



SORH COVID19 Learning Community Notes

Call Date: June 11, 2020

National Organization of
State Offices of Rural Health

NOSORH Updates

Tammy provided an update on several federal announcements, including:

- [CMS - Guidance on Requests for Exceptions from Standards to Permit Testing of Proposed Modifications 45 Code of Federal Regulations \(C.F.R.\) § 162.940](#)
- [CMS - Recommendations Re-opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent Non-COVID-19 Healthcare 6/8/2020](#)
- [CDC - Communication Toolkit - For Migrants, Refugees, and Other Limited-English-Proficient Populations 6/5/2020](#)
- [CDC – Contact Tracing - COVID-19 Sample Training Plans for Contact Tracers, Case Investigators, and Supervisors](#)
- [CDC - Interim COVID-19 Contact Tracing Communications Toolkit for Health Departments 6/4/2020](#)
- [HHS - Announces Enhanced Provider Portal, Relief Fund Payments for Safety Net Hospitals, Medicaid & CHIP Providers 6/9/2020](#)
- [HHS - CARES Act Provider Relief Fund: General Information](#)
- [HHS – Medicaid Provider Distribution Instructions 6/11/2020](#)
- [HHS – Medicaid Provider Distribution Application Form 6/11/2020](#)
- [HHS - New Laboratory Data Reporting Guidance for COVID-19 Testing Guidance 6/4/2020](#)
- [HHS – New Laboratory Data Reporting Guidance for COVID-19 Testing FAQs 6/4/2020](#)
- [HRSA – CARES Act Provider Relief Fund Payment Attestation Portal](#)

SORH Challenges and concerns

- Several states noted that they are seriously concerned about meeting state match requirements in the coming year, with required state budget cuts.
 - *If this is a concern for your state, please contact your Project Officer ASAP!*
- Members reiterated concerns of constituents uncertain of appropriate use of CARES Act funding.
 - FL asked if other states were working on additional resources (beyond the VT and PA examples on the website), or a matrix of how to use the funding.
 - AZ noted that they are using Eide Bailey to assist hospitals in figuring out how these dollars will impact cost reports. Flex-funded project for financial and operation areas.
 - Tammy shared that TASC was in the early stages of developing a matrix to show the differences between the funding streams.
- As we “return” to work, do you see your SORH role already shifting?
 - Some states noted that there will be a lot more support for telehealth and telemedicine of constituents.
 - Members noted that since “re-opening” some states are seeing a spike in cases where spikes hadn’t been before, particularly in rural areas.
 - Major outbreaks remain in tribal communities, including the Navajo nation. Meanwhile the Grand Canyon is reopening; at the opposition of the local tribes.



- NV noted that planning for conferences next year is already requiring people to learn new skills.

Identified Rural Strategies

- How can foundations support the work of SORH during the COVID-19 response? Not just the financial support but leveraging expertise as well.
 - LA discussed a foundation grant that allowed them to expand their efforts to working with RHCs – has been a great resource.
 - MT hosts a conference with the Federal Reserve, RWJF and other local foundations. Has brought in bigger presenters, expand the reach in the state, and build momentum of partnerships.
 - Teryl discussed Cara James, who now directs the Association of Health Care Funders and Foundations, as a new potential partner.
- Have you seen any rural communities implement policies or strategies to help “open up” safely (i.e., local guidance for retail, collaborative efforts using community foundations, etc.)?
 - NH discussed that [one of their CAHs](#) was helping to train local businesses so they can open up (i.e., PPE education for donning/doffing, etc.).
 - NH mentioned looking at local Community Finance Authorities for unique ways in which community funds were supporting COVID-19 efforts. More information can be found at [Council of Development Finance Agencies \(CDEFA\)](#).

Health Equity Approaches to COVID

- PA noted that their Department of Health, Office of Health Equity created a COVID-19 specific task force to assess strategies in place to reach out to vulnerable populations.
- Several members discussed that COVID-19 highlighted the need to develop deeper relationships with public health partners.
 - Some noted that a lack of a public health infrastructure in their rural counties may lead to a greater role of the SORH.

Needed Rural Resources

- Members discussed the format and flow of these calls moving forward. Changes include:
 - Continue calls every *other* Thursday.
 - Split the call into two sections:
 - Current challenges, questions of peers, etc.
 - Future focused – not just of SORH, but for the rural health landscape