



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services



Pennsylvania
Department of Health



PENNSYLVANIA
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION



Pennsylvania
Department of Aging



Pennsylvania
Insurance Department



Pennsylvania
Department of Drug and
Alcohol Programs

Pennsylvania's Rural Health Transformation Plan

Content of presentation was reviewed and approved and branding is used as required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services as required in terms outlined in the Rural Health Transformation Program Notice of Award.

This project 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 \$193 million 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.

Shapiro Administration work on Rural Health

- Deep groundwork from Shapiro Administration before the RHTP opportunity
 - Health care is critical for rural economic development
- Started in 2023 to prepare for end of CMMI PA Rural Health Model (global budget model)
 - Needed to shift planning and approach
- Held first formal rural health convening with stakeholders in January 2024, with several others through that year.
 - Built on this with 6+ regional rural health summits
- Dedicated rural health funding in HR1 presented opportunity to expand this work and make targeted investments



Regional Engagement: Rural Health Summits

- Seven summits held thus far identified common, overlapping themes and challenges
 - Maternal health, aging, access to primary & specialty care, behavioral health, EMS & transportation, and workforce were most common themes
- Different partnerships and opportunities able to build locally driven solutions
- **Our takeaway: design a model that supports regional leadership, collaboration and solutions alongside an overarching statewide strategy and resources**
- RHTP was an opportunity to design a suite of interventions – all with a rural focus – that regions could spearhead
 - Ideas emerged from summits, public call for concepts, and cross-agency RHTP writing teams



RHTP Application Process

States may apply for \$200M/year for 5 years – Single application

| September 2025 | | | | | October 2025 | | | | November 2025 | | | | December 2025 | | | | Q1 2026 and Beyond | |
|----------------|-----|------|------|------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|-------|-------|--------------------|-----|
| 9/1 | 9/8 | 9/15 | 9/22 | 9/29 | 10/6 | 10/13 | 10/20 | 10/27 | 11/3 | 11/10 | 11/17 | 11/24 | 12/1 | 12/8 | 12/15 | 12/22 | 12/29 | 1/1 |



December 29, 2025:

CMS announced RHTP awards; Pennsylvania awarded **\$193 million** for year one, renewable for years 2-5



Pennsylvania's Regional Approach

- RHTP work will be coordinated with long-standing, quasi-governmental regional economic development organizations (i.e., Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance)
 - Will serve as cross-sector conveners that drive regional economic strategies
- **Approach: establish Rural Care Collaboratives (RCCs) in each region – align with long-term regional planning to maximize impact and sustainability**
 - Health care providers, MCOs, business & economic development, hospitals, FQHCs, public health, state and local elected officials, educational institutions, CBOs, and others.



Years 1 and 2: Rapid Response

Recognizing the urgency of challenges rural communities face today, Pennsylvania plans to launch a short-term Rapid Response Access Stabilization Program in Years 1 and 2

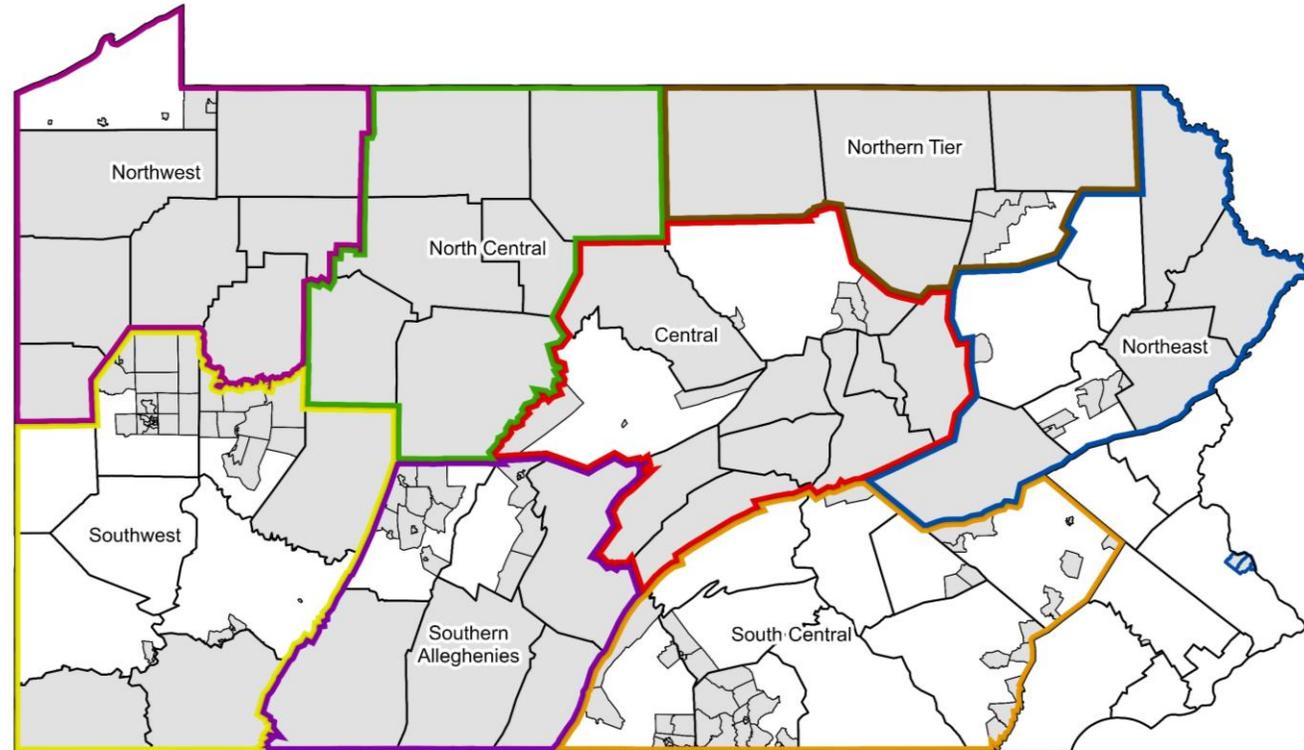
- Targets key near-term investments, including:
 - Preserving essential hospital and EMS capacity;
 - Investing in technology and workforce; and,
 - Supporting projects that align with RHTP.

Rapid Response will allow for near-term support as regional implementation and oversight is established.



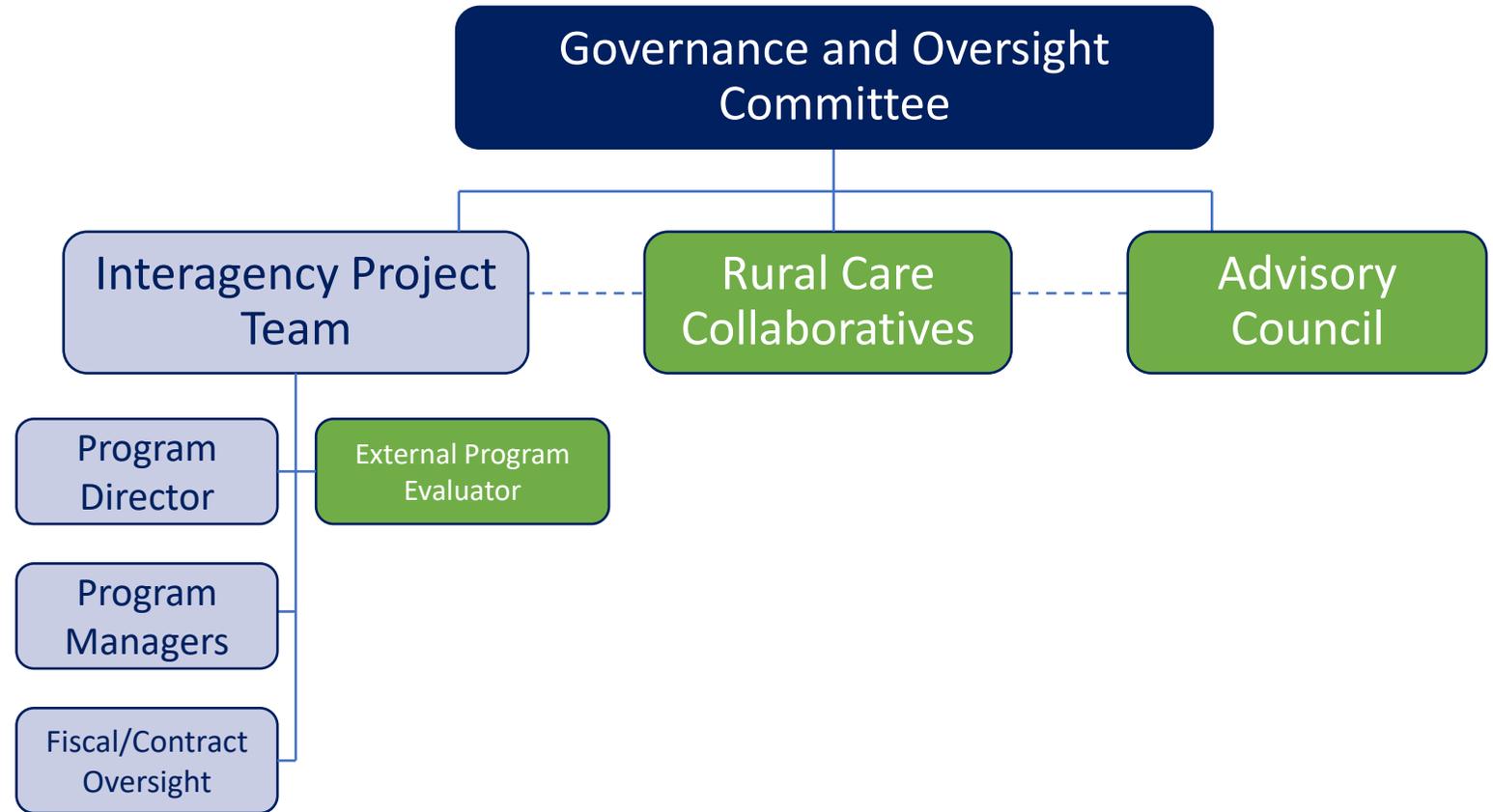
Rural Care Collaboratives (RCCs)

- Convene regionally
- Prioritize initiatives to meet regional needs
- Establish and strengthen shared services
- Support regional technology solutions and clinical integration
- Focus on consistent access to high-quality and specialty care
- Looking to be staffed and meeting by end of 2026



Statewide Leadership Supporting Regional Solutions

- State will support RCCs and RHTP by:
 - Establishing clear **RHTP goals and accountability**
 - Establish statewide governance and an Advisory Council
 - Ensure technical assistance and fiscal oversight
 - Engage with independent evaluation partner – ensure consistent metrics and evaluation



Pennsylvania's RHTP: Supporting Strong, Resilient Rural Communities



Pennsylvania Rural Health Transformation Plan

Vision

Pennsylvania's RHTP envisions strong, resilient rural communities where people of all ages can access timely, high-quality care close to home, accomplished by leveraging and strengthening local infrastructure through technology, innovation, and collaboration.



RHTP Goals

Improve Access to Care and Outcomes

Use Technology to Drive Innovation

Expand Partnerships for Change

Create a Robust Workforce to Address Regional Need

Use Data-Driven Solutions

Implement Financial Sustainability Strategies



RHTP Initiatives

Technology & Infrastructure

Workforce

Maternal Health

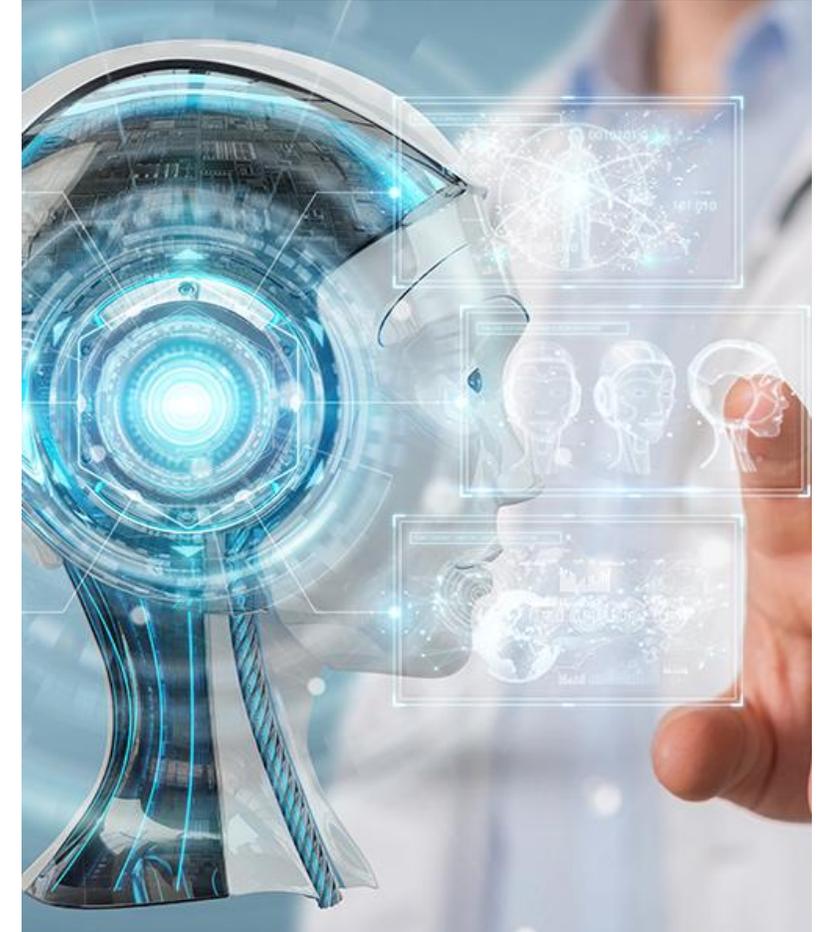
Behavioral Health

Aging and Access

EMS and Transportation

Technology & Infrastructure

- **Modernize and expand HIE** with broader integration of health records
- Regional digital hubs to support vetting and **adoption of AI and provider technology tools**
- Regional **mobile and community digital health strategy** – mobile units, telehealth hubs and kiosks
- **Community Wellness Hubs** – prevention, screening, adoption of evidence-based programs, PA Navigate integration



Workforce



- **Train local, stay local**
 - Recruit rural students
 - Expand rural training programs
 - Support new workforce models
- **New workforce incentives**
 - **Upfront** educational awards
 - Mentoring, short-term housing
 - Stipends based on a five-year service commitments in rural PA



Maternal Health

- Comprehensive regional maternal health hubs
 - Provide **comprehensive care management and navigation**
 - Integrate **behavioral health**
 - Lead regional quality improvement and **maternal health innovation**
 - Develop regional strategies to build maternal health **workforce** and improve access



Behavioral Health

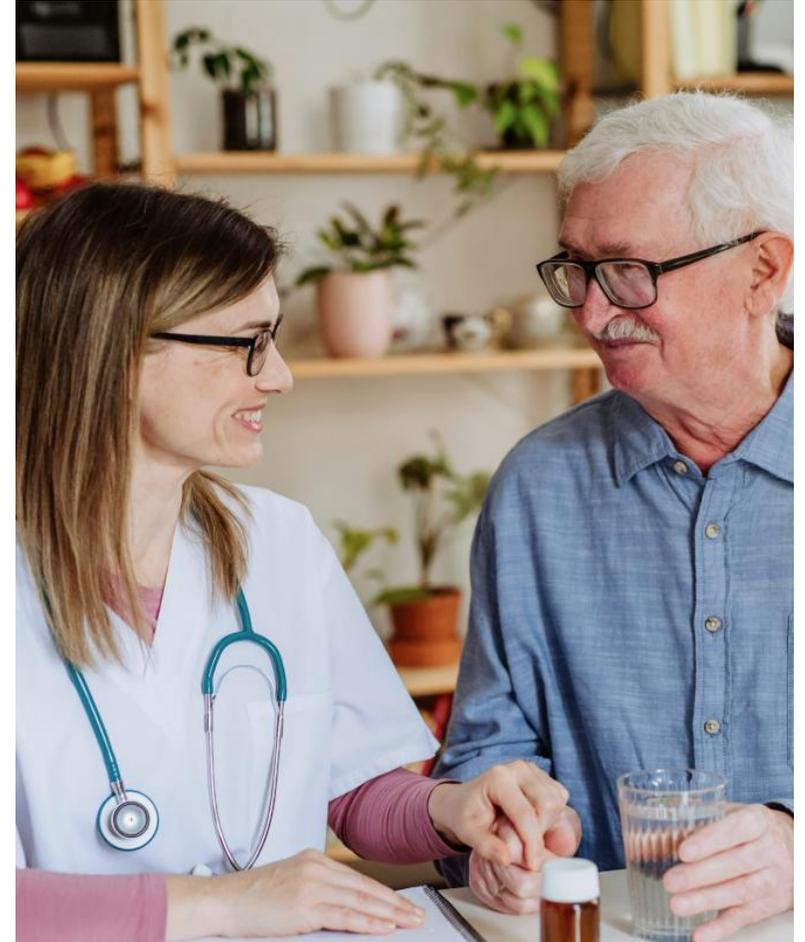


- Expanding **988 utilization** and services & continuing public education on crisis response services
- Growing **remote behavioral health** consultation services that connect providers to specialists able to provide collaborative care or assist in real-time
- Funding **educational awards for peer support and recovery specialists** to expand behavioral health workforce in rural communities



Aging and Access

- Safe transition from hospitalization to care at home – **community paramedicine**
- **Quality of care in rural long-term care facilities** through the Long-Term Care Quality Investment Program
- Launching **nurse aide training hub** to build a sustainable pipeline for direct care workers
- **Expanding Pennsylvania's LIFE (PACE) program** for dually eligible older adults to more rural counties



EMS and Transportation



- Modernizing **rural EMS infrastructure** to improve efficiency and sustainability (e.g., ECG machines, lift equipment, ALS ambulances, etc.)
- Supporting the **EMS workforce** and growing this essential field – recruitment, tuition reimbursement, career advancement programs
- Develop **new EMS and Community paramedic training programs**

Next Steps

- Notice of Award shared with states December 29, 2025 – **Pennsylvania awarded \$193M/year** with potential for additional funding in later grant years
- More information will be shared publicly on funding distribution.



Thank you!



We will continue to share updates:
www.dhs.pa.gov/ruralhealth