

HAPPY NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH DAY!

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH AND
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It's been quite a year! Major changes are underway in health care across the country—and in Minnesota. Impending cuts in Medicaid and throughout the health care system are poised to have significant effects on access to health care, particularly in rural Minnesota. While not in any way enough to offset the upcoming cuts, a noteworthy funding opportunity was included in federal legislation last summer – the Rural Health Transformation Program, which gave all states the ability to apply for a share of \$50 billion over five years to improve rural health by investing in infrastructure, workforce development and innovative care models.

Minnesota built its application from extensive stakeholder input—we held over 40 meetings with external partners and reviewed over 350 responses that came through our website portal. Our final package received strong bipartisan support through its focus on:

- Community-based preventive care and chronic disease management with a particular focus on improving health outcomes for rural Minnesotans with or at risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease.
- Recruiting and retaining talent in rural communities—building the rural healthcare workforce starting with early exposure in high school and extending through new clinical training and residency tracks in rural hospitals and communities.
- Sustaining access to services to keep care closer to home by creating new access points for community-based screenings, preventive care, and chronic disease management.
- Creating regional care models to improve whole person health and keep more of health care local so people have access to the care they need.
- Investing in technology, infrastructure and collaboration to strengthen and stabilize the financial health of rural providers.

We expect to hear from our federal funders by the end of the calendar year on the level of funding and scope of programming that we will be able to move forward. We're excited for the work ahead and the opportunity to develop some new programs with our partners in promoting rural health. And National Rural Health Day gives us a wonderful opportunity to recognize those partners, the people who do so much every day to maintain, sustain and improve health in our rural communities.

Thank you to all of the healthcare providers, communities, organizations and individuals who go to work every day to make health care accessible to rural Minnesotans. Thank you to our many advisory committee members who share their wisdom and experience with us. Thank you to the many more informal partners who work with us every day.

Our partnership with you is crucial to our role in helping to identify and call attention to the needs of rural Minnesotans, and in developing policies and administering programs to address these needs. I'll close with a special thanks to our ORHPC staff, who make this journey so rewarding.

Happy National Rural Health Day!

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