



The Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) is off and running with its FY21 Flex activities!

Along with many other Flex activities, ORH is pleased to share some highlights they are working on to begin the year. One major focus is the Flex QI Project. ORH is partnering with the University of Washington Tele-Antimicrobial Stewardship Program (UW TASP) to support Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) to improve antibiotic use in asymptomatic bacteriuria (ASB). This year-long project supports a cohort of hospitals with the goal of improving ASB prescribing and ASP reporting.

ORH continues to grow its support for RHCs across Oregon. Its provision of mock surveys to clinics to assist them in preparing for recertification remains one of the most needed and requested activities among clinics. Additionally, in October, ORH will kick off a SigmaMed Solutions Quality Improvement Training Collaborative for RHCs to support them in building capacity to track and measure their quality efforts. Another exciting project that starts this year is the development of an RHC Compliance Team Cohort to help train and support clinics in building both internal and cross-clinic peer-to-peer compliance teams to maintain the ongoing regulatory requirements of being a RHC. ORH plans to continue growing this cohort model in the coming years and bring additional RHCs into the cohort to build strong peer-to-peer connections in the state.

For the third year in a row, ORH will offer the CAH and EMS Partnered Improvement Project Grant opportunity for CAHs to collaborate with their local EMS agencies to strengthen delivery of quality care. The grant allows CAH-EMS partners to propose work to strengthen the coordination between pre-hospital and hospital providers, policies and/or programs.

ORH has an exciting opportunity and is currently recruiting for a [Program Manager for Rural Population Health](#) which will support rural providers to navigate the telehealth landscape, plan the [Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon](#), administer the [Elder Service Innovation Grants](#) and plan and develop other population health programs across Oregon.

COVID-19 support for communities across Oregon to increase testing and vaccination continue in multiple ways. ORH has been there to provide information and support to all rural health facilities throughout the pandemic—from discussing the evolving rules to working with them to understand and access the tranches of money that have come through the CARES Act, ARPA, and other grant opportunities. Additionally, ORH is working with the Oregon Health Authority (the state's public health authority) on two contracts to 1.) Support RHCs, CAHs, and rural and frontier FQHCs in accessing testing supplies and other support; and 2.) Provide outbreak testing at rural long-term care facilities by mobilizing RHCs and FQHCs to provide on-call testing services where there need for this support.