directly and expediently distribute to hospitals and health systems funds from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund that were designated for providers in the CARES Act. Read the full newsletter [here](#).

OTHER AHA RESOURCES

New AHA Connect App

The AHA has a new members-only app designed to help you stay current with the latest health policy news and legislative updates. The app offers a personalized experience through customization according to your issue interests, enables you to contact your congressional representatives with a single tap and participate in discussion groups. The app includes a link to the AHA Rural Forum digital community. Learn more here (<https://www.aha.org/advocacy/2020-04-16-introducing-ahas-new-app-my-aha-connect#download>).

AHA Physician Alliance: Addressing Rural Health Care Challenges

In 2019, the Physician Alliance hosted rural physician leaders to a discussion about challenges and innovative strategies when providing care in rural hospitals. This [issue brief](#) includes keys to leadership in a rural setting, and clickable icon links to resources to explore how rural leaders are providing better care for their patients.



Nursing staff at Wilson Medical Center, Neodesha, Kan.

Get engaged with the AHA Digital Community for Rural Hospitals CEOs

In this [letter](#) to rural health care leaders, Marty Fattig, CEO of Nemaha County Hospital in Auburn, Neb., shares the value of support from AHA's Rural Hospital Executive Community. "The feedback continues to be positive and we encourage our colleagues from across rural America to use this resource for problem solving and knowledge transfer," Fattig writes. "This is a safe and secure platform to examine key operational and management priorities with input from rural health care subject matter experts and thought leaders."

AHA releases updated resource for members on COVID-19 pathways to recovery. The AHA today shared with members an updated resource, [COVID-19 Pathways to Recovery](#), which includes considerations, questions and checklists for hospitals and health systems to consider as they work toward a safe, orderly return to providing comprehensive health care services to their communities. The second installment of this resource focuses on support and ancillary services, plant

operations/environment of care, financial management and governance. The first part of the resource covered workforce, testing and contact tracing, internal and external communications, and the supply chain.



AHA Leadership Team Award

AHA is accepting applications for the [AHA Rural Hospital Leadership Team Award](#), which honors outstanding efforts by AHA members who have guided their hospital and community through transformational change on the road to health care reform. The team will have displayed exemplary leadership and responsiveness to the community's health needs and demonstrated a collaborative community process that has led to measurable outcomes.

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CMS Issues Rural Crosswalk: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19. Recently, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a Rural Crosswalk: CMS Flexibilities to Fight COVID-19. This new resource documents all current COVID-19-related waivers and flexibilities issued by CMS that impact Rural Health Clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals, rural hospitals generally, and long term care facilities, and describes the significance of each provision for these rural providers and facilities. The Rural Crosswalk can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/2020-08-12rural-crosswalk.pdf>.

COVID-19 Funding Sources Impacting Rural Providers Guide

The Guide from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and the Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC), at <https://www.ruralcenter.org/resource-library/covid-19-funding-sources-impacting-rural-providers> supports rural health care providers, along with their state and local partners, navigate the availability of federal funds for COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts. Also, visit the National Rural Health Resource Center new [COVID-19 Collection](https://www.ruralcenter.org/resource-library/covid-19) located on The Center's website at <https://www.ruralcenter.org/resource-library/covid-19>

CDC Rural Communities

CDC updated information on rural communities and their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for public health professionals, healthcare providers, and healthcare systems in these areas. Learn more here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/other-at-risk-populations/rural-communities.html>

Federal Resources to Improve Living at Home in Rural Areas. Recently in August, three federal departments – the Departments of Health & Human Services, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development –released a joint informational bulletin summarizing the federal resources available to improve home safety for older adults and people with disabilities in rural areas. It describes how states can improve accessibility of home environments through Medicaid, programs that can facilitate home repair and modification, initiatives to reduce and prevent falls, resources to support aging in place, and loan opportunities for mortgages and housing repair. A joint press release describing the opportunity may be found here <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib081920.pdf>.

Rural Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019. The Rural Health Information Hub posted a guide to help you learn about activities underway to address COVID-19. This guide will help you learn about activities underway to address COVID-19, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, with a focus on rural communities. It may be found at <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/covid-19>

Rural Healthcare Surge Readiness. Developed by the COVID-19 Healthcare Resilience Working Group and HRSA this tool provides the most up-to-date and critical resources for rural healthcare systems preparing for and responding to a COVID-19 surge. The resources span a wide range of healthcare settings (EMS, inpatient and hospital care, ambulatory care, and long-term care) and cover a broad array of topics ranging from behavioral health to healthcare operations to telehealth. It may be found at https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/healthcare-surge-readiness?utm_source=racupdate&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=update072920

Rural-Specific Resources and Assistance from USDA

USDA Rural Development has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Visit www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus for information on Rural Development loan payment assistance, application deadline extensions and more. Learn more here https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDARDCOVID-19CumulativeSA_06032020.pdf

Maintaining financial viability: Stroudwater Associates developed a sample **26-week cash planning document** hospitals should use to prepare cash projections and identify resources for the coming weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Visit this link](#) to download the workbook.

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).

For additional information, please contact John Supplitt at jsupplitt@aha.org.

December 3, 2020

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services [webpage](#).