



Rural Health Special Edition

April 9, 2020

Resources to Help Rural Hospitals and Health Systems Navigate COVID-19

View stories from the field and other resources

The AHA is hard at work advocating for the needs of rural hospitals and health systems amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, working with Congress and the administration to ensure the frontlines of health care – hospitals, physicians and nurses – remain a priority for federal assistance.

During these unprecedented times we know that there are many challenges, especially for rural hospitals. But we're inspired to see so many rural hospitals stepping up to meet this moment in our history. Below are some case studies featuring rural hospitals that may help you quickly implement your own solutions to help care for patients and your community, as well as additional resources that you may find helpful.

CASE STUDIES

- A case study (<https://www.aha.org/case-studies/2020-04-08-case-study-ksb-hospital-response-coronavirus-covid-19-katherine-shaw-bethea>) on key lessons learned from **Katherine Bethea Shaw Hospital** in Dixon, Ill., which used its ambulance garage as its drive-through site to rapidly test patients for COVID-19.
- A case study (<https://www.aha.org/case-studies/2020-04-07-case-study-getting-front-covid-19-addressing-social-determinants-health>) from **Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District** (SoHum Health), in Garberville, Calif., on how it is proactively addressing social determinants of health for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A case study (<https://www.aha.org/case-studies/2020-04-07-rural-covid-19-case-study-surviving-covid-19-surge-margaret-mary-health>) from **Margaret Mary Hospital** in Batesville, Ind., a not-for-profit, critical access hospital on how it is handling its COVID-19 surge.
- A case study (<https://www.aha.org/case-studies/2020-04-07-case-study-rural-hospital-shifts-operations-anticipation-covid-19-surge>) from **King's Daughters Medical Center**

in rural Mississippi, on how it is implementing a variety of strategic and operational shifts in anticipation of an April surge of COVID-19 patients.

- A case study (<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/news-releases?ID=7C0FAA42-6446-460D-BBA1-A39851B9F64A>) on how **Riverwood Healthcare Center** in Aitkin, Minn., deployed a virtual care model for patients amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the full compendium of resources, view AHA's updated Rural Health Services webpage (<https://www.aha.org/advocacy/small-or-rural>).

For additional information, please contact John Supplitt at jsupplitt@aha.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Save the date: Webinar next week on rural communities' efforts to manage COVID-19

AHA next week will host a webinar with speakers from two rural hospitals sharing their real-time experiences and best practices as they deliver care to COVID-19-positive patients. Plan to participate in the *Experience from the Front Lines: Managing COVID-19 in Rural Communities* webinar on April 14 at 1 p.m. ET, which will include an opportunity for you to ask questions and share your lessons learned as well. More details to follow.

Administration urged to increase number of doctors in rural, medically underserved areas.

A bipartisan group of senators and representatives today urged (<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/cache/files/2/5/25d21ee4-3ff6-485b-b53f-fd7a42fe0d52/163D64DD548684AC87E73A4FFC71D3E2.2020-04-06-letter-to-uscis.pdf>) the administration to resume premium processing for physicians seeking employment-based visas to provide rural communities with access to foreign physicians who have just completed their medical training in the U.S. In March, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services suspended premium processing of all I-129 and I-140 forms, including those needed for Conrad State 30 program waivers, due to the COVID-19 crisis. In a statement (<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/news-releases?ID=7C0FAA42-6446-460D-BBA1-A39851B9F64A>), AHA said it supports this effort "because it will increase the number of physicians on the front lines providing care to patients during the ongoing public health emergency."

Groups launch 'Protect the Heroes Campaign'

The Creative Coalition, Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, and the AHA April 7 launched (<https://www.aha.org/news/headline/2020-04-08-groups-launch-protect-heroes-campaign>) the "Protect the Heroes" campaign, which allows the general public to make direct impact donations to America's hospitals and health systems. Every dollar raised from Protect the Heroes goes directly to the donor's choice of local hospital to purchase personal protective equipment and other support for their local health care workers to fight COVID-19. Individuals can visit the website (<https://protecttheheroes.org/>) to be connected to a local hospital of their choosing and contribute to hospital emergency relief funds. Each hospital will determine where funds should be applied.

Businesses offer free and discounted services for front-line health care workers

As the women and men in America's hospitals and health systems heroically fight COVID-19 on behalf of their patients and communities, a number of companies are offering free and discounted services to front-line health care workers. Participating groups include Hilton,

Marriott, United, Delta, Starbucks and Uber. Find more information here (<https://www.100millionmasks.org/system/files/media/file/2020/04/COVID-Discounts-Updated-4-7-20-v5.pdf>). Please note that the AHA is sharing information, but is not in a position to guarantee free or discounted services.

501(c)(3) hospitals invited to apply for Novartis US Foundation COVID-19 local-relief funds

The Novartis US Foundation has established a \$5 million fund to support local initiatives and communities impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Hospitals that are verified 501(c)(3) organization [are invited \(https://www.novartis.us/news/novartis-us-covid-19-initiatives\)](https://www.novartis.us/news/novartis-us-covid-19-initiatives) to apply for grants in the range of \$100,000 to \$250,000 for programs that strengthen local and national health care infrastructure to meet increased demand and protect frontline health workers; help establish digital platforms for COVID-19-related data collection, remote delivery of health care and effective dissemination of important public health information; and create or enhance new community health programs specific to the pandemic response. Research and development efforts related to COVID-19 are not eligible.