



Rural Health Transformation Program Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR CHARLIE BRERETON

Welcome to the inaugural Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) newsletter.

In December 2025, Governor Greg Gianforte and the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) were proud to announce a historic \$233 million investment aimed at stabilizing and modernizing rural health care delivery across our state. Awarded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), this funding represents a pivotal moment for Montana’s rural health care providers and the communities they serve.

Our goal is to ensure that every Montanan has appropriate access to the services they need, regardless of their zip code. Through this newsletter, we look forward to sharing our progress, highlighting success stories from the field, and providing the latest updates on how these funds are being put to work for you. Thank you for joining us on this journey to transform rural health in Montana.

STAY INFORMED ON RHTP

- Sign up for emails and the newsletter at ruralhealth.mt.gov
- Subscribe to receive [official DPHHS news releases](#).
- Visit the [Information for Vendors](#) page.
- Follow DPHHS on [Facebook](#) and [X](#).
- For specific questions regarding RHTP, email HHSRuralHealthTransformation@mt.gov.



We stand ready to put these transformative dollars to work to modernize our health care infrastructure and support the dedicated professionals serving our communities.



- DPHHS Director, Charlie Brereton



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Director Brereton speaks at the podium during the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee earlier this year.



JOIN THE RHTP TEAM

We're hiring! Please consider applying for an RHTP position to help us shape the future of rural health care in Montana.

Make an impact, improving access and equity for rural communities. The following position is available:

- **Program Director:** This role sits at the center of the five-year, federally funded effort investing hundreds of millions of dollars annually to strengthen rural health care, improve access, and ensure long-term sustainability for communities across the state.

All positions are term-limited through Sept. 30, 2030, contingent on federal funding.

To be considered for any of these positions, you must complete the state application and attach all required documents through the [Montana State Careers site](#)—cover letter, resume, references.

For more information about the roles, visit the [RHTP Job Openings](#) page.



Rep. Jane Gillette speaks during the first RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Council meeting.

NEXT STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING IS AUG. 6

The next RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 6. The Montana Office of Rural Health will host the meeting on the Montana State University campus.

The committee was established to provide guidance to DPHHS to support effective implementation of the RHTP initiatives.

Meeting registration information will be available closer to the meeting.





Cindy Stergar of the Montana Primary Care Association speaks during the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting in January 2026.

RHTP EXPANDS SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR MONTANANS WITH INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The ability to simply stay at home when you are sick. Remaining in a safe and familiar environment with your caregiver. A person with autism avoiding the trauma of simply going to the emergency room. These reasons and more provide the basis for expanding the use of telemedicine for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and other vulnerable populations.

DPHHS has awarded \$390,000 in Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) funds to increase access to these telemedicine services for the I/DD population by expanding its current partnership with StationMD.

This expansion will increase the number of people served to 1,000, growing the program from two regions to all five regions across Montana.

StationMD provides 24/7 access to doctors who are specifically trained to treat individuals with I/DD. By offering urgent care, psychiatry, and nurse-on-call services via telemedicine, the program helps patients receive expert care in the comfort of their homes and avoid difficult visits to the ER.



“ This partnership is about getting the right care to Montanans when and where they need it. By providing 24/7 access to specialists who understand the unique needs of the I/DD community, we are improving health outcomes and reducing the strain on local emergency rooms and families. ”

- Behavioral Health and Developmental Division Administrator Meghan Peel

While the RHTP funds provide the initial spark for this expansion, DPHHS is moving to make the service permanent. The Department is working with the CMS to add StationMD’s services as a formal Medicaid benefit. This ensures the program remains financially sustainable long after the initial grant period ends.

THE RHTP VISION

RHTP will support Montana’s rural health care providers in delivering sustainable, high-quality care and ensuring appropriate access to services for those in need.

DPHHS will collaborate with rural providers, hospitals, community organizations, and other health care stakeholders to deliver five core initiatives tailored to Montana’s rural health care challenges.

The five core initiatives are:

1. Develop **workforce** through recruitment, training, and retention
2. Ensure rural **facility sustainability and access** through partnerships and restructuring
3. Launch **innovative care delivery** and payment models
4. Invest in **community health** and preventive infrastructure
5. Deploy modern health care **technologies** to guide rural health interventions



AS AN ORGANIZATION SERVING RURAL MONTANANS: HOW DO WE ACCESS RHTP FUNDING?

Hospitals, universities, nonprofits, federally recognized tribes, and FQHCs that serve Montana's rural populations may be awarded RHTP funds through initiative-specific grant applications (e.g., to renovate existing infrastructure, invest in critical repairs, fund pharmacies' startup costs for point-of-care testing, or modernize Electronic Health Records (EHRs), etc). These grant opportunities will be administered directly through DPHHS or through a contractor of DPHHS. All grant opportunities will be announced on our webpage at ruralhealth.mt.gov.

Additionally, DPHHS will be offering an opt-in opportunity to facilities to participate in the Center of Excellence (CoE). Through the CoE, facilities will receive funding for committing to implement CoE recommendations and meet measurable improvements in care quality, patient access, and financial performance. Facilities eligible to participate in the CoE will include rural & tribal hospitals, FQHCs, and RHCs.

For more information, view our [Vendor Fair FAQ \(PDF\)](#).

DPHHS CREATES NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY FOR VENDORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS

DPHHS is now offering a networking opportunity for vendors to explore potential partnerships before submitting their responses to the RHTP solicitations. A shared directory has been developed to aid communication among potential collaborators. Organizations interested in connecting with others who may wish to participate in RHTP initiatives can complete the [Contact Information for Vendors and Subcontractors form](#) to be included in the directory.

The information is already available on the [RHTP Vendor and Subcontractor Directory webpage](#).

Participation is intended to support networking and the exchange of information related to the upcoming RHTP solicitations. Organizations that intend to submit as primary vendors may find potential subcontractors through this list, while others may find value in exploring potential collaborations for joint submissions through this resource.

The directory will remain active at least through the end of this calendar year, and possibly into the future.

Disclosure: Participation in this form is entirely voluntary and optional. Submission does not guarantee a partnership, subcontracting opportunity, or contract award.

If you have any other questions about becoming a vendor with RHTP, please visit the [Information for Vendors](#) page.

NEARLY 900 VENDORS PARTICIPATE IN RFP WEBINAR

DPHHS and the Department of Administration (DOA) hosted a live Zoom webinar on **Wednesday, March 11**, for vendors interested in upcoming RHTP RFPs.

The goal of the webinar was to ensure a transparent and efficient funding process.

During the webinar, state officials detailed the [five core RHTP initiatives](#) and anticipated procurements, followed by a Question-and-Answer (Q&A) session. DPHHS and DOA officials spent 30 minutes during the Q and A answering questions. [Responses to vendor questions \(PDF\)](#) asked during the webinar have also been posted.

In addition, a [centralized website page](#) has been created with resources to help vendors effectively navigate the registration process and understand next steps. The resources include a vendor checklist, direct links to helpful videos, and a Frequently Asked Questions document.

With the first-year budget finalized, funds will be awarded to vendors to support implementation of RHTP initiatives through competitive bidding at [bids.mt.gov](#). Other funding avenues will include grant applications for providers and community organizations and inter-agency agreements (e.g., between DPHHS and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry). Funding opportunities for communities and providers will be posted at [ruralhealth.mt.gov](#) on a rolling basis.

A [recording of the webinar](#) is available on the DPHHS website. The [webinar PowerPoint presentation \(PDF\)](#) is also online.

For more information on future funding opportunities, visit [ruralhealth.mt.gov](#). For specific questions regarding the program, please email HHSRuralHealthTransformation@mt.gov.



Rocky Boy Health Center CEO Joel Rosette speaks at the RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting.



DPHHS Deputy Medicaid Director Gene Hermanson answers questions during the recent RHTP vendor webinar.

FIRST RFPS NOW AVAILABLE

On April 2, DPHHS officials announced it is seeking proposals for two distinct components of Montana's CoE, as part of RHTP. The first request is for proposals to create the CoE; the second is for proposals to support facilities in implementing CoE recommendations. Interested organizations can find the procurement details on the [DOA website](#).

The CoE will serve as the heart of the RHTP and will be driven by three primary objectives:

- 1. Data-Driven Strategy:** The CoE will analyze rural health supply and demand to provide county- and facility-level recommendations, ensuring care delivery aligns with the specific needs of Montana's rural and frontier communities.



2. **Long-Term Sustainability:** Guided by a stakeholder governance board, the CoE will help participating facilities develop roadmaps to achieve independent, positive operating margins without the need for ongoing state support.
3. **Performance Incentives:** Through a voluntary opt-in program, facilities that implement CoE recommendations and meet measurable improvements in care quality, patient access, and financial performance will be eligible for incentive payments. More information on how providers, facilities, and organizations can participate in the CoE and the associated funding opportunities will be released in the coming months.

One RFP that has been released seeks a contractor to assist the Department in delivering the three objectives outlined above.

The second component of the CoE is the establishment of a partner to assist rural facilities in implementing the recommendations. Through this RFP, DPHHS seeks to contract with a dedicated implementation partner to provide hands-on technical expertise and change management resources tailored to the unique characteristics of Montana’s health care providers and communities. It is anticipated that this contractor will subcontract with other vendors to deliver the scope of work.

All interested vendors and subcontractors are encouraged to register for the [Vendor and Subcontractor Directory](#) to connect with each other.

DPHHS plans to issue additional funding opportunities, including through RFPs, over the coming months, and will post information about new proposals at ruralhealth.mt.gov as they become available.

RHTP FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

- DPHHS plans to release eight procurements, all by September 2026 (for primary contractors; does not include sub-recipient opportunities).
- Five grant programs, four by September 2026
- For more detailed information, please see the [DPHHS RHTP presentation \(PDF\)](#).





RHTP RESOURCES

RHTP MATERIALS

- [RHTP Plan](#)

WEBSITE INFO

- Visit the RHTP website home page at ruralhealth.mt.gov.
- The Information for Vendors page includes a [centralized toolkit to assist vendors applying for upcoming RFPs](#).

PRESENTATIONS

- [RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee presentation, Jan. 22, 2026](#)
- [RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting minutes](#)
- [RHTP legislative presentation, Jan. 13, 2026](#)
- [RHTP legislative presentation, March 9, 2026](#)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Next Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting will be Aug. 6

IN THE NEWS

- [Gov. Gianforte, DPHHS submit Rural Health Transformation Plan, Fallon County Times](#)
- [Everything you need to know about Montana's rural health windfall, Montana Free Press](#)
- [Montana submits plan for \\$1B rural health care funding, Non-Stop Local](#)



TIMELINE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2025 MILESTONES

- **November 2025:** Submitted RHTP application
- **December 2025:** CMS approves Montana's RHTP application.

2026 MILESTONES

- **January 2026:** First RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting is held in Bozeman
- **February 2026:** CMS gives final approval of DPHHS budget, clearing the way for funds to be awarded
- **March 11, 2026:** DPHHS and DOA host a Vendor Webinar
- **April 2, 2026:** First RFPs released

The Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$233,509,358.76 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

