



Rural COVID-19 Support

June 16, 2021

Louisiana's Health Initiative



Housekeeping

- Your lines are muted to prevent background noise
- Please enter any questions into the chat box
- Recording and slide available at:
 - <https://wellaheadla.com/healthcare-access/state-office-of-rural-health/>



Agenda

- American Rescue Plan (ARP) COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation
- Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation (RHCCTM) Program
- Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution (RHCVD) Program
- Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence (RHCVC) Program
- Question and Answer



American Rescue Plan (ARP) COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation

Kandi Smith, Rural Hospital Sustainability Manager



Funding Opportunity for Small Rural Hospitals

- Application and management through State SHIP Programs
- Funding Formula is \$230,000 x # of participating hospitals
- Eligibility Requirement: Critical Access Hospitals & Rural Hospitals with 49 beds or less
- Notice of Award expected date is July 1st



Allowed Expenditures

- COVID-19 Testing
- Community Mitigation
 - CDC has developed Mitigation Guidelines:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>



Examples of Testing Expenditures

- Purchase and administer COVID-19 Tests
- Develop and implement strategies to address patient concerns (re: testing)
- Ensure access
 - Address long-standing systemic health and social inequities that put some rural residents at increased risk for COVID-19/severe illness



Examples of Testing Expenditures

- Install temporary structures, leasing of properties, retrofitting facilities
- Education, rehabilitation, prevention, treatment, and support services for symptoms occurring after recovery from acute COVID-19 infection
- Planning for implementation of a COVID-19 testing program, hiring staff, procuring supplies to provide testing, training providers and staff on COVID-19 testing procedures, and reporting data to HHS on COVID-19 testing activities



Examples of Mitigation Expenditures

- Promote behaviors that prevent spread of infectious diseases
- Ensure Ventilation Systems operate properly
- Educate the community, including education on vaccines
- Maintain health operations for staff, including building measures to cope with employee stress and burnout



Examples of Mitigation Expenditures

- Conduct contact tracing
- Use digital technologies to strengthen the hospital's core capacity to support the public-health response to COVID-19
- Support and referrals to testing, clinical services, and other essential support services



Additional Information

Contact Kandi.Smith@la.gov with questions



Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation (RHCCTM) Program

Denise Dowell, Rural Development Coordinator

Eligible Facilities

- Rural Health Clinics listed in either:
 - The CMS Provider of Services file or
 - The CMS Survey and Certification's Quality, Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR) that qualified for the COVID-19 Testing Funds
- RHCs that received funding for RHC COVID Testing Funds (\$49,461.42) will receive these funds
 - Those RHCs that are delinquent on reporting will have the opportunity to enter data so they are up-to-date

Support Provided

- Funds in the amount of \$100,000 per eligible RHC were deposited into TIN accounts on June 10, 2021
- If RHC is provider-based, funds are being deposited into the TIN of the hospital also on June 10, 2021
- If an independent RHC, funds are deposited directly into their TIN account
 - Hospitals receiving these funds will disburse funds to their RHC(s)
 - If RHCs or hospitals received funds by paper checks during the previous COVID-19 Testing Funds allocation, paper checks will be issued this time also (there could be a delay in receiving funds.)
 - Payment description: “COVID*ARPAAct*RHCCTMPmt*HHS.GOV”

RHC COVID-19 Funds Comparison

RHC COVID-19 Testing Funds

- Amount / RHC: \$49,461.42
- Funds issued to TIN accounts:
 - May, June, December 2020
 - Paper checks issued could have been delayed receipt
- Expenditure Period:
 - Ending December 31, 2021

RHC COVID-19 Testing & Mitigation Funds

- Amount / RHC: \$100,000
 - Funds issued to TIN accounts:
 - June 10, 2021
 - If paid by paper checks, receipt may be delayed
- Expenditure Period:
 - January 1, 2021-December 31, 2022

RHC COVID-19 Funds Comparison

RHC COVID-19 Testing Funds

- Attestation required
 - Accept or reject funds within designated time period
- Monthly reporting required through portal:
 - <http://www.rhccovidreporting.com>

RHC COVID-19 Testing & Mitigation Funds

- Attestation required
 - Accept or reject funds within 90 days of receipt of funds
 - <https://covid19.linkhealth.com/#/step/1>
- Monthly reporting required through portal:
 - <http://www.rhccovidreporting.com>



Purpose of Funds

- To build upon the activities conducted through the RHC COVID-19 Testing Funds issued in May, June, and December 2020
- Maintain and increase COVID-19 testing efforts;
- Expand access to testing in rural communities; and
- Expand the range of mitigation activities in local communities.
- Also intends to address health equity gaps by offering support and resources to medically underserved rural communities.

Terms and Conditions

- Provides information on

- Attestation
- COVID-19 testing,
- COVID-19 mitigation, and
- COVID-19 testing and mitigation related expenses
- Funding period (January 1, 2021-December 31, 2022)

- Attestation

<https://covid19.linkhealth.com/#/step/1>

- Attest to the amount being accepted
 - Reject the amount that will be returned
 - A credit will be issued to the TIN
- Additional guidance on COVID-19 testing and mitigation expenses are expected later in June



Allowable Use of Funds

- COVID-19 testing
 - viral tests to diagnose active COVID-19 infections,
 - antibody tests to diagnose past COVID-19 infections, and
 - other tests that the determined appropriate in guidance by the HHS Secretary and CDC



Allowable Use of Funds

- **COVID-19 mitigation**

- Efforts, activities, and strategies to reduce or prevent local COVID-19 transmission,
- Minimize morbidity and mortality of COVID-19 in schools, workplaces, and health care organizations

- **Examples:**

- Case investigation,
- Contact tracing,
- COVID-19 screening,
- COVID-19 testing promotion and confidence building,
- Community education,
- Health behavior promotion,
- Referrals to testing,
- Clinical services, and
- Support services

Allowable Use of Funds

- COVID-19 testing and mitigation related expenses include:

- Building or construction of temporary structures, leasing of properties, and retrofitting facilities as necessary to support COVID-19 testing and COVID-19 mitigation

- Examples:

- Replacing entry door with door that has a open-door foot pedal so that entry and exiting is hands-free
- Replacing fabric chairs with vinyl or plastic chairs that can be disinfected
- Replacing carpet with vinyl flooring



Reporting

- Monthly reports will be required through rhccovidreporting.com
 - Same portal used for RHC COVID-19 Testing Funds
- To be reported on a monthly basis beginning July 2021 for the duration of the reporting period:
 - The number of tests conducted,
 - The number of positive tests, and
 - Data related to COVID-19 mitigation activities
- Reporting is to be completed at the Tax Identification Number (TIN) level



Additional Information and Resources

- Additional guidance anticipated soon
- Resources:
 - [HRSA RHCCTM Program Website](#)
 - [CDC Mitigation Information](#)
 - [HRS RHC COVID Testing and Mitigation Terms and Conditions](#)
 - [RHC Reporting Portal](#)
 - [NARHC webinar recording May 19, 2021](#)
 - [NARHC COVID19 New Initiatives Slides May 19, 2021](#)
- Questions:
 - RHCCTM Funds: RHCCOVID-19Testing@hrsa.gov
 - Reporting: RHCcovidreporting@narhc.org



Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution (RHCVD) Program

Denaé Hebert, State Office of Rural Health Manager

Eligible Facilities

- Rural Health Clinics that are
 - Medicare Certified;
 - Have an active CMS Certification Number (CCN); and
 - Are listed in the CMS Survey and Certification's Quality, Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR)
- Organizations that own and operate RHCs meeting the qualifications above
- To verify your eligibility, visit the CMS Quality, Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR) website:
https://qcor.cms.gov/basic_research.jsp



Support Provided

- All RHCs are eligible to receive direct shipments of their choice of COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and/or Johnson & Johnson)
- Separate from and in addition to jurisdictions' weekly allocations

Deadline & How to Receive

- Complete the Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program Readiness Assessment
 - Will be required to attest to/provide information about ability to meet storage requirements, current vaccine data reporting, staffing and processes, and contact information
 - **MUST KNOW YOUR VTrcKS PIN**
 - If you don't know your VTrcKS PIN contact State Immunization Manager
 - Stacy Hall, 504.568.2600, stacy.hall@la.gov, <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/>
- No deadline—ongoing

Next Steps

- After completing the Readiness Assessment, sign and return conditions of participation document to RHCVaxDistribution@hrsa.gov
 - HRSA will follow up for additional information as needed
- Set up [Vaccine Provider Order Portal \(VPoP\) Account](#)
 - Will receive email from VPoP with instructions within ~1 week after submitting Conditions of Participation Agreement and the Readiness Assessment



Order Process

- Create a vaccine order in [Vaccine Provider Order Portal \(VPoP\)](#)
 - HRSA places shipment orders on Thursdays to be delivered to clinics the following week (Monday/Tuesday)
- Minimum dosage orders
 - Pfizer: 450 (decreased from 1,170)
 - Moderna: 100
 - Johnson & Johnson: 100



Manage Inventory & Reporting

- Track your HRSA allocated inventory daily by logging stock on hand through Vaccine Provider Order Portal (VPoP)
 - Only vaccines supplied through HRSA's federally allocated vaccine program should be managed in VPOP
- Follow state priority guidelines in administering the vaccines. You will be required to store, handle, and administer vaccines according to stated requirements, and meet necessary reporting requirements



Important Notes

- CDC has advised that concerns about wasting unused doses in a small-volume environment is secondary to the imperative to get “shots in the arms”



Additional Information and Resources

- [HRSA RHCVD Program Website](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Quick Reference Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [CDC Identification, Disposal, and Reporting of COVID-19 Vaccine Wastage](#)
- [NRHA COVID-19 Vaccine Talking Points](#)
- [NRHA COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#)
- HRSA RHCVD Questions: RHCVaxDistribution@hrsa.gov



Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence (RHCVC) Program

Nicole Coarsey, Division of Population Health Manager



Eligible Facilities

- **Rural Health Clinics**

- Certified by CMS;
- Have CMS Certification Numbers (CCNs); and
- Listed in the CMS Survey and Certification's Certification and Oversight Reports (QCOR)

- **Organizations that own and operate RHCs**

- Note: organizations that own or operate multiple RHCs should submit their budget for the TOTAL amount



Support Provided

- Estimated \$50,000 per RHC
- Award amounts may be higher or lower than \$50,000 per RHC depending on the number of RHCs that apply for the RHCVC Program (this is not guaranteed)
- Organizations that own and operate multiple RHCs may apply for up to \$50,000 per RHC
 - The organization should submit ONE application for all RHCs owned and operated under the EIN/TIN
- You may request reimbursement of allowable costs incurred retroactive to March 15, 2021.



Deadline & How to Receive

- **Deadline for applications: June 23, 2021**
- **Period of Performance: July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022**
- **Prior to applying for the grant, organizations must:**
 - Register with [DUNS](#) (Estimated time to complete: one day)
 - Register with [SAM](#) (Estimated time to complete: three days)
 - Register with [Grants.gov](#) (Estimated time to complete: two-to-three weeks)
- Follow instructions in [NOFO](#)
- Follow instructions in [SF-424 Application Guide](#)



Description of Funding

- Fund ALL eligible RHC applicants to address gaps in the COVID-19 vaccination rate by offering support and resources
- Improve vaccine confidence and counter vaccine hesitancy in rural communities
- Fund a broad range of efforts to improve health care in rural areas that reinforce basic messages about prevention and treatment of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases

Activity Examples NOFO pp 19-21

Schedule Patient Vaccine Appointment

- Schedule patient vaccine appointment
- Can include transportation and childcare options to meet patients where they are and prevent no-shows

Webinar or Other Virtual Event

- Showcase vaccine confidence materials and host a one-time or ongoing discussion with your community

Patient Participation Visibility

- Provide stickers, buttons, pens, lanyards, etc. to patients following vaccine appointment and encourage them to share it on social media or other communication channels

Public Service Announcement (PSA) (e.g. radio, TV, print ad)

- Distribute/host/participate in a PSA to educate people about the importance of vaccination and basic prevention measures to prevent COVID-19 and protect public health

Website, Social Media, Email, Postcard/Direct Mail

- Feature vaccine confidence resources on your website and encourage readers to use and share information
- Share social media graphics, messages, and videos with your community and encourage them to repost
- Email your network and share the latest vaccine confidence messaging and resources, including measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, be sure to include a clear call-to-action
- Send culturally tailored, plain language postcards/mailers to educate patients about the importance of vaccination and basic prevention measures and protect public health



Outreach Tools

- HHS-Funded COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Tools
 - [We Can Do This, COVID-19 Public Education Campaign](#)
 - [We Can Do This, Rural Community Toolkit](#)
 - [Vaccinate with Confidence](#)
 - [CDC Photo Gallery](#)

Additional Information

- HRSA RHC Vaccine Confidence Program Webpage
 - <https://www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus/rural-health-clinics/confidence>
- Subscribe to RHC Vaccine Confidence Program Listserv for HRSA updates
 - <https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=RHC-VAX-CONFIDENCE-PROGRAM&A=1>
- Contact HRSA with questions
 - Lindsey Nienstedt, Public Health Analyst
 - RHCVaxConfidence@hrsa.gov
 - (301) 443-0835

Questions?



Thank you!

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