



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

COVID-19 Response Spotlight:

Eastern Shore Health District

The Eastern Shore Health District started meeting with community health care providers to formulate their vaccination strategy back in October 2020, a couple months before vaccine became available. These partnerships had existed for many years so working together came naturally.



Eastern Shore District Director, Jon Richardson, describes these partnerships in more detail, "We all have attitudes of service and recognized from the beginning it would take all of us working together to take care of our community. We have two main healthcare organizations on the Shore, Eastern Shore Rural Health (ESRH) and Riverside Medical group. Both orgs have been providing vaccines to our community since December, along with clinics held by the Health District. At the onset, we agreed to divide our population into more manageable groups based on the phases. Riverside and ESRH agreed to handle all those in the current phase(s) based on their age/health conditions, with ESRH agreeing to vaccinate anyone wanting an appointment regardless of patient status. The Health Department was then able to focus on the essential worker groups and we have all been working in concert ever since. In addition, the District has partnered with one or both organizations to hold larger events as vaccine has become available."

Richardson also shared some of the methods of communication that the Eastern Shore Health District has implemented in order to most effectively reach the community. "Although email is most efficient, we knew prior to beginning the vaccine campaign, there would be inequity if we relied on email, as many in our community don't have email access or have very slow internet. ESRH and Riverside were accepting appointments via phone so our community had equal opportunity and appointments were made first come, first serve. Phone contact has really been the most successful for us even though internet and email may be more efficient.

We've been using all available media to reach our community including print, social media, phone, radio and word of mouth/grassroots. We have also engaged (formal and informal) leaders in our community to help with messaging. Throughout the pandemic, we have relied on our diversity within ESHD as a major source of strength. It has been our experience that folks in the community prefer to interact with members of our team who share similar cultures and come from the same communities. Recognizing this, and having such a diverse team at ESHD, has gone a long way toward fostering the trust of our community."

While there are many reasons for the Shore's success, Richardson names a few. "First, our ESHD family is great and our partner's teams are great. We are also able to count on the collective strength of our community and our rural nature. Our community is tight knit, resilient and willing to work hard to look out for each other. This is really what made it possible for us to be where we are with vaccinations. There is still much work to do and we look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve our community!"

Updated COVID-19 Resources

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) COVID-19 Vaccination Resources

- [Vaccinate Virginia- VDH Vaccine Registration](#)
- [Become a 2021 VDH Community Ambassador](#)
- [VDH COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Education Materials](#)
- [VDH COVID-19 Vaccination Response](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Phase by Health District](#)
- [Find out which phase of the vaccination campaign you fall in](#)
- [Contact your Local Health District](#)



COVID-19 Communications Materials

- "The Best Ways for Employers to Promote COVID-19 Vaccines ([download here](#))
- "About the Three COVID-19 Vaccines" Graphic ([download here](#))
- Conversation with CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, about COVID-19 communications and the important partnership between the CDC and local health departments, 03/30/2021 at 1 PM ET ([register here](#))
- [The Language of Vaccine Acceptance](#) by de Beaumont
- Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC)- [Misinformation Alerts](#)
- Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC)- [Communications Resources](#)
- [CDC Vaccination Communication Toolkit](#)
- Downloadable [VDH COVID-19 Vaccine Patient Education Materials](#)

Additional COVID-19 Resources

- [CDC National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [NIH Assessment of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Reporting Data Systems](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Tracking System \(VTrckS\)](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQs and Funding for HRSA Programs](#)
- [COVID-19 Claims Reimbursement to Health Care Providers and Facilities for Testing, Treatment, and Vaccine Administration for the Uninsured](#)

Information & Resources for Providers & Healthcare Facilities

Virginia SORH and VRHA host POND webinar, free to RHC's

March 24, 2021 at 11 AM ET



The Virginia State Office of Rural Health (VA SORH) recognizes the importance of rural health clinics (RHC) for our rural communities and healthcare delivery systems. To address this key set of providers, we are developing a statewide RHC performance improvement network that will include a focus on technical assistance, training and benchmarking. Throughout 2021 in collaboration with the Virginia Rural Health Association, we will offer a set of training resources as well as data-based insights into the performance of our RHCs.

The Virginia Office of Rural Health and Virginia Rural Health Association have paid the cost for all Virginia RHCs to use the POND benchmarking system. POND is live and ready to be used and practices can start enrolling in POND immediately at <https://pond.lilypad207.com>. It will take no more than 20 minutes (per year) for a clinic to complete the information.

POND is a web-based data collection, reporting and benchmarking application for rural providers including rural health clinics, community health centers, health system satellite practices, and free-standing clinics. POND is designed to fill a critical gap in actionable and comparative practice level data that can be used by rural primary and specialty care provider entities seeking to optimize clinic financial performance, compensation and productivity.

Join us on March 24 at 11 AM ET for a free webinar that will provide an overview of the Practice Operations National Database (POND). POND is part of a national initiative to focus on the sustainability of the rural primary care delivery system.

To Register

POND flyer

Webinar flyer

United Way SWVA x SWVA Medical Reserve Corps Virtual Volunteer Info Session



United Way of
Southwest Virginia

March 18, 2021 at Noon

United Way of Southwest Virginia is partnering with the Southwest Medical Reserve Corps to host a virtual volunteer recruitment info session. This virtual session will be held during lunchtime and will provide more information on how to volunteer and help with vaccination clinics in SWVA. No prior experience necessary to attend the info session or be a volunteer. Non-medical volunteers are needed, not just medical volunteers.

To Register



Appalachian Regional Commission Launches “Envision Appalachia: Community Conversations for ARC’s New Strategic Plan”

Envision Appalachia: Community Conversations for ARC’s Strategic Plan, a virtual series of public input sessions to identify critical opportunities and challenges facing Appalachia’s economic future. Using insights gathered from these public sessions, coupled with guidance from regional, state, and local partners, ARC will develop a strategic plan to inform investment priorities for fiscal years 2022-2026. Sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Monday, April 12 at 3:00 PM ET
- Wednesday, April 14 at 10: AM ET
- Saturday, April 17 at 10:00 AM ET
- Tuesday, April 20 at 7:00 PM ET
- Thursday, April 22 at 12:00 PM ET

*All sessions are free, but pre-registration is required.

For More Information and to Register



Check out the Healthy Places, Healthy Lives data dashboard

For many Americans the neighborhood in which they live has a significant impact on their opportunity for optimal health. However, most measures of community characteristics and health outcomes are made at the county or metro level. These often hide vulnerable populations, diluting their impact in mapping and analysis.

Healthy Places, Healthy Lives bridges this gap by combining robust, Census Tract-level, measures into a single visualization. For health outcomes, the visualization uses life expectancy estimates created by the United States Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP). For neighborhood characteristics the visualization incorporates the Health Opportunity Index (HOI), a Census Tract-level index comprising 13 Social Determinant of Health (SDOH) indicators, created by the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity.

High and Rising Mortality Rates Among Working-Age Adults

Identifies key drivers of increasing death rates and disparities in working-age mortality from 1990-2017 and examines modifiable risk factors that could alleviate poor health and widening health inequalities in the working-age population. Makes recommendations for future research and data collection, and explores potential policy implications. Mentions rural throughout. Features statistics on trends in working-age mortality by age, sex, race/ethnicity, cause of death, and geography.

[For More Information](#)



Save the Date! The National Rural EMS & Care Conference is next month!

April 20 - 22, 2021 from 1:00 - 4:30 PM ET

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, The National Association of State EMS Officials, and The Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care invite you to attend the 6th Annual National Rural EMS & Care Conference.

[For More Information](#)

Eide Bailly Critical Access Hospital Conference

The event will be broken into two key sessions (April 8 & 9, April 15 & 16) focusing on the Medicare cost report and revenue cycle.



While this year looks different due to COVID-19, the goal is to connect with you in a meaningful way to continue their mission of providing an educational experience that goes beyond the surface. While the event is being held virtually, you'll still gain professional development, content created just for you and an opportunity to interact with presenters during the sessions.

[For More Information and to Register](#)

State & Regional Resources & Funding Opportunities

The Virginia State Loan Repayment Program (VA-SLRP) application cycle is now open!



Application Deadline: March 31, 2021

VA-SLRP is operated by the Virginia Department of Health-Office of Health Equity (VDH-OHE) providing a non-taxed incentive to qualified medical, dental, behavioral health and pharmaceutical (pharmacists) professionals in return for a minimum of two (2) years of service at an eligible practice site in one of the federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in a qualified field of practice in Virginia. There is a total of \$2,465,000 in available funding.

[Updated Program Flyer](#)

[For More Information and to Apply](#)

Federal funding helps scheduled service from rural to urban areas

The 5311 (f) is a program that funds regularly scheduled service from rural areas to urban areas, and it requires the service to make a meaningful connection with a larger intercity carrier. And while the program is a federal one, states must choose to participate in the program, and each state is different in how they administer the program for their particular state.

[For More Information](#)

Deadline Extended for CMS Rural Transformation Project (CHART)



Updated Application Deadline: May 11 (optional letters of intent due April 13)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has extended the application due date for its new, rural-focused Community Health Access and Rural Transformation (CHART) Model Community Transformation Track to May 11. Optional Letters of Intent are due April 13. This voluntary payment model, the first of its kind from the CMS Innovation Center, will test whether upfront investments, predictable capitated payments, and operational and regulatory flexibilities will enable rural health care providers to improve access to care while reducing health care costs. Selected participants will have 15 months to collaborate with local partners and develop a Community Transformation Plan.

[For More Information](#)

CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Surveillance

Application Deadline: April 25, 2021

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will make 61 awards, each up to \$850,000, for testing and reporting and improving linkages to services. Eligible applicants are state and local governments, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments.

[To Apply](#)

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[Visit the VA-SORH Facebook Page](#)



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