



Greetings from the Virginia Primary Care Office & the State Office of Rural Health

We sincerely wish that each of you are doing well and staying safe during these unusual and challenging times. If you and your place of business are like us, you have recently been inundated with information. This newsletter is an attempt to categorize the most recent information applicable to our stakeholders for your reference. Our intention is to help sort through the noise, not contribute to it. If you find this useful, please pass along to colleagues.

Virginia's Rural Response to COVID-19

Join the Rural Community Conversation
Tuesday, May 5, 2020
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

*What resources are needed to support rural communities
in the Commonwealth of Virginia's response to the COVID-19 crisis?*

Hosted by the Office of Governor Ralph Northam &
the Virginia Department of Health
COVID-19 Emergency Support Team Health Equity Working Group

[Register Here](#)

Information & Resources for Providers

**Just-In-Time COVID-19 ECHO for Primary Care Providers
in Virginia**

Virtual Sessions Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
8:00 - 9:00 AM ET



 **SCHOOL
OF MEDICINE**

This Just-in-Time ECHO (Extensions for Community Health Outcomes) Learning Series for Primary Care is a state-wide partnership bringing you up-to-the-minute information and answering your questions about COVID-19. The goal is to facilitate collaboration and share best practices in a protected learning environment.

[Virginia Project ECHO Series Registration Link](#)

HHS Announces Allocations of CARES Act Provider Relief Fund

The Health and Human Services (HHS) Department announced *Thursday, April 23rd*, that \$10B of the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund will be allocated to rural providers. Additionally, HHS is allocating an additional \$20B - on top

of the \$30B that was distributed last week which will total \$50B. However, the allocation of the \$50B will be distributed on the basis of 2018 total patient revenue. The first distribution was done based on Medicare fee-for-service revenue. HHS will distribute the difference between what was calculated under the first distribution and the calculation based on total 2018 net patient revenue. The first distribution was made Friday April 24 based on data from cost reports. Providers will need to enter their revenue into a the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund Payment Attestation Portal.

[Provider Payment Attestation Portal](#)

FCC Adopts \$200 Million COVID-19 Telehealth Program

With the potential for the telehealth surge to leave behind poor, rural communities, Congress approved a major coronavirus rescue package which included \$200 million to help healthcare providers pay for internet connectivity and devices enabling telehealth. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been encouraged to pressure telecommunications companies to build more rural networks, a longstanding complaint that has only intensified during the pandemic.

[FCC Statement](#)

Free CME/CE Activity, "COVID-19: What Clinicians Serving Patients in Rural and Underserved Communities Need to Know"

Dr. Paul Sax and Dr. Barbara Yawn lead a 30 minute audio-based CME/CE activity on COVID-19 to inform clinicians on the background and epidemiology of the virus, clinical presentation and diagnosis, modes of transmission, prevention methods, and potential treatment. The activity is worth 0.5 complimentary CME/CE credits upon completion.

[Audio-Based CME/CE Activity](#)

For Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities (FQHCs, RHCs, Free Clinics, Tribal):

Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association COVID-19 Dashboard

With the support of hospital members, the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) has launched a new online data dashboard to provide up-to-date statistics on the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations across the Commonwealth.



[COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

Webinar Opportunity: Wednesday, May 6th, from 2:00 - 3:00 PM EST
Brookings: Telehealth Before & After COVID-19

[Webinar Registration Link](#)

New Guidance from U.S. Treasury and Small Business Administration (SBA) Allows Small Government Hospitals to Qualify for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Interim Final Rule

On April 2, 2020, the U.S. SBA posted an interim final rule announcing the implementation of sections 1102 and 1106 of the CARES Act. Section 1102 of the Act adds a temporary program, titled Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to the SBA's 7(a) Loan Program. Section 1106 of the act provides for forgiveness of up to the full principal amount of qualifying loans guaranteed under the PPP. SBA posted additional interim final rules on April 3, 2020 and April 14, 2020 which supplements the previously posted interim final rules with addition guidance.

Interim Final Rule

BiPartisan Policy Center: Rural Health Task Force Policy Recommendations

Confronting Rural America's Health Care Crisis

The Bipartisan Policy Center's Rural Health Task Force has developed recommendations over the last year to stabilize and improve the urgent problems challenging rural communities and to do it permanently. The report also includes recommendations for enhanced payments to keep obstetric units open, and tax credits to encourage physicians and advanced practice clinicians, or physician assistants and nurse practitioners, to stay in rural communities.

Rural Health Care Report

CMS COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers

CMS is empowered to take proactive steps through 1135 waivers as well as, where applicable, authority granted under section 1812(f) of the Social Security Act (the Act) and rapidly expand the Administration's aggressive efforts against COVID-19. As a result, the following blanket waivers are in effect, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020 through the end of the emergency declaration.

CMS Newsletter

RAND: Responding to Critical Care Surge Capacity

The RAND Corporation included 61 rural hospitals in its survey of hospitals across the country about their capacity to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic. The report presented a range of strategies for creating capacity, including an online Critical Care Surge Response Tool. The tool allows decision makers at all levels, hospitals, health care systems, states, regions, to estimate current critical care capacity and rapidly explore strategies for increasing it.

Critical Care Surge Response
Tool

Stroudwater Associates

Stroudwater Associates, remains focused on the success of rural and community hospitals and health systems around the country, During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Stroudwater has focused on providing helping information that industry colleagues and your organizations can use to weather this storm. Previous webinar presentations have been centered around: *Emergency Cash flow planning, Telehealth Strategies and Coding Concerns, Sustain and Pivot Care Management Services, Revenue Cycle Crisis Management*

State & Regional Resources



Virginia Department of Health: COVID-19 Cases in Virginia and Additional Information:

The VDH COVID-19 page is updated daily before 10 AM. Numbers are preliminary and close out at 5 PM the day before posting. Case counts reflect what has been reported to VDH by healthcare providers and laboratories.

[Scorecard and Resources](#)

USDA COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture launched an online list of programs offering immediate and long-term assistance to rural communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. These programs offer support for rural residents, businesses, and communities through technical, training, and management assistance, financial assistance, and state and local assistance.

[Federal Rural Resource Guide](#)

United Way of Southwest Virginia COVID-19 Relief Fund:

United Way of Southwest Virginia, a regional community organization focused on improving health, education, and economic mobility, has established the COVID-19 Relief Fund, a resiliency and social innovation initiative. United Way of Southwest Virginia will respond to the needs of our communities experiencing detrimental economic effects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



[United Way of Southwest Virginia](#)

[United Way COVID-19 Relief Information](#)

Rural Tribal COVID-19 Response Program, Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, HRSA received \$15 million to allocate to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, Urban Indian Health Organizations, and health service providers to Tribes. The funding will provide support for the Tribes to prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19 in rural communities.

[Grant Opportunity](#)

Region A.H.E.A.D. (Appalachian Highlands Economic Aid Directory)

Service Area: Northwest Tennessee/Southwest Virginia

This site was created to give small businesses and the community a place to connect and learn how we can support one another during this time of uncertainty. We have compiled a list of small businesses that can use your support which you can view here. If you would like your business to be listed in this directory, please see the link below.

[Support Directory](#)

Virginia Chamber COVID-19 Resources

The link below offers a comprehensive overview of resources developed by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Department of Health, Treasury Department, Small Business Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations and government partners to ensure your business and your employees have the necessary information to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We all play a vital role in not only preventing the spread of COVID-19 but also enacting everyday safety and wellness precautions to keep our workforce healthy.

[Virginia Chamber- COVID-19 Resources](#)



VRHA N95 Decontamination Partnership with Battelle: STOP Throwing Away N95s

The Virginia Rural Health Association has partnered with Battelle to provide FREE N95 Decontamination Services

Contact Beth O'Connor: boconnor@vrha.org if your site is interested in participating

[N95 Decontamination Fact Sheet](#)

Feel Good Stories

This 16-year-old student pilot is flying medical supplies to rural hospitals during the pandemic

TJ Kim, a high school student, from Bethesda, Maryland is delivering medical supplies, along with his flight instructor, to rural hospitals. Donated supplies include gloves, masks, gowns, and other essential equipment like shoe covers and protective eyewear.

[Link to Story](#)



Pilot Provides PPE to Rural Healthcare Workers

The Virginia Rural Health Association has been coordinating efforts with the Angel Flight East, a medical flight company, to distribute proper personal protective equipment to healthcare workers throughout rural Virginia including Wise County, Williamsburg, and Harrisonburg.

To donate items, contact VRHA Administrative Assistant Krin Collins: kcollins@vrha.org

[Link to Story](#)

Shenandoah Memorial Hospital: Hospital staff holds parade for 8-year-old who donated piggy bank to help those in need

A little boy's generous gesture is bringing people to tears. Eight year-old Noah has donated his entire piggy bank stash to a Virginia hospital. He said he wanted to find a way to help people during the coronavirus pandemic. So, he sent a card and his savings, \$7.87, to Shenandoah Memorial Hospital. The staff was so touched they held a parade outside of his home. They also matched Noah's donation and named the fund "Noah's Piggy Bank". The fund now has \$3,000.

[Link to Story](#)

NRV Mask Makers

The NRV Mask Makers are an all-volunteer group who are donating their time, materials and skills to providing masks to healthcare facilities in the New River Valley, Virginia. On April 27th, 101 MORE masks were given to VRHA to distribute to 30 Rural Health Clinics in Virginia. As of now, over 250 homemade masks have been donated to rural sites by the NRV Mask Makers.



[For More Information](#)

New College Institute with help from Canon provides face masks to health care workers across Virginia

NCI and Canon have teamed up to provide hundreds of face shields to healthcare workers across Southwest Virginia.

[Link to Story](#)

