

New Jersey Awards First Round of Rural Health Transformation Grants

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Historic \$83M Investment Will Strengthen Healthcare Workforce, Infrastructure, Technology, Prevention, and Chronic Disease Services in Rural Communities

TRENTON – Governor Mikie Sherrill today announced the first round of grant awards through New Jersey's Rural Health Transformation Program (NJRHT), investing \$83 million in projects that aim to strengthen healthcare access and improve health outcomes for residents living in rural communities across the state.

The awards represent the first investments made through New Jersey's five-year Rural Health Transformation Program, a federally funded initiative designed to improve healthcare infrastructure, expand access to care, strengthen the healthcare workforce, and support innovative approaches to prevention and chronic disease management in rural communities.

"Every New Jerseyans deserves access to quality healthcare, regardless of where they live," **said Governor Sherrill**. "These grants will help strengthen hospitals, community health providers, and the healthcare workforce that families rely on every day. While these funds do not make up for a federal government that is gutting funding for healthcare, by investing in innovative, community-driven solutions, we are taking a healthier and more affordable future for New Jersey into our own hands."

Today's awards support projects across NJRHT's five priority areas:

- Workforce: Recruiting, training, and retaining clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals;
- Infrastructure: Strengthening hospitals, primary care providers, and other essential healthcare facilities;
- Technology: Expanding the use of health technology and innovative care delivery models;
- Prevention: Improving community health through prevention-focused initiatives; and
- Chronic Disease: Supporting programs that improve the management of chronic health conditions.

"In order to make good health possible for everyone, we have to identify the challenges facing distinct populations and craft innovative solutions to meet their health needs," **said Health Commissioner Dr. Raynard E. Washington**. "These investments will help strengthen the overall health of rural New Jersey communities and move us closer to our goal of making New Jersey the healthiest state in the union."

"These investments are about more than funding individual projects," **said Human Services Commissioner Dr. Stephen Cha**. "They are about transforming how healthcare is delivered in rural New Jersey. We are investing in stronger healthcare systems, a more resilient workforce, and innovative models of care that will improve access and affordability for residents today while building lasting capacity for the future."

While New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation, approximately one in ten New Jerseyans live in rural communities. Rural communities are more likely to experience healthcare workforce shortages, hospital maternity unit closures, higher rates of substance use-related health impacts, and lower rates of annual pediatric well visits.

New Jersey received more than \$147 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for the first year of the five-year Rural Health Transformation Program, which was approved by Congress last year, with New Jersey receiving one of the highest per-capita Rural Health Transformation awards in the nation for this first year of funding. The funding levels for the remaining four years of NJRHT are not yet known.

The Department of Human Services serves as the state's lead agency overseeing the program, with the Department of Health administering approximately \$95 million in competitive grant funding.

The Department of Health received more than 200 applications across six grant categories. Today's awards represent the first year of investments that will fund 103 projects. A summary of grant awards can be found [here](#).



While the Rural Health Transformation Program represents a historic investment in New Jersey's rural healthcare system, it comes at a time when changes in federal law are expected to place significant financial pressure on hospitals, providers, and health coverage programs nationwide.

As a result of H.R. 1, New Jersey is expected to face a \$3.3 billion cut to hospitals and public health funding annually.

Changes to Medicaid could result in [more than 300,000 New Jerseyans](#) losing [NJFamilyCare](#) coverage. [Nearly 70,000 New Jerseyans](#) dropped their [GetCoveredNJ](#) plans in the months after the federal government’s elimination of enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies.

Amid such challenges, the Sherrill Administration remains committed to using Rural Health Transformation funding strategically to strengthen rural healthcare systems and maximize its long-term impact for New Jersey communities.

For more information about the Rural Health Transformation Program, including future funding opportunities, please join NJ's RHT Listserv [here](#). Program questions can be directed to the RHT email address: mahs.njrht@dhs.nj.gov.

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