

RHODE ISLAND LAUNCHES \$156 MILLION, FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVE TO TRANSFORM RURAL HEALTH CARE



Governor McKee Announces \$156 Million Federal Award to Transform Rural Health Care in Rhode Island

Rhode Island has been awarded more than \$156 million in federal funding over five years to advance a comprehensive transformation of health care delivery in the state's 18 rural communities. The award, secured through a federal program, represents a significant opportunity to strengthen rural health systems, expand access to care, and support providers serving some of the state's most geographically isolated populations. The announcement reflects the first year of funding, with implementation continuing over the full five-year period.

The initiative is guided by the state's approved Rural Health Transformation Program framework and will be finalized in coordination with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. While detailed budgets and timelines are still under development, the priorities of the program are clear and aligned with long-standing goals to improve access, quality, and affordability of care in rural areas.

Key Strategies include expanding the role of Federally Qualified Health Centers as community-based anchors for primary care, behavioral health, and dental services. The program will also broaden Hospital at Home models, allowing eligible patients to receive hospital-level care safely in their homes. Investments in value-based payment models will support more coordinated, preventive, and outcomes-focused care across primary care practices, hospitals, and community providers.

Addressing behavioral health needs is a central focus, with new crisis stabilization and recovery services designed to improve access to timely, community-based support, particularly in areas heavily impacted by the opioid crisis. The initiative also prioritizes modernization of health information technology, enabling telehealth expansion, improved data connectivity, and participation in value-based care arrangements.

Additional investments will support workforce development, mobile health services, emergency medical services modernization, and locally tailored solutions for communities such as Block Island and the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Together, these efforts aim to build integrated, community-centered systems of care that improve health outcomes and ensure rural residents can access high-quality services closer to home.

The Care Transformation Collaborative of Rhode Island will play an important role in supporting the goals of the Rural Health Transformation Program. As implementation details are finalized, the Collaborative is expected to contribute its experience in advancing primary care transformation, value-based care, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to support successful statewide execution.

John Minichiello, Executive Director