



2022 Year-End Report

# OREGON

# OFFICE

# OF RURAL

# HEALTH

IMPROVING THE QUALITY, AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HEALTH CARE FOR RURAL OREGONIANS



# About the Oregon Office of Rural Health

The Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) has been the focal point for rural and frontier health in Oregon since 1979. Supported by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, the state of Oregon and Oregon Health & Science University, ORH offers assistance to hospitals, clinics and communities to strengthen the rural and frontier health care delivery system.

**OUR MISSION** *To improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care for rural Oregonians.*

**OUR VISION** *To serve as a state leader in providing resources, developing innovative strategies and cultivating collaborative partnerships to support Oregon rural communities in achieving optimal health and well-being.*

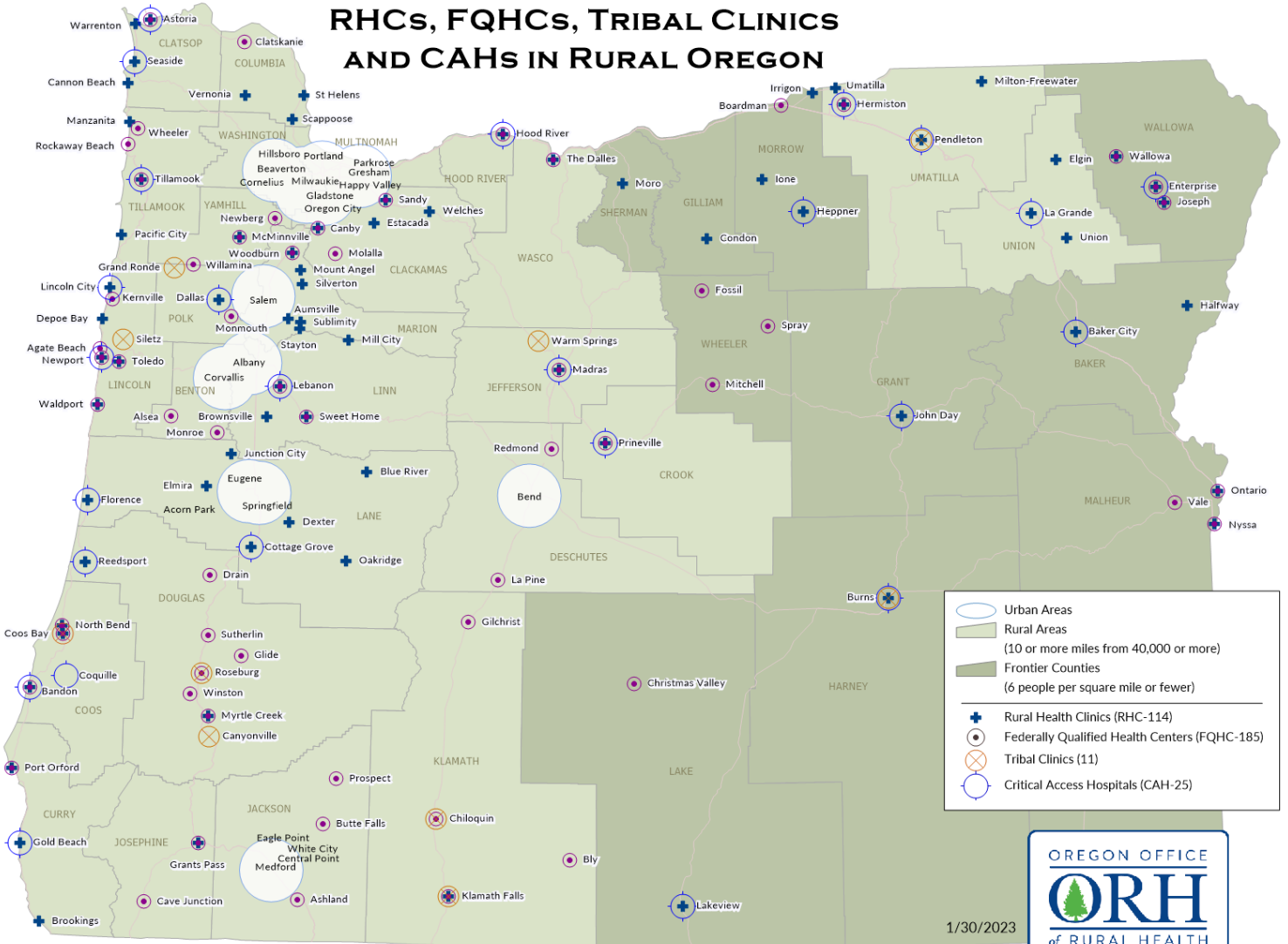


# What Is Considered Rural and Frontier?

*34.7% of Oregon's population lives in rural and frontier communities*

The Oregon Office of Rural Health defines rural as all geographic areas in Oregon 10 or more miles from the centroid of a population center of 40,000 people or more. Frontier counties are defined as those with six or fewer people per square mile. Ten of Oregon's 36 counties are frontier.

## RHCs, FQHCs, TRIBAL CLINICS AND CAHs IN RURAL OREGON



1/30/2023



RHCs: [https://qcor.cms.gov/report\\_select.jsp?which=12](https://qcor.cms.gov/report_select.jsp?which=12)  
 FQHCs: <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/HEALTHCAREPROVIDERSFACILITIES/HEALTHCAREHEALTHCARRREGULATIONQUALITYIMPROVEMENT/Documents/FQHCList.pdf>  
 Tribal Clinics: <http://www.npahlb.org/member-tribes/#1450475820392-65215ee8-17e6>  
 CAHs: <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-of-rural-health/oregon-cahs>

### OREGON RURAL HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

For more information on what is considered rural and frontier, or to determine if your community is rural or frontier, visit our website:

[www.ohsu.edu/orh](http://www.ohsu.edu/orh).



# ORH's Work Is Aligned Under the Following Service Areas:



## FIELD SERVICES

### DATA & ANALYSIS

ORH provides data and analysis about rural and frontier health to providers, elected officials, government agencies, educators and members of the public.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ORH offers technical assistance to rural and frontier communities and health care facilities to strengthen their health care delivery systems.

## WORKFORCE SERVICES

### PROVIDER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

ORH works with rural practice sites to help them recruit and retain practitioners, and with practitioner candidates to help them find suitable rural and frontier Oregon practice sites.

### PROVIDER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

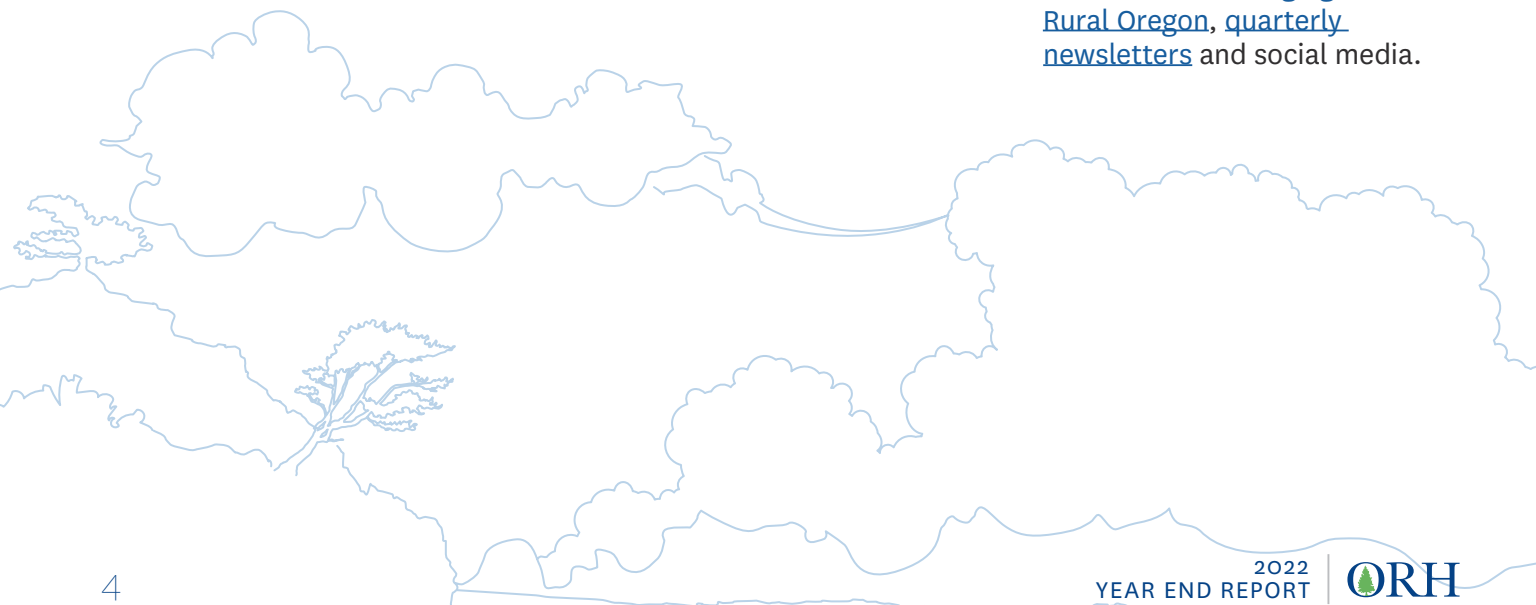
ORH manages loan repayment, loan forgiveness, tax credits and malpractice subsidy programs to incentivize the recruitment and retention of rural and frontier Oregon providers.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

The state legislature has charged ORH with “coordinating” the provision of health care to rural Oregonians and developing legislative proposals to benefit the health of rural Oregonians.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

ORH keeps its constituents informed through the annual [Oregon Rural Health Conference](#), the annual [Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon](#), [quarterly newsletters](#) and social media.

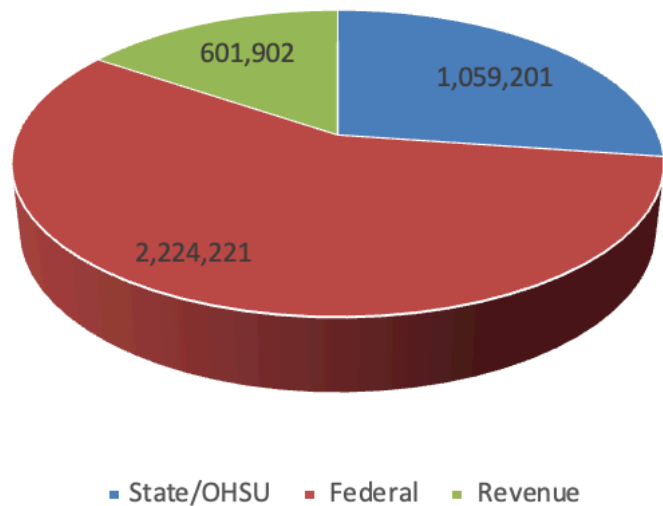


# Funding Sources

ORH is funded through the support of multiple federal grants, state general fund, OHSU and various partnerships. Federal grants include the State Office of Rural Health Grant and the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant provided through the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA).

State/OHSU Support	\$1,059,201
Federal Grants	\$2,224,221
SORH	\$223,410
Flex	\$697,883
SLRP	\$300,000
SHIP	\$333,736
Long Term Care COVID Testing	\$122,685
HRSA Workforce Grant	\$546,507

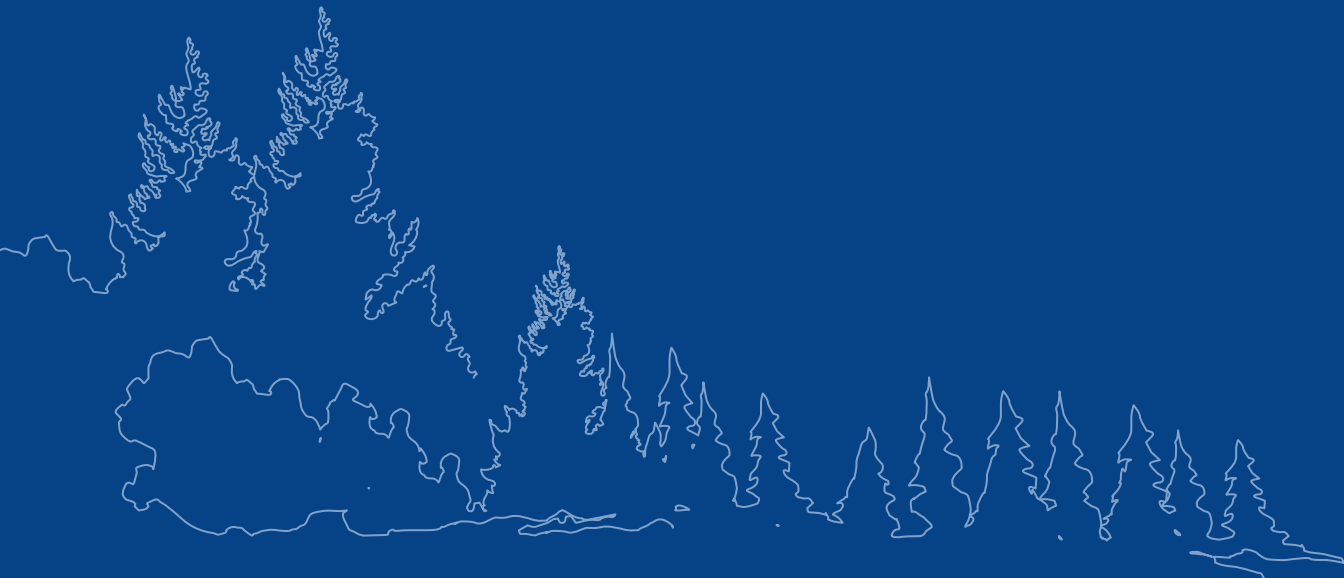
2022 ORH Budget





# Workforce Services

---





## Health Care Provider Candidate Sourcing

ORH sources candidates through direct outreach to students, residents and practicing providers throughout the country. We work directly with candidates reached through the national nonprofit Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet) and through the scholarship and loan repayment programs we administer. Focus on meeting the workforce needs of our rural and underserved communities is a priority.

---

ORH reached 1,193 providers during 2022 who had an interest in practicing in Oregon.

---

## Practice Opportunity Sites

ORH provides many recruitment and retention services to rural clinics, federally qualified health centers, hospitals and communities:

- Practice site assessments.
- Assistance with practice profile development.
- Assistance with the development of a recruitment & retention plan.
- Facilitate the marketing of current job opportunities and profiles on 3RNet as well as all ORH social media outlets.
- Promotion of opportunities at medical and dental schools, residencies, and other health professional programs.
- Provide referrals of health professional candidates who have expressed an interest in job opportunities matching Oregon opportunities.

For additional information, contact the ORH Workforce Services team | [ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu](mailto:ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu)

## Health Care Provider Incentive Programs

**Loan Repayment** is a financial incentive for clinicians to work in an underserved location in exchange for a service commitment. ORH administered two loan repayment programs in 2022:

**State Partnership Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)** - \$372,932 awarded to 6 providers: 1 PA, 1 DO, 3 MDs, and 1 PharmD.

**Oregon Health Care Provider Incentive Loan Repayment (PILP)** - \$4,113,729 awarded to 41 providers: 2 EPHDs, 13 DMDs, 1 ND, 7 NPs, 2 PharmDs, 6 PAs, 3 DOs, and 7 MDs.

**Loan forgiveness** is an incentive program in which students receive loans during their education, which are forgiven when they complete a service obligation after graduation. Participating institutions are Western University of Health Sciences (CompNW), Pacific University and OHSU.

**Primary Care Loan Forgiveness Program (PCLF)** was designed to meet workforce needs in rural Oregon for primary care providers. \$434,500 awarded to 8 future providers: 2 DMDs, 2 MDs, 1 DO, 2 PharmDs, and 1 PA.

**Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative (SHOI)**, gives students the opportunity to make a difference in an underserved community in Oregon by offering full tuition and fees at an approved OHSU medical program in exchange for a service obligation upon graduation. \$2,500,000 awarded to 16 future providers: 5 DMDs, 7 DNPs, 2 PAs, and 2 MDs.

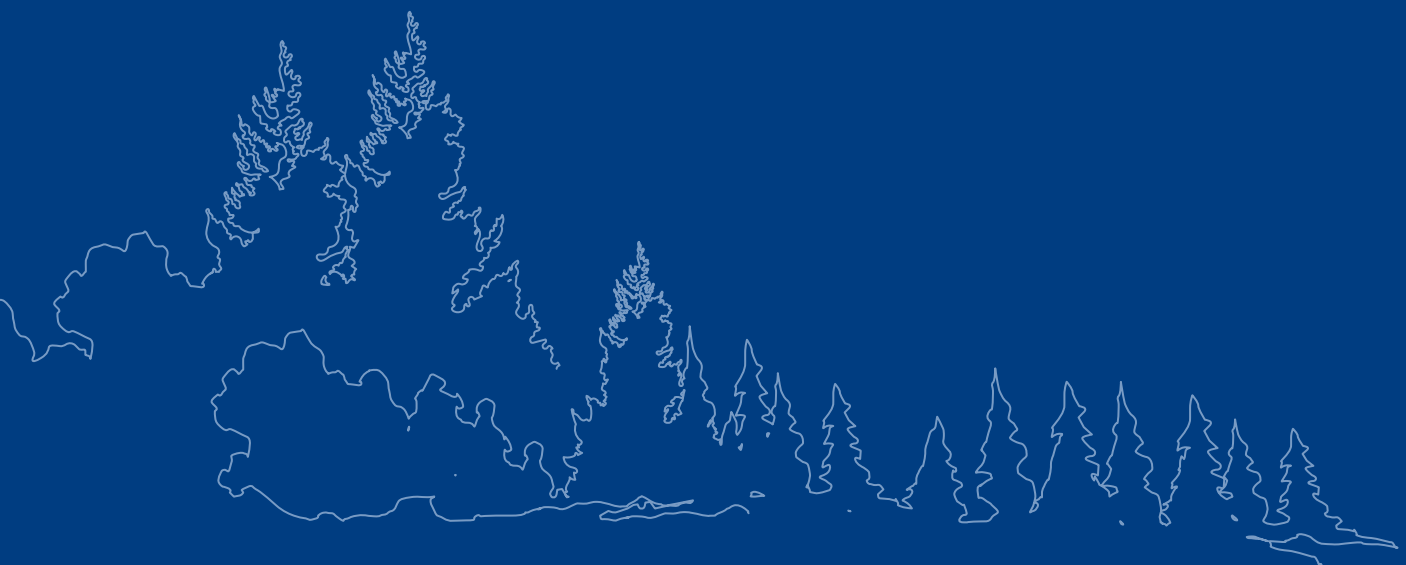
---

ORH supported 19 rural health care facilities in the 2022 Recruitment Academy. The Academy provides training for staff who are responsible for the recruitment of Oregon's health care workforce.

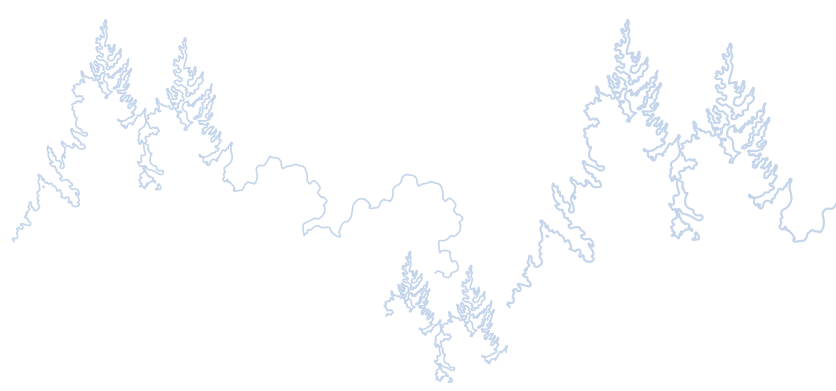
---



# Field Services







## Areas of Unmet Health Care Need (AUHCN) Report

Since 1998, the Oregon Office of Rural Health has published the [Areas of Unmet Health Care Need \(AUHCN\) Report](#).

The report includes nine variables that measure access to primary physical, mental and oral health care. This report can be used by state partners to prioritize financial and technical assistance, and by community health care stakeholders to advocate for their unmet needs. For more on the variables used, see page 12 of the report.

The report provides a total unmet need score for each primary service care area in Oregon. An area's score can be compared to other service areas as well as to overall scores for the state, all urban, all rural and all frontier areas. Additionally, if a score is low, it identifies which of the nine variables are negatively impacting the service area. The report can be used to quantify how well communities are able to access physical, mental and oral primary health care.

For more information, contact Emerson Ong | [ong@ohsu.edu](mailto:ong@ohsu.edu).



## Small Hospital Improvement Program Grants (SHIP)

The HRSA-funded SHIP grant is available annually to small, rural hospitals with 49 or fewer beds. Hospitals use funding in support of value-based purchasing (VBP), shared savings/accountable care organizations (SS/ACO), and payment bundling programs, and to purchase related health information technology, equipment software, and/or training.

During the FY22 annual grant cycle, \$260,745 in direct funding provided awards of \$11,336 each to 23 hospitals. This represents 74% of Oregon's eligible SHIP facilities. Forty-two percent of FY22 Oregon SHIP hospitals chose to expend their awards on activities in support of VBP; 41% expended their awards on SS/ACO; and 17% invested their awards in payment bundling programs.

Some highlights of FY22 projects include:

- Training and process improvement related to social determinants of health screening focused on trauma-informed care;
- Antimicrobial stewardship training and process improvement;
- Patient safety training for health care staff; and
- Swing bed operations and growth assessment.

## Telehealth

ORH understands the importance telehealth contributes to health care access in rural Oregon. We have developed and curated [two story maps](#) dedicated to tracking the telehealth landscape in Rural Health Clinics and Critical Access Hospitals across the state. Also, ORH provides technical assistance to rural health facilities that have questions about telehealth.

In addition, telehealth in rural areas is significantly impacted by available broadband and speed. To provide expertise on these issues for rural communities, ORH Program Manager Stepha Dragoon was appointed to the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council in 2022.

For more information, visit our website or contact Stepha Dragoon | [dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:dragoon@ohsu.edu).

## Clinic Technical Assistance

ORH provides technical assistance to rural and frontier health care clinics on general operations, Rural Health Clinic (RHC) designation, and RHC compliance. ORH continued to provide technical assistance to Oregon's 110 certified RHCs in 2022. Assistance included addressing questions on compliance, billing and coding, emergency preparedness, assistance in preparing for the state recertification survey, and more. In addition, ORH hosts a Rural Health Clinic Workshop each year at the Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference.

For more information on clinic-related technical assistance, visit the [ORH website](#) or contact Rondyann Gerst | [gerst@ohsu.edu](mailto:gerst@ohsu.edu).

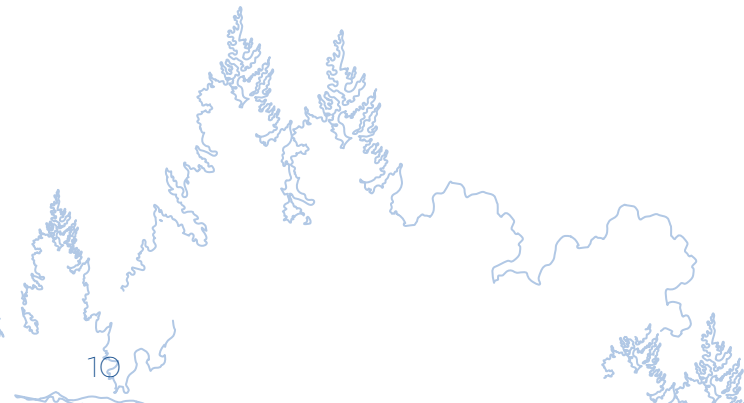
## Supporting Rural Health Clinics

ORH supports RHCs by providing regular updates on the changing regulations at the federal and state levels. ORH offers the bi-monthly RHC newsletter, which provides clinics with the latest information on topics from Medicare and Medicaid, billing and coding to education opportunities. Register for the newsletter [here](#).

## RHC Scholarships and Training

Innovation is key to meeting our health care needs. RHC Innovation Grants support innovative projects that seek to improve operations, increase revenue, and/or workflow within primary care practices. Grants have supported clinic projects focused on the following:

- Initiation of community health worker-led smoking cessation support/education groups;
- Improved patient health outcomes through enhanced data reporting;
- Best practice RHC certified billing/coding education and training to clinic staff to improve compliance, increase revenue and sustainability;
- Improving patient access to community health workers (CHW) by increasing the number of CHWs; and
- Building a robust case management program and improving patient care through training and education of CHWs and case managers.



## Critical Access Hospital Programming and Support

ORH continues to support training and staff development for Oregon's Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). From quality to leadership, investing in staff and programs improves CAHs' ability to offer high-quality care to their communities.

The following programs, scholarships, and grants were offered to CAHs in FY22:

- Awarded memberships to the National Association of Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) to 16 CAH staff members.
- Sixty-five staff from 11 CAHs participated in the Patient & Family Engagement (PFE) virtual training.
- Provided the MBQIP.com web portal to all 25 Oregon CAHs. The platform allows CAHs to directly report EDTC data and provides downloadable reports and graphs for all MBQIP measures.
- ORH Offered an in-person Quality Improvement Workshop. Staff from 14 CAHs attended the workshop, which provided content expertise on a variety of quality improvement topics.
- Seven CAHs engaged in the Turning Data into Action program, through which they identified and completed quality improvement projects using the PDSA cycle and process improvement techniques taught at the workshop.
- Provided scholarships to enroll in the National Rural Health Association's Rural Hospital Leadership Certification Program to two CEOs and one CNO.
- Provided scholarships for three CAHs to participate in cyber-security training.
- Provided one CAH with a rare opportunity for a \$20,000 equipment grant.

For more information on quality improvement assistance, contact Stacie Rothwell | [rothwels@ohsu.edu](mailto:rothwels@ohsu.edu).

## Support for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

ORH continues to support rural and frontier EMS. In 2022, ORH provided funding to support the training and retention of rural volunteer EMS service personnel as well as technical and financial assistance to support the operations of EMS agencies.

EMS is provided by volunteers in much of rural Oregon. Their service requires time off from work and away from their families and great personal expense for training. For this reason, ORH offers a yearly opportunity to apply for funding to support the training and retention of rural volunteer EMS service personnel through its Helping EMS in Rural Oregon (HERO) program. Through HERO, ORH awarded 13 training grants in FY22 totaling \$30,750. Additionally, ORH provided scholarships to five EMS agencies to attend the virtual National Rural EMS Conference.

ORH also offers CAH-EMS Partnered Improvement Grants to support the coordination of pre-hospital and hospital care. In FY22, ORH awarded one \$10,000 grant. Additionally, ORH was able to provide a rare opportunity for equipment grants to EMS agencies in FY22 and awarded three agencies \$20,000 each.

Technical assistance is a hallmark of ORH's work. In FY22, it provided 100 technical assistance encounters to rural and frontier agencies.

Contact Sarah Andersen | [ansarah@ohsu.edu](mailto:ansarah@ohsu.edu) for more information on ORH's EMS programming.





## Rural Public Health Support

Public health is a critical element of the health care infrastructure throughout our state. Public health departments in rural areas, in particular, have a pivotal role in assuring access to health information, resources, and health care in our rural communities. As such, ORH developed and implemented strategies to better support rural public health departments in FY22.

ORH partnered with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to create a public health track for the first time at its Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference. Sessions focused on strategies to maximize funding, approaches to partnering with other rural health care organizations, addressing the social determinants of health and equity in rural communities, and more. Through this partnership, ORH supported staff from 15 Oregon rural public health agencies to attend the conference.

ORH also partnered with OHA to support the training and certification of community health workers (CHWs) in rural communities. Through this project, ORH has enrolled 25 students to train as CHWs across the state, who will work at rural clinics, hospitals, and public health departments to support the health and health care of vulnerable populations in rural areas.

In a larger project, ORH and the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) were awarded a three-year, \$1.5 million HRSA Rural Public Health Workforce Network grant to build a network of recruiters, educators, and employers who can expand and cross-train the rural public health care workforce. This project, called “Healthy Rural Oregon,” is focused on the following:

- Recruiting, cross-training, and supporting new and currently certified CHWs in Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Wheeler, Wasco, Klamath, and Lane Counties; and
- Recruiting, cross-training, and supporting new and currently certified EMTs in Community Paramedicine in Malheur County.

By the end of the three-year cycle, we will have trained/cross-trained 127 CHWs and 40 community paramedics.

Contact Sarah Andersen | [ansarah@ohsu.edu](mailto:ansarah@ohsu.edu) for more information on ORH’s public health programming.



PROCLAMATION

# Policy Development & Advocacy

WHEREAS Oregon's rural communities are wonderful places to live and work – places of economic innovation and creativity; and

WHEREAS Rural Oregon plays an integral part in transforming our health care system to meet the needs of our population, expanding insurance coverage, accessibility and addressing COVID-19 pandemic challenges;

The Oregon Office of Rural Health is mandated

WHEREAS the Oregon Legislature has mandated ORH to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with courage, creativity, and extraordinary dedication to their statewide efforts for providing health care in

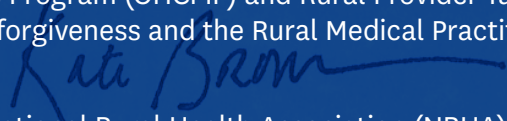
rural areas” and “develop enabling legislation to facilitate further development of rural health care delivery systems.”

WHEREAS rural health care providers are innovative and resourceful that reach beyond boundaries to deliver quality care, and are the economic foundation of their communities.


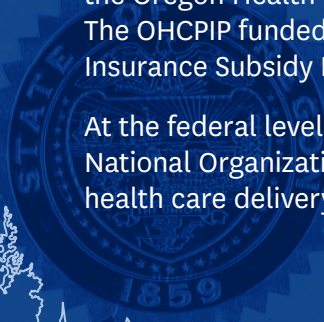
NOW, THEREFORE: I, Kate Brown, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim **November 2020** to be

The obstacles facing health care delivery in rural communities are as diverse as the communities themselves, and include economic, cultural and social differences. In some cases, the isolation of living in remote areas can be an impediment to health. The COVID-19 pandemic and Public Health Emergency only added to those challenges.

ORH worked with the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Oregon Rural Health Association (ORHA), and other partners to support rural health facilities and providers during these challenging times. ORH remained focused on addressing health care workforce shortages in rural Oregon. The Oregon Legislature continued funding for the Oregon Health Care Provider Incentive Program (OHCPIP) and Rural Provider Tax Credit. The OHCPIP funded loan repayment, loan forgiveness and the Rural Medical Practitioners Insurance Subsidy Program.



At the federal level, ORH works with the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) to support rural Oregon health care delivery through federal financial support.

  
Bev Clarno, Secretary of State

## Oregon Rural Health Conference

ORH held the 39th Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference live in 2022, as well as the Rural Health Clinic Workshop. This conference is the largest gathering dedicated to the issues impacting health care in rural Oregon. Forty-seven speakers delivered excellent presentations to 256 attendees through 29 conference sessions, addressing issues affecting workforce, quality, financial and operations issues and pandemic related topics.

Conference presentations and information can be found on the [ORH website](#).

## Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

ORH was pleased to host the 2022 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon (Forum) in-person in Seaside, Ore. May 16-18, 2022. The Forum brought together elder care professionals, caregivers, clinical providers, community members, policymakers, and philanthropists to make rural communities the best places to age. Sessions focused on motivational interviewing, the needs of LGBTQIA+ older adults, the statewide comprehensive plan for aging, advanced care planning, and more. The 2022 event attracted nearly 150 attendees. The 2023 Forum will be held in May.

Visit the [ORH website](#) for Forum presentations, agendas, and registration information. For more information, contact Stepha Dragoon | [dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:dragoon@ohsu.edu).

## Elder Service Innovation Grants

ORH is dedicated to assisting rural Oregonians to age in place. In FY22, it offered \$22,139 in Elder Service Innovation grants to three agencies to assist their efforts to innovatively address aging solutions in rural communities. Projects included an outdoor fitness center for older adults, disaster preparedness education and kits for vulnerable older adults, and the development of a geriatric-focused EMS curriculum for providers.

For more information, visit our website or contact Stepha Dragoon | [dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:dragoon@ohsu.edu).

## Rural Population Health Grants

ORH launched a new grant program to support innovative programs that address a specific population health need for an identified rural population in 2022. Awards of \$5,000 were awarded to each of five organizations. Projects focused on:

- An evidence-based diabetes prevention program that promotes lifestyle changes through trained lifestyle coaches, a research-based curriculum, and group support.
- Connecting high-risk patients with a traditional health worker who conducts social determinants of health screenings and connects members with primary care providers and other resources.
- A program to monitor elevations in heart rate, blood pressure, and increase in weight for patients with congestive heart failure.
- Work with local EMS agencies to create a basic life support obstetrics (BLSO) course to improve the quality of emergency obstetrics and maternal health.

For more information, contact Stepha Dragoon | [dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:dragoon@ohsu.edu).




## Get in touch

1.866.674.4376  
503.494.4450  
ruralweb@ohsu.edu  
www.ohsu.edu/orh

### MAILING ADDRESS

Oregon Office of Rural Health  
Oregon Health & Science University  
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Rd., L593  
Portland, OR 97239

### ON SOCIAL

 @ORHruralOregon  
 /Oregon-Office-of-Rural-Health  
 /oregon\_office\_of\_rural\_health

The Oregon Office of Rural Health has been a partner of Oregon Health & Science University since 1989.



## ORH Partners



### STATE

Oregon Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS)  
Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN)  
Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS)  
Oregon Health Authority (OHA)  
Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)  
Oregon Health Care Workforce Institute (OHWI)  
Oregon Medical Association (OMA)  
Oregon Nursing Association (ONA)  
Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA)  
Oregon Rural Health Association (ORHA)  
Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network (ORPRN)  
Pacific University  
Telehealth Alliance of Oregon (TAO)  
Western University of Health Sciences –Comp NW



### NATIONAL

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)  
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)  
National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH)  
National Rural Health Association (NRHA)  
National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet)