



Hawaii

Title: The Hawai'i Rural Health Transformation Plan will build a robust, sustainable rural health care system that will improve healthcare access, quality and outcomes through six interconnected initiatives.

Abstract: The State of Hawaii requests a five-year, \$1 billion Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) cooperative agreement from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to achieve the RHT statutory goals of making rural America healthy again, promoting sustainable access, workforce development, innovative care, and technology innovation.

Healthcare access challenges are significant in the State of Hawaii due to its unique geography; 95.1% of the land area is rural. Healthcare services are centered in Honolulu, the State's single urban core. There are serious deficiencies in the digital and physical health care infrastructure, along with severe workforce shortages and financial constraints that negatively impact rural residents' access to physical and behavioral care at all levels.

The goal of the State of Hawai'i's RHTP is to transform the rural health care delivery system in a sustainable manner that will improve healthcare access, quality, and outcomes. The plan focuses on addressing prioritized challenges affecting rural populations. These include health information technology infrastructure, the emergency medical services (EMS) system, access to behavioral health care, overreliance on hospitals and emergency care, workforce shortages, and the inability of rural providers and networks to adopt innovative care models.

The RHTP includes six interconnected initiatives: (1) Rural Health Information Network (RHIN): A statewide digital backbone connecting rural hospitals, clinics, and health centers through interoperable EHRs, wireless networks, and integrated data hubs; (2) Pili Ola Telehealth Network: A statewide telehealth network connecting rural communities to providers and integrating digital health access, virtual care, and telehealth training; (3) Rural Infrastructure for Care Access (RICA): A physical access initiative to expand emergency medical services, implement evidence-based community care practices (healthcare team expansion, community paramedicine, and mobile healthcare), and bolster the behavioral health infrastructure; (4) Hawaii Outreach for Medical Education in Rural Under-resourced Neighborhoods (HOME RUN): A pipeline initiative expanding education, recruitment, and retention of healthcare workers through certificate programs, residencies, scholarships, and mentoring; (5) Rural Respite Network (RRN): An expansion of the effective medical respite model to rural areas to reduce preventable hospital use among unhoused or post-acute patients with low medical acuity; (6) Rural Value-Based Innovation (RVBI) & AHEAD Readiness Fund: A competitive fund enabling rural providers to adopt innovative care models and succeed under the CMS Achieving Healthcare Efficiency through Accountable Design (AHEAD) model by financing local value-based innovations.

CMS funds will support personnel (RHTP Oversight Team), consultants for specialized technical and programmatic assistance, and subawards for initiative leads. Subawardees include the State Health Planning and Development Agency, the University of Hawaii (UH) Telecommunication and Social Informatics Program, the State Department of Health, UH John A. Burns School of Medicine, and the State Department of Human Services.

This document includes the State's Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program Project Abstract submitted in its RHT Program Application. As outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), States were required to submit a one-page summary of their proposed project including its purpose and anticipated outcomes for the purposes of public information sharing. Budget amounts/requested funds highlighted in the State's Abstract are purely illustrative and hypothetical and do not reflect the State's final award amount or approved use of funds.