March 25, 2020

Rural Health Information during COVID-19

Dear Rural Stakeholders,

It is important to have consistent and efficient communication to provide rural health stakeholders with the information needed during this global pandemic. The rural health programs at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) are working on providing you with regular updates and resources amid this outbreak.

For critical information relating to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we recommend that you regularly monitor information on the <u>Iowa Department of</u> <u>Public Health COVID-19 Page</u>. For additional resources and updates, see the following pages.

Please reach out for technical assistance and for any questions you may have. We are an ongoing resource for you.

Best,

Rural Health Programs

Iowa Department of Public Health

For questions, contact:

Samra Hiros, MPH

State Office of Rural Health

E-mail: <u>Samra.Hiros@idph.iowa.gov</u>.

Phone: (515) 423-7900





COVID-19 Monitoring and Testing Information

- COVID-19 Iowa information provided by IDPH can be found <u>here.</u>
- Discover the latest resources, maps and information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) on <u>coronavirus.iowa.gov</u>

Public hotlines for Iowans

- A public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling **2-1-1** or 1-800-244-7431.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has created a Disaster Distress Helpline for resources related to mental health and coping. The line is available 24/7, dial 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

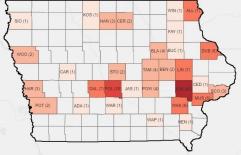
COVID-19 Resources

- Telehealth toolkits
 - The National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers developed a <u>COVID-19</u> <u>Telehealth Toolkit</u> that details how telehealth can be used in response to COVID-19.
 - CMS created a General Provider <u>Telehealth and Telemedicine Tool Kit</u> that includes information on establishing telemedicine programs, patient monitoring, developing documentation tools, and more.
 - The Rural Health Information Hub has created a <u>Rural Response to Coronavirus</u> <u>Disease 2019</u> guide to inform of activities underway to address COVID-19.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides daily <u>updates on the</u> <u>Coronavirus</u> with guidance for health providers and local public health officials.

Telehealth Considerations for Providers

- Licensure
 - There now exists a Temporary waiver of the requirement that out-of-state providers be licensed in the state where they are providing services when they are licensed in another state. This applies to both Medicare and Medicaid, see: <u>CMS</u> <u>COVID 19 Emergency Declaration Health Care Providers Fact Sheet</u>







- Data Privacy and Security
 - The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced, effective immediately, that it will exercise its enforcement discretion and that it will not impose penalties for noncompliance with the regulatory requirements under the HIPAA Rules against covered health care providers in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency, see: <u>Notification of Enforcement</u> <u>Discretion for Telehealth Remote Communications During the COVID-19</u> <u>Nationwide Public Health Emergency</u>
- The Iowa Insurance Division's COVID-19 information can be found on the <u>Iowa</u> <u>Insurance Division COVID-19 Resources</u> page.
- The Trump Administration announced the expansion of telehealth coverage to Medicare beneficiaries, starting March 6. See <u>CMS Medicare Telemedicine Health Care Provider</u> <u>Fact Sheet</u> and <u>Medicare Telehealth Frequently Asked Questions</u>
- An update on billing services related to COVID-19 can be found on <u>Letter #</u> <u>2119-MC-FFS-CVD</u>. A list of <u>all DHS Informational Letters</u>.

IDPH Rural Health Program Updates

- **PRIMECARRE Loan Repayment Program**: Providers and sites may have concerns about compliance with their service obligation during the COVID-19 emergency. Participants who are required to be away from their approved service site more than the allotted seven weeks per service year; become unemployed as a direct result of the outbreak; or are directed by their employer to provide care outside of the PRIMECARRE approved site should provide notification via <u>IowaGrants</u> correspondence.
- <u>Certificate of Need (CON)</u>: According to the Governor's proclamation of March 17, institutional health facilities, which includes hospitals and nursing homes, that add beds specifically to deal with COVID-19 are exempt from the CON process through March 31.
- Volunteer Health Care Provider Program (VHCPP): For health care providers who would like to volunteer their services, any provider holding a current VHCPP agreement with the Volunteer Health Care Provider Program (VHCPP) shall be afforded the protection of an employee of the state. Individual provider applications can be accessed here and submissions will be processed as quickly as possible.

