

Rural Health Network to Begin Two Year Social Determinants Project

By Jack Salo, Executive Director

December 2018

With funding support from the New York State Health Foundation and Care Compass Network, Rural Health Network is initiating a two year project to improve data collection and measurement of social determinants of health¹. The goals of the project are to:

1. **Determine the effectiveness of specific social determinant of health interventions** (services) on health behaviors and health outcomes.
2. **Provide guidelines, resources and training opportunities for rural Community Based Organizations** (CBOs) that provide social determinant of health services and position rural CBOs to proceed with value based payment² partnerships and contracting.
3. **Help guide and inform the development of social determinant of health data collection and measurement** within Care Compass Network and other healthcare related data collection systems (electronic medical records, regional health information organizations, etc.)



Emma Nalin, who has worked with Rural Health Network as a Community Health Worker for the past year will lead the project. Ms. Nalin has dual Masters Degrees in Public Health and Applied Anthropology and a strong academic research background. She brings both practical experience providing social determinant support services through her Community Health Worker position and an academic background which will be important to the project.

¹ **Social determinants of health** (SDoH) is a relatively new term in health care. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), SDoH are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels”

<https://nam.edu/social-determinants-of-health-101-for-health-care-five-plus-five/>

² **Value-based** care is a form of reimbursement that ties payments for care delivery to the quality of care provided and rewards providers for both efficiency and effectiveness. This form of reimbursement has emerged as an alternative and potential replacement for fee-for-service reimbursement which pays providers retrospectively for services delivered based on bill charges or annual fee schedules.

<https://revcycleintelligence.com/features/what-is-value-based-care-what-it-means-for-providers>

“The Social Determinants Project is important for several reasons: Community organizations that provide the non-clinical services in rural New York State often lack the capacity to actively participate in the healthcare reform opportunities that are taking place. This project will provide these organizations with information and training to help them navigate and participate in value based health care networks and arrangements. Rural communities and organizations are at a competitive disadvantage in the changing healthcare environment. We lack the numbers (of patients), economies of scale and have inherent operational inefficiencies due to serving a small population across a large area. If we are to successfully compete and have a role in providing services like food assistance, transportation, housing, health education and case management support in partnership with healthcare providers, we need to know if these services are effective in changing health behaviors and health outcomes. The data collection and measurement focus of the project will help determine whether or not the services are making a difference in health outcomes and associated costs. We can build on the services that show results and help rural community organizations continue and expand their work with healthcare partners.”
Jack Salo, Executive Director, Rural Health Network.

A project advisory committee will help guide the work. A consultant will be selected in January to provide technical assistance on data collection and measurement design. The consultant will also be responsible for program evaluation. Primary project partners include: Care Compass Network; Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital; Family Health Network; Binghamton University School of Public Health; Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network, Tioga Opportunities, Inc. and; the NYS Association for Rural Health.

For more information contact Jack Salo at jsalo@rhnscny.org or Emma Nalin at enalin@rhnscny.org