

Innovative Strategies for Rural EMS Workforce Development



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Anti-racism



Building a culture where difference is valued.

- The Center is committed to DEI and anti-racism. We create an environment that reflects the communities we live in and serve; a place where everyone feels accepted and empowered to be their full, authentic selves; and where everyone belongs.
- We understand the impact of and seek to defeat racism and discrimination in ourselves, our workplace, and the world. This guides how we cultivate leaders, build our programs and resources, and deliver our technical assistance.
- We are an organization that honors, celebrates, and respects all dimensions of diversity. These principles are central to our mission and to our impact.

Read more at ruralcenter.org/about/DEI

ruralcenter.org

The Center's Purpose

The National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) is a leader in the improvement of rural health – serving as a national knowledge center that provides technical assistance, information, tools, and resources designed to support the financial and operational performance, and sustainability of the country's rural hospitals and clinics, rural health networks, and other rural health care organizations.

The Center's work is focused on strengthening state and local capacity in five key areas:

- Transition to Value and Population Health
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Performance Improvement
- Health Information Technology
- Workforce Development





This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number UB1RH24206, Information Services to Rural Hospital Flexibility Program Grantees, \$1,350,000 (0% financed with nongovernmental sources). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



Tracy Morton

Director of
Population Health

National Rural Health
Resource Center

tmorton@ruralcenter.org



Ben Wasmund

Consultant

SafeTech Solutions

ben@safetechsolutions.us



Nicole Clement

Program Specialist

National Rural Health
Resource Center

nclement@ruralcenter.org

ruralcenter.org

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the key challenges facing rural health care systems in terms of workforce development and sustainability, especially in rural emergency medical services (EMS).
- Recall the key strategies proposed by the Rural Health Workforce Summit as they relate to innovative workforce development and sustainability in rural EMS.
- Identify potential roles and activities for state Flex Programs to advance or achieve rural EMS workforce strategies.



A Brief History of Rural EMS Workforce

What's Happening with Workforce?

1

Workforce
Challenges

2

Financial
Challenges

3

Behavioral
Health/Addiction
Challenges

Source: *Top Issues Confronting Hospitals* survey, American College of Healthcare Executives, Fall 2023

Rural Health Workforce Summit

Purpose

- May 2024 – national summit of rural health workforce experts
- Identify Alternative Workforces Strategies that can be undertaken by rural health organizations to Ensure an Adequate Supply of Needed Workforce, both Now and in the Future

Group Consensus Statement

“Addressing rural health workforce challenges is about strategy, not policy”

Health Equity and Leading Principles

Health Equity

Importance of
Community

Role of Rural
Ingenuity

Alignment of
Payment

Core Strategies to Build and Maintain Rural Health Workforce



Innovate and expand new and existing workforce roles to meet consumer and health care organization needs.



Build partnerships and networks to develop collaborative workforce solutions.



Leverage technology to improve access and health equity.



Maximize collaboration with educational institutions to build the future health workforce pathway.



Strategy 1

Innovate and expand new and existing workforce roles to meet the consumer and health care organization needs.

- Expand scope and capabilities of available current health care workers
- Create career crosswalks
- Maintain and enhance traditional workforce approaches



Strategy 2

Build partnerships and networks to develop collaborative workforce solutions.

- Share scarce workforce expertise
- Gain access to needed resources
- Expand the reach of services
- Formalize partnerships
- Aggregate for efficiency, savings, and payor engagement



Strategy 3

Leverage technology to improve access and health equity.

- Embrace telehealth to provide additional health services
- Explore emerging technology
- Share technology and data for population health management
- Expand the use of technology for education and knowledge sharing



Strategy 4

Maximize collaboration with educational institutions to build the future rural health workforce pathway.

- Expose local students to health careers early and often
- Partner with high schools to build future workforce
- Maximize post-secondary training
- Support and cultivate local and statewide commitment
- Support retention of existing workforce

Engagement Assessment's Impact on Retention



<https://www.gallup.com/services/191558/q12-meta-analysis-ninth-edition-2016.aspx>

Roles and Activities for State Flex Programs to Advance or Achieve Rural EMS Workforce Strategies

Roles and Activities for State Flex Programs

Program Area 4: Rural EMS Improvement (Optional): The authorizing legislation for the Flex program states that the purpose of funding for EMS activities is “for the establishment or expansion of a program for the provision of rural emergency medical services.”

- **Improve the organizational capacity of rural EMS, and**
 - Recruitment/Retention are specifically called out in the Flex Program funding guidance
 - Flex Programs have often supported leadership development
 - Consider organizational assessments of future reliability and sustainability
- Improve the quality of rural EMS
- **Flex Program EMS Supplement (FY 2024-2028)**
 - Funded by FORHP, eight (8) state Flex Programs awarded multi-year funding to establish or expand programs for the provision of rural EMS by strengthening the EMS workforce in rural areas through recruitment, retention, and financial and operational strategies.
 - Resulting resources will be shared broadly (webinar recordings, templates, guides, lessons learned, and best practices)



Resources to Support Innovative EMS Workforce Development and Sustainability

ruralcenter.org

Building a Sustainable Rural Health Workforce

Findings from the Rural Health Workforce Summit:

<https://www.ruralcenter.org/resources/building-sustainable-rural-health-workforce>



[ruralcenter.org](https://www.ruralcenter.org)

Gallop and Press Ganey Resources

- **The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organizational Outcomes** <https://www.gallup.com/services/191558/q12-meta-analysis-ninth-edition-2016.aspx>
- **What drives a culture of belonging?** <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/395102/drives-culture-belonging.aspx>
- **The benefits of employee engagement** <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236927/employee-engagement-drives-growth.aspx>
- **The State of Workforce Engagement** <https://info.pressganey.com/e-books-research/2023-state-of-workforce-engagement>
- **Why employee engagement matters for optimal healthcare outcomes** <https://info.pressganey.com/press-ganey-blog-healthcare-experience-insights/why-employee-engagement-matters-for-optimal-healthcare-outcomes>
- **Employee experience in healthcare 2024** <https://info.pressganey.com/e-books-research/employee-experience-2024>
- **Delta Doctors - Delta Regional Authority (dra.gov)**
- <https://www.ruralcenter.org/programs/drchsd/program-activities/consultations/leadership-and-workforce-development>

EMS Specific Resources

- Telemedicine Framework for EMS and 911 -
https://www.911.gov/assets/Telemedicine_Framework-May_2021-1638566942.pdf
- Rural Community Paramedicine Toolkit -
<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/community-paramedicine>
- Access to EMS in Rural Communities -
<https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/advisory-committees/rural/access-to-ems-rural-communities.pdf>
- Telehealth for Emergency Departments - Telerriage -
<https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/best-practice-guides/telehealth-for-emergency-departments>

A Few of Many Other Resources

- Workforce Toolkit to Support Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Providers - <https://www.flexmonitoring.org/tool/workforce-toolkit-support-critical-access-hospitals-and-rural-providers>
- Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Workforce Equity - <https://www.gwhwi.org/>
- National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers - <https://nursingworkforcecenters.org/about-us/>
- Health Workforce Technical Assistance Center - <https://www.healthworkforceta.org/research/>
- Rural Health Network Development Planning Program - <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/grants/rural-community>

A Few of Many Other Resources

- Resources - <https://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/scrubs-program/teacher> Advanced Care at Home Program - <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/services-and-treatments/advanced-care-at-home>
- University of New Mexico Project ECHO - <https://projectecho.unm.edu/model/>
- Health Career Exploration
- HOSA-Future Health Professionals - <https://hosa.org/>
- Nebraska Behavioral Education Partnership - <https://www.unmc.edu/bhecn/education-training/training-partnerships/nebhep.html>
- Grow Your Own Toolkit - <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/609027-GrowYourOwnToolkit-RuralHealth.pdf>



Tracy Morton

Director of
Population Health

National Rural Health
Resource Center

tmorton@ruralcenter.org



Ben Wasmund

Consultant

SafeTech Solutions

ben@safetechsolutions.us



Nicole Clement

Program Specialist

National Rural Health
Resource Center

nclement@ruralcenter.org

ruralcenter.org