



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES



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RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

Rural Health Transformation Program Advisory Council

April 23, 2026

Harnessing innovation and strengthening partnerships to build a healthier future for rural Wisconsin.



Agenda

- Welcome and agenda overview
- Introductions
- Program overview
- Council overview and purpose
- Program updates and discussion
- Meeting schedule
- Future agenda items



Federal funding support

Wisconsin's Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$203,670,005.21 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



Rural Health Transformation Program Timeline

Application and Start Up

Nov '25 – Mar '26

- Application submitted
- **December:** CMS announced Wisconsin will receive **\$203.7 million** in FFY26
- **February:** CMS approved budget
- Advisory council created
- Work begins for subrecipients named in application

Phase 1: Begin Implementation

Apr – Sept '26

- **April:** Electronic health records (EHR) system application period
- **Late Spring:**
 - EHR system selection
 - Grant funding opportunities announced
- **Early Fall:**
 - Grant awards finalized
 - All funds obligated
- Monitoring and evaluation planned

Phase 2: Full Implementation

Oct '26 – Sept '27

- Program implementation
- Grant management
- Program monitoring and evaluation
- Technical assistance
- Site visits, convenings

Phase 3: Continuation and Adaptation

Oct '27 - 2031

- Yearly planning
- Ongoing learning and adaptation in collaboration with Wisconsin and federal partners



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Our Goal

Improve the health and well-being of rural communities across Wisconsin

Expand access, improve quality, and ensure sustainable solutions

Workforce:
Strengthen
capacity

Technology:
Leverage
innovation

Coordinated Care:
Build
partnerships



Purpose

The purpose of the council is to provide feedback on grant implementation, key milestones, outcomes, and decisions. Council input will help to guide the development and implementation of Wisconsin's Rural Health Transformation Program, while also supporting efforts to engage partners and the community for ongoing feedback during implementation and evaluation.



Member Roles and Responsibilities

- Share your experiences and suggestions to help guide the implementation of Wisconsin's Rural Health Transformation Program.
- Engage in an authentic, collaborative, and respectful manner at all times.
- Attend quarterly meetings.
- Length of service: The council will exist for the length of the grant and members will serve at the pleasure of the Secretary during that time.
- Identify any conflicts of interest.



Conflict of Interest

Council members must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the program director. Members who are actively seeking employment with or have direct or personal financial or professional interest in any entity that may receive funding through the program are required to report this interest and recuse themselves from all discussions, deliberations, and decisions related to that entity.



Meeting Structure

- Quarterly meetings
- In accordance with Open Meetings Law, Advisory Council meetings will be open to the public and agendas and minutes will be posted
- Future agendas will include time for public comment
- All meetings will have a virtual and phone dial-in option to ensure members from across the state are able to participate.
- At least one meeting a year will include an in-person option in different regions of the state and may be combined with a public listening session.
- Meetings will not be recorded.



Member Agreements

- What would help to make the Rural Health Transformation Program Advisory Council a group where you feel confident that we have common goals and trust each other?
- What would help you succeed and thrive as a member of the council?
- What should we avoid to ensure our success?
- When we are stuck how should we move forward?



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Discussion Questions



- What makes a grant funding opportunity accessible to a diverse set of applicants?
- We expect a diversity of projects to be proposed through these applications. To what extent is it helpful to provide categories that projects might fit into?
- The Rural Technology Transformation Funds will be a formula-based allocation. How do we validate provider organization information, funding amounts, and eligible IT investments?





Initiative 1: Workforce

Strengthening the rural health care workforce



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Workforce projects

**\$341.2 million
investment
over five years.**



Rural workforce grants



Workforce readiness



Community health workers



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Workforce initiatives

- **Goal:** Train, recruit, and retain health care workers through regional grants to employers and schools
- **Amount:** \$281 million overall (\$59 million in year one)
- **Next steps:**
 - Subrecipients implementing projects with support from DHS



Community health workers

- **Goal:** Pilot community health worker (CHW) integration and study the return on investment. Sustain support through Medicaid coverage starting in 2028.
- **Amount:** \$60 million overall (\$25 million in year 1)
- **Next steps:**
 - DHS subject matter experts revising grant funding opportunities
 - Grant funding opportunities released late spring/early summer with 10 weeks to apply





Initiative 2: Technology

Driving rural technology and innovation



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Technology projects

**\$335.1 million
investment
over five years.**



**Facility technology
transformation**



**Public navigation
transformation**



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Rural technology transformation fund

- **Goal:** Help facilities procure technology upgrades through flexible, allocation-based IT grants
- **Amount:** \$211 million overall (\$30 million in year 1)
- **Next steps:**
 - DHS subject matter experts revising grant funding opportunity
 - Grant funding opportunity released late spring/early summer with 10 weeks to apply



Rural health care collaborative

- **Goal:** Procure a statewide electronic health records system for provider organizations. The system will prioritize patient care, interoperability, provider support, public health integration, and performance measures
- **Amount:** \$85 million overall (\$40 million in year 1)
- **Next steps:**
 - Request for services closed 4/20
 - Subject matter experts will be consulted during selection and contract negotiations



Dental grants

- **Goal:** Help dental clinics procure efficient cleaning technologies in exchange for serving Medicaid beneficiaries
- **Amount:** \$10 million overall (\$5 million in year 1)
- **Next steps:**
 - DHS subject matter experts revising grant funding opportunity
 - Grant funding opportunity released late spring/early summer with 10 weeks to apply



Public navigation transformation

- **Goal:** \$29 million (\$13.7 million in year one) for other IT projects to help rural residents and providers find and deliver high-quality care.
- **Projects:**
 - United Way of WI – 211 and WIRE
 - WI Statewide Health Information Network (WISHIN)
 - DHS Communications Team, No Wrong Door for Mental Health
 - WI Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
 - WI Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)





Initiative 3: Coordinated care

Transforming rural care through partnerships



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Coordinated care projects

**\$279 million
investment
over five years.**



Care coordination grants



Behavioral health innovations



**Medicaid reform and other
investments**



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Care coordination grants

- **Goal:** Transform delivery through innovative care models developed through regional partnerships. Examples include mobile clinic development, telehealth partnerships, service co-location, and co-responder models for behavioral health.
- **Amount:** \$230 million overall (\$10 million in year 1)
- **Next steps:**
 - DHS subject matter experts revising grant funding opportunity
 - Grant funding opportunity released late spring/early summer with 10 weeks to apply



Behavioral health innovations

- **Goal:** Address Wisconsin's rural mental health crisis, especially for kids, starting in 2026.
- **Amount:** \$5 million overall (\$4 million in year 1)
- **Key partners:**
 - DHS Division of Care and Treatment Services
 - Office of Children's Mental Health



Medicaid reforms and strategic investments

- **Goal:** Invest in Tribal Nations, Medicaid reforms, and public intervenor services to improve health care for patients and providers.
- **Amount:** \$43.5 million overall (\$9.5 million in year 1)
- **Key partners:**
 - DHS Division of Medicaid Services
 - Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI)
 - Tribal Nations



Discussion Questions



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- We expect a diversity of projects to be proposed through these applications. To what extent is it helpful to provide categories that projects might fit into?
- The Rural Technology Transformation Funds will be a formula-based allocation. How do we validate who to include, how funds can be used, and allocation amounts?



Next steps



Learn more about
Wisconsin's RHT Program
and sign up for updates.

- **Upcoming Advisory Council Meetings**
 - July 23
 - Oct. 22

