

HHS Announces Nearly \$1 Billion for Rural COVID-19 Response

May 5, 2021, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the availability of nearly \$1 billion to respond to COVID-19 in rural communities. Administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the funds will expand COVID-19 testing, and increase the number of vaccines sent to rural areas.

Additionally, HHS announced that approximately \$250 million will be awarded to develop and support a community-based workforce who will serve as trusted voices sharing information about vaccines, work to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence, and address any barriers to vaccination for individuals living in vulnerable and medically underserved communities.

Over the next few months, HRSA will:

- Provide up to \$100,000 to each of more than 4,600 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) across the country through the Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation Program, which follows the success of the [Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Testing Program](#). Send questions about the Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation Program to RHCCOVID-19Testing@hrsa.gov.
- Further expand COVID-19 testing in approximately 1,730 small rural hospitals – Critical Access Hospitals and other rural hospitals with fewer than 50 beds – with up to \$230,000 each through the [Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program](#) (SHIP). Hospitals that are interested should contact [their state's SHIP grantee](#).
- Invite RHCs to join the new Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program – a joint effort with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to increase COVID-19 vaccine supply in rural communities. Send questions about the Rural Health Clinic COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program to ruralpolicy@hrsa.gov with RHC Vaccine Distribution in the subject line.

Make nearly \$100 million available in grants through the Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence (RHCVC) Program. HRSA will fund all eligible RHCs that apply. Rural Health Clinics participating in the RHCVC program will be able to use the funds to increase patient and community confidence in COVID-19 vaccination and to address equity gaps by bolstering patient literacy on the benefits of broader vaccination for other infectious diseases. Send questions about the Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence Program to RHCVaxconfidence@hrsa.gov

[Read the full press release](#) and [White House Fact Sheet](#) for more details about this new funding. For more information about HRSA's rural programs, visit the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy website: <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/index.html>.

You will find the above information at the South Country Health Alliance website under Provider Resources and Information for COVID-19 at https://mnscha.org/?page_id=14895