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News Release

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USDA Rural Development Awards \$2.1 million in Emergency Rural Health Care Grants in Colorado

DENVER, Colo., May 31, 2022 – Several rural communities in Colorado will be receiving a total of \$2.1 million in funding from USDA Rural Development and the American Rescue Plan to strengthen health care through the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grant](#) (ERHC) program.

The program is one way to expand rural hospitals and providers' access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and supplies, while helping rural health care providers stay financially solvent in the long-term. Within months after the American Rescue Plan Act's passage, USDA responded quickly by making this funding available to ensure the long-term availability of rural health care services. Nationwide, the program will use up to \$475 million in ERHC grants to expand rural hospitals and providers.

“Rural Colorado has faced the challenges from the pandemic and is coming back better and stronger. Nearly one in five Americans live in rural areas. The need for local hospitals and clinics for care is essential in our rural communities. These grants provided today will allow for the continuation of health care and vital services across our state. They will also provide needed relief and support to address challenging conditions arising from the COVID-19 emergency,” said USDA Rural Development State Director for Colorado Armando Valdez.

In Colorado, seven organizations received grant funding designed to help rural hospitals and health care providers implement telehealth programs, build, or renovate facilities, improve resources, and purchase medical supplies. These grants also provide funding to advance ideas and solutions to solve regional rural health care problems to support the long-term sustainability of rural health care.

Colorado's awards include:

- \$50,000 to ***Southeast Mental Health Services in La Junta*** to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies and furniture for an outdoor waiting room. The PPE and cleaning supplies are critical to their ability to maintain trust with their community, especially those who are unhoused and those who are intoxicated or in acute mental health crisis. It will allow them to continue providing necessary health care services and assisting them in becoming vaccinated against COVID-19.
- \$85,500 to ***La Puente Home, Incorporated in Alamosa*** to help offset unexpected costs and allow La Puente Home to continue serving meals in the community.
- \$92,000 to ***La Puente Home, Incorporated in Alamosa*** to assist the Food Bank Network. Substantial funding was expended on cleaning supplies and masks to

further local public health safety goals. Additional food was required to meet the increased demand for services and equipment, and it was difficult to find funding for facilities to store the added food volume. This funding will help cover unexpected expenses and continue supplying nutritious foods to food-insecure residents in the San Luis Valley.

- \$246,800 to the ***Olathe Community Clinic, DBA River Valley Family Health Center*** to provide funding for the clinic to purchase new equipment, this investment will increase the community's access to COVID-19 testing, vaccines and treatment.
- \$270,700 to ***Huerfano County Hospital District*** to purchase and equip a mobile vaccine clinic to help reach underserved community members and educate those with vaccine hesitancy concerns. The goal is to provide testing, education, and vaccination to all.
- \$289,000 to ***Uncompahgre Combined Clinics in Norwood*** to provide equipment purchases to help the clinic with increased patient encounters and increased time with patients. The pandemic has seen the Clinic's equipment experience high demand. This, along with the need for specific testing and triage procedures for patients has highlighted the need for new and replaced equipment, such as room dividers and personal protective equipment.
- \$486,000 to ***Eastern Rio Blanco Health Service District*** to fund the development and patient education around a telehealth network. Having telehealth as an option will increase patient access to services, and by giving patients the option to stay home and still receive medical care, it will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious disease.
- \$615,600 to ***Delta County Memorial Hospital District*** to reimburse a portion of those lost funds to ensure the 8,915 rural residents the district serves continue to have access to high-quality healthcare

Background: Emergency Rural Health Care Grants

In August 2021, USDA made the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants](#) available through the American Rescue Plan to help rural health care facilities, tribes and communities expand access to health care services and nutrition assistance. The assistance is helping provide immediate relief to support rural hospitals, health care clinics and local communities. USDA is administering the funds through Rural Development's Community Facilities Program.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs, and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety, and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal, and high-poverty areas. For more information in Colorado, visit www.rd.usda.gov/co.

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