



Rural Community Health Initiative
COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES



NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Emmet School Health Initiative

Health Department of Northwest Michigan

Primary contact:

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Purpose:

A small group of parents in Emmet County, Mich., voiced concerns regarding a lack of school health resources. This prompted the school, health department, and hospital system to create a work group to evaluate potential student needs in three rural school districts. From this assessment, the health department has been able to apply for numerous grants to address the health needs of the students. The work group is key to successful programming, evaluation, and sustainability.

Successful outcomes:

Our network is relatively new, and we are planning to conduct a second health needs assessment in the fall/winter of the 2021-2022 school year to evaluate the effectiveness of programming and resources. The original needs assessment provided information from school staff that the most support was needed around mental and behavioral health, connecting parents to resources, nutrition education, oral health screenings, and safe dating/healthy relationship education. Since conducting the needs assessment, we have secured funding to bring a school nurse to two of three districts and a mental health professional to all three districts, all of which lacked those services prior to the assessment. The health department has also secured funding to implement a healthy relationship curriculum in all four public school districts in Emmet County.

Contact information:

220 W. Garfield
Charlevoix, Mich. 49740
231-347-4918

Sources of funding:

After the completion of this assessment, we applied for numerous grant opportunities and secured letters of commitment from each school district in a timely manner. So far, we have been awarded two grants from Michigan Health and Human Services, two grants from Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, and one grant from HRSA for Rural Health Network Planning.



Link to program:

<http://www.nwhealth.org/schools.html>

Rural health equity and COVID-19 vaccine access across the digital divide in Virginia

Four Oxen

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Purpose:

This program aims to provide outreach, education, and promote vaccine confidence in hard-to-reach rural communities in Nelson County, Va. This is accomplished through collaborating, building partnerships, providing technical expertise, and mobilizing resources among organizations that share similar goals. A mailing campaign provided necessary information to the 46 percent of households in the county that do not have broadband internet access. The mailing included a list of local clinics, a hotline to register for the vaccine, and pertinent information to provide transportation assistance. Self-reporting registration was incentivized with a cookout event and raffle prizes.

Successful outcomes:

The Rural Health Information Hub provides key evidence-based materials suggesting multimedia campaigns have a greater impact on rural populations. Hard-to-reach communities include the elderly, those that lack internet access or private transportation, and those with language or legal status barriers. This project helps promote easy access to information for households that do not have internet, phone numbers for the elderly, and free public transportation to households that do not have equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine based on income, age, or physical disabilities. The Blue Ridge Health District has compiled information to target vaccine hesitancy demographically, which will be posted in frequently visited areas around the county. Additional efforts will be help the mobile clinic gain access to migrant worker sites, particularly in the agriculture and viticulture industries prevalent across the county.



Sources of funding:

We will solicit funding through social media and crowd-sourcing platforms, local county government, and other stakeholders in the region.

Link to program:

<https://www.fouroxen.org/service-projects>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFTfl3oW3zw>

Outer Cape Community Solutions Health Planning Network

Outer Cape Health Services, Inc.

Primary contact:

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Contact information:

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Purpose:

The Outer Cape Community Solutions network (OCCS) began in May 2019 to collaborate on care and service coordination in Outer Cape Cod, Mass. OCCS' intent was to create and enhance connections among service providers, discuss topics of interest or concern in small group dialogue, and provide time for networking. Up to 30 individuals attend meetings, representing 15 organizations that include clinical providers, community groups, local police departments, first responders, councils on aging, regional schools, town health officers, behavioral health providers, skilled nursing facilities, addiction recovery networks, and others. OCCS received a 2021 HRSA Rural Network Development Planning grant.

Bay Cove Human Services; Cape Cod Children's Place; Caregiver Homes; Eastham Police Department; Homeless Prevention Council; Lower Cape Ambulance; Nauset Public Schools; Truro Police Department; and Wellfleet Police Department – came on board as community network partners.

This group has continued to meet monthly via Zoom throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing its meeting attendance. They regularly share health and wellness information through a listserv. Smaller sets of partners collaborate on projects of mutual interest, such as developing a school-based telehealth site in the regional high school. Cape Cod Community College, which has become a member of OCCS, is contributing toward the shared goal of strengthening workforce, and has identified an instructor for diversity, equity and inclusion training. Members of OCCS regularly provide letters of support as member organizations or partnering groups seek funding. OCCS works with the local state legislature representative and state senator to identify areas of need in the region. The Massachusetts State Office of Rural Health continues to assist the group in identifying and applying for rural funding sources at the state and national level.

Successful outcomes:

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of OCCS Health Planning Network's impact was their ability in 18 months to move from a loose confederation of organizations that did periodic networking to a true collaborative organization capable of producing a tight, winning, and perfect-scoring proposal for a HRSA Rural Health Network Development Planning grant. Three core partners emerged as the nucleus: Outer Cape Health Services (the local FQHC); Helping Our Women, a Provincetown nonprofit agency that educates, empowers, and supports women in the Outer Cape who are living with chronic, disabling, or life-threatening health conditions; and the Barnstable County, Mass., Department of Human Services, which plans, develops, and coordinates regional solutions to Cape Cod's most pressing health and human service issues. Ten additional partners – Alzheimer's Family Support Center;

Sources of funding:

HRSA Rural Network Development Planning grant, July 1-2021-June 30, 2022
Massachusetts State Office of Rural Health Training and Education grant, FY2021

Link to program:

<https://www.outercape.org/services/community-based-services/>

Rural Libraries and Social Wellbeing

University of North Carolina At Greensboro

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Purpose:

The Rural Library and Social Wellbeing project looked specifically at independent public libraries in the nation's smallest and most isolated communities – towns without formal education facilities or hospitals and with fewer than 2,500 people. During the study period (2018-2021), researchers visited eight of these communities for in-depth interviews with residents, as well as library trustees and staff. The results of this work led to a public toolkit and website featuring some ways that rural libraries support health and wellness through community partnerships.

Successful outcomes:

The websites' interactive story map featured detailed descriptions of rural libraries contributing to community health in eight participating communities.

Sources of funding:

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Link to program:

<https://rurallibraries.org/>



Eastern Shore Telehealth Consortium

Primary contact:

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Contact information:

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Purpose:

The Eastern Shore Telehealth Consortium (ESTC) was founded by Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance to establish a sustainable consortium designed to build telehealth delivery system infrastructure and promote increased resources, innovation, and coordination of health services on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The initial ESTC project aims to coordinate services for individuals living with mental health and substance use disorders and/or opioid use disorder by linking treatment resources through telehealth.

We project that 150 clients with OUD will be identified by June 2023. At the end of year one, we have served 61 individuals.

Sources of funding:

Eastern Shore Telehealth Consortium is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of an award totaling \$900,000, with zero percent financing with nongovernmental sources under the Rural Health Network Development Program.

Successful outcomes:

The first goal was to develop a sustainable ESTC for the development of strategic virtual health initiatives designed to increase resources, innovation, and coordination of health services on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. ESTC currently has nine organizations represented. The second goal is to increase the use of evidence-based, culturally appropriate OUD/SUD interventions through community partnerships and telehealth-enabled innovations. In year one, we have trained 32 providers in telehealth, including 11 to become board-certified telemental health providers. The third goal is to enhance linkages to evidence-based practices for medication assisted treatment, peer recovery and recovery support services, and other substance abuse services offered in partnerships between group members.



Link to program:

<https://easternshoretelehealth.org/>

Rural telehealth consortium including school, community, hospital and behavioral health projects

Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance

Primary contact:

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Executive director
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Contact information:

618 Hospital Rd.
Tappahannock, Va. 23185
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Purpose:

Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance (BRTA) is a nonprofit telehealth network in rural Eastern Virginia. BRTA's vision is for virtual health strategies to contribute to better health and well-being for populations in communities served by BRTA members. We serve communities by developing virtual health projects that improve access to health services; engage patients as partners; reduce professional isolation among service providers; and provide access to training and development of the health care workforce. BRTA has been successful in expanding access via telehealth in schools, behavioral

health services, homes, hospitals, and long-term care settings through partnerships with health systems and community-based organizations.

Successful outcomes:

Information on evaluation efforts of the programs described above may be requested by contacting BRTA, including ROI and outcome studies of remote patient monitoring and geriatric psychiatry programs. The following list includes BRTA's presentations and publications related to evaluation activities and reporting:

- 2020
 - Virginia Rural Health Association Conferences
 - Implementing telehealth: Ingredients for success
 - Telehealth: COVID and beyond
 - Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program Virtual Annual Grantee Conference
 - Telehealth: Expanding access and improving outcomes in rural communities
 - Training Leader webinar for physicians
 - Telehealth workflows: Improve patient care and build revenue
 - HRSA webinar for Rural Health Network Development Program
 - Successful rural health networks
- 2019
 - HRSA RCORP reverse site visit on Project ECHO in Virginia
 - Monitoring and evaluation of OUD Project ECHOs in Virginia
 - HRSA National Rural Health Day webinar
 - Rural Health Information Hub: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease toolkit

- Evidence-informed practice: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/copd/3/bay-rivers-telehealth-alliance>
- 2018
 - National Rural Health Association Annual Rural Health Conference, HRSA-FORHP team
 - ROI findings of geriatric psychiatry grant program
 - National Rural Health Association Annual Rural Health Conference, TNGP panel
 - Using telehealth networks to improve health outcomes and access to care
 - Virginia Behavioral Health Summit, Virginia Health and Hospital Association
 - Navigating telebehavioral health in Virginia
 - Riverside Medical Group Primary Care Providers, Riverside Tappahannock Hospital
 - Remote patient monitoring and care management coaching in primary care practices
 - World Congress Behavioral Health Technology Summit
 - Engage providers to use proven modalities and assess current initiatives to improve quality care
- 2017
 - Presentation to Virginia Medicaid managed care organizations

Bay Rivers Telehealth Alliance

Member Bulletins:

1. Universal Service Programs & USAC, June 2016
2. Medicare Access & Chip Reauthorization Act (MACRA) 2016: A Golden Opportunity For Telehealth Expansion, August 2016
3. Lessons Learned From The Bridges To Behavioral Health Project, February 2017
4. Home-Based Clinical Video Teleconferencing & The Families Program, October 2017
5. Bridges To Care Transitions: Project Outcomes And Lessons Learned, August 2018

Sources of funding:

- HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Community Based Division Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program
- HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Community Based Division Rural Community Opioid Response Program
- HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Community Based Division Rural Health Network Development Program
- HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Community Based Division Office for

the Advancement of Telehealth Telehealth Network Grant Program

- Virginia Department of Health Office of Health Equity
- USDA RUS-Distance Learning and Telehealth Program
- HRSA Bureau of Health Professions Area Health Education Centers Program

Link to program:

<https://bayriverstelehealth.org/>

Rural Community Opioid Response Program

Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri

Primary contact:

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Contact information:

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Lexington, Mo. 64067
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Purpose:

The overarching goal is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use disorder and opioid overdoses in our high-risk rural community. The goals include creating an engaged collaborative partnership with defined roles and responsibilities to fill identified MH/SUD gaps; connecting 75 percent of individuals with MH/SUD to appropriate services within 72 hours; decreasing substance use; increasing unique referrals to treatment; and increasing the community's ability to identify and support individuals with MH/SUD.

Successful outcomes:

Our organization has been able to hire peer recovery coaches, create leave-behind kits, implement MAT, start using SBIRT as a screening tool, and much more. We have always implemented with sustainability in mind, as we know SUD/OD and mental health will continue to present ongoing challenges. Through this project, we have been able to provide more than 100 services for both returning and new clients. This number does not include follow-up and case management from our peer coaches, which far exceeds 1,000. We have seen a distinct impact from this funding.





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RuralHealth.US