

Project Abstract

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is the 10th most rural state in the country, with 1.87 million residents, nearly half (41.6%) of the total state population, residing in a rural area. According to America's Health Rankings, Kentucky is currently ranked 41st out of the 50 states based on a spectrum of measures. Average life expectancy ranges from 64.5 to 79.7 years across counties, with a lower life expectancy in counties within Eastern rural areas. These rural communities face some of the most significant health access challenges in the Commonwealth and across the country, including high rates of chronic disease, maternal health deserts, behavioral health crises, and limited access to preventive dental care and emergency services.

The Commonwealth's Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) represents a bold step forward to transform care delivery across our rural health ecosystem. Kentucky's Department for Public Health, under the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and, together with key stakeholders, propose five specific care innovation models to refocus efforts on improving access and prevention of high-priority health conditions that disproportionately impact rural Kentuckian. These initiatives and their goals include: 1) **Rural Community Hubs for Chronic Care Innovation:** Reduce obesity and diabetes rate through evidence-based, community-led strategies focused on upstream prevention; 2) **PoWERing Maternal and Infant Health, Community-Based Teams:** Increase timely perinatal care in maternity care deserts through coordinated, telehealth-enabled teams; 3) **Rapid Response to Recovery, EmPATH Model, Mobile Crisis, and Telehealth:** Expand integrated, technology-enabled crisis care from community response to long-term support; 4) **Rooted in Health, Kentucky Rural Dental Access Program:** Improve rural access to preventive dental care and treatment through expanded training and mobile, portable services; and 5) **From Crisis to Care, Integrated EMS and Trauma Response:** Strengthen EMS and trauma care capacity, responsiveness, and coordination.

Across these five priority areas, Kentucky will make investments in new and emerging technology infrastructure, data interoperability standards, and other technology-based initiatives. The Commonwealth will also support workforce capacity by expanding the number and role of clinical and non-clinical health care workers to improve access and enable more cost-effective rural health delivery at the local community level. Kentucky intends to allocate funds to subrecipients who will play a critical role in implementing the proposed initiatives outlined in the RHTP. The Commonwealth will also maintain ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the program's duration to ensure broad input and collaboration. Kentucky is fully committed to fiscal responsibility, rigorous monitoring, measurable outcomes, and long-term program sustainability. Furthermore, the Commonwealth will adopt and enforce any policies or regulations necessary to support and advance the goals of the program. Through this comprehensive and collaborative approach, Kentucky aims to create lasting improvements in rural health outcomes across the Commonwealth and be a leader in rural health transformation nationwide.

Total Federal Cost: \$200,000,000 per budget period