



The State Office of Rural Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Colorado Rural Health Center Partners to Connect Rural Facilities to Statewide Data

The project aims to connect rural hospitals and clinics to the state's Health Information Exchanges (HIEs), the electronic systems that allow the secure exchange of health data across the state, and provide access to analytics.

Denver, CO – April 20, 2022– The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) has partnered with state and local partner organizations to continue the Rural Connectivity Program to support Critical Access Hospitals and federally certified Rural Health Clinics to make data-driven improvements to patient care by leveraging technologies: analytics and health information exchange.

“The Rural Connectivity Program is an intensive, collaborative effort to ensure health equity for rural healthcare providers, through connection to Colorado’s Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) and an analytics platform. Connection to these technologies is an incredibly important piece of our rural providers being able to provide safe, effective, and efficient care no matter where they were last seen by a medical provider,” said CRHC CEO Michelle Mills.

The project began in the summer of 2020 with a partnership between the Office of eHealth Innovation (OeHI), the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), CRHC, the Colorado Community Managed Care Network (CCMCN), Quality Health Network (QHN) and the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO/Contexture). Since 2020, these partners have been working to establish a sustainable model for rural connectivity, including:

- Connecting providers to Colorado’s HIEs (CORHIO/QHN)
- Supporting rural providers to adopt health information, data sharing, and analytics through implementation support

- Providing analytics and tools to support COVID-19 emergency response, care coordination, and quality measurement
- Of the 84 eligible rural facilities, 63 were connected to CRHC's Data Vault, 27 have data in the system, 22 completed a workflow activity, 51 completed an environmental scan and 23 connected to the health information exchange.

“For the past 2 years, CRHC, along with the invaluable collaboration of our partners, has worked hard to establish itself as a clearinghouse of information, tools, and linkages to get rural healthcare providers connected to the data that makes care more affordable, safer, and of a higher quality,” said Mills.

HIEs allow health information to be shared, securely, across hospital and clinic systems, different health information technology platforms, and geographically disparate areas. Colorado has two HIEs: CORHIO and QHN.

Current activities amongst partners are centered around ensuring technical assistance for rural facilities to make data-driven decisions with the end goal of improving the health and safety of rural Coloradans. These efforts help ensure affordable, accessible, and equitable health care for all Coloradans.

The Rural Health Connectivity Initiative, in collaboration with CCMCN, is funded from the Office of eHealth Innovation. The Office of eHealth Innovation and the state eHealth Commission are guided by the Colorado Health IT Roadmap.

About The Colorado Rural Health Center

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health and the State Rural Health Association. The organization's mission is to enhance healthcare services in the state by providing information, education, linkages, tools, and energy toward addressing rural health issues. CRHC's vision is to improve healthcare services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare. For more information visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.