

RURAL HEALTH CONNECT

Improving the Health of Rural Communities

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What's New

New Federal Poverty Guidelines Released

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services released new guidelines used to determine financial eligibility for certain federal programs. Programs using the guidelines include Head Start, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the National School Lunch Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

To view the new guidelines, please follow the link [here](#).

Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is accepting applications for the fiscal year 2020 [Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships \(NAT\)](#) program. The application cycle closes on March 6, 2020.

This funding opportunity will allow eligible institutions to cover the costs of nurse anesthesia programs for individuals. The NAT program will increase the number of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) to provide care to underserved populations.

Eligible applicants are schools of nursing, nursing centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and other public or private nonprofit entities determined appropriate by the Secretary.

HRSA expects approximately \$2,250,000 to be available in FY 2020 to fund an estimated 80 awards.

New Centers for Disease Report on Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published data finding that suicide among the U.S. working-age population (ages 16-64 years) was increasing during the time period studied. The five major industry groups with suicide rates higher than the study population included 1) Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; 2) Construction; 3) Other Services (e.g. automotive repair); 4) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting; and 5) Transportation and Warehousing

To view the report, please follow the link [here](#).

Full Medicaid Expansion in Utah

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement full Medicaid expansion in the state. The expansion will extend Medicaid eligibility to Utah adults whose annual income is up to 138% of the federal poverty level (\$16,753 for an individual or \$34,638 for a family of four). The federal government will cover 90% of the costs of these services, with the state covering the remaining 10%.

Enrollment and coverage for the newly eligible individuals began January 1.

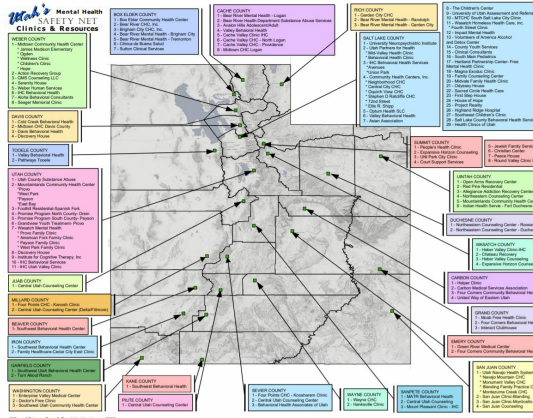
This announcement, along with a smaller-scale expansion implemented last April, means up to 120,000 Utah adults who didn't qualify for Medicaid at the beginning of 2019 now qualify.

For more information and how to apply, please follow the link [here](#).

OPCRH Office Highlight:

Each month the OPCRH team

highlights a map or project in our office. This month, we're highlighting our [Mental Health Safety Net Map](#) for the state of Utah! The Mental Health Safety Net Map is a newly developed map, if you have any suggestions or edits, please forward them to coltongordon@utah.gov.



Upcoming Events

Rural Health Association Conference



"Building Partnerships for Rural Well-Being"

The well-being of communities and individuals is complex and requires collaboration through effective partnerships that address multiple factors that affect health such as, social, financial, and environmental. Rural communities have unique challenges, yet great opportunities, to foster partnerships and collaborations for improved health and well-being.

Hospitals, clinics, and providers often need community resources to support their patients to improve health. Some examples include: pre-diabetes and diabetes education, opioid dependency resources, access to fresh fruits and vegetables, or physical activity and social connections. This conference will address how to connect community resources, engage the community at large, and develop effective partnerships.

*April 10, 2020
St. George, Utah*

[For more information and registration, please click here.](#)

Utah AIDS Education and Training Center Program (AETC)



"HIV Prevention in Primary Care"

This conference is designed for primary care providers in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB/Gyn, Adolescent Medicine, Pediatrics, and Pharmacy working in the Mountain West and beyond who are interested in attending a comprehensive medical conference to learn how to provide HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) through pharmacotherapy within their practice.

"Transgender Medicine Pre-Conference"

This pre-conference is geared toward primary care providers who are interested in learning more about multi-disciplinary care for transgender/gender-non conforming patients. Visit the registration link below for more information and topics covered!

[For more information on the Conference and Pre-Conference, please see the attached Save the Date Flyer here.](#)

April 2-3, 2020 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Viridian Event Center
8030 S 1825 W
West Jordan, Utah 84088

OPCRH Program Updates

HEALTH SYSTEMS SUPPORT

- **Save the Date: April 9, 2020.** OPCRH is sponsoring a workshop for **Rural Health Clinics** and will cover survey preparedness, billing, and coding. This is in conjunction with the RHAU conference on April 10 in St. George, Utah.
- **Save the Date: June 11-12, 2020** the OPCRH is hosting our annual **FLEX Summit** at Ruby's Inn in Bryce Canyon, UT.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- The legislative session began this month, which means we are watching for funding for our three state funded programs: **Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance, State Primary Care Grants, and Rural Physician's Loan Repayment.** Keep an eye out for announcements regarding funding and application cycles over the next few months! If you have any questions on the amendment, please contact **Robbin Williams, at robbinwilliams@utah.gov**
- The OPCRH is establishing a **Health Workforce Coalition** to develop a coordinated

approach to addressing health workforce issues in rural and underserved Utah. The first coalition meeting will be held *March 26, 2020* and will focus on the root causes of health workforce shortages, identify emerging issues affecting Utah's health workforce, and share successful models and opportunities to scale them. Members may include government, health industry, education institutions, and associated organizations. We are still in the process of reaching out to potentially interested stakeholders. If you would like to participate or learn more about this initiative, please contact **Ashley Moretz, Workforce Development Specialist**, at amoretz@utah.gov

Statewide Announcements

Utah bans Conversion Therapy for Children

Utah Governor Gary Herbert has directed a ban on conversion therapy for children. This makes Utah the 19th state to curtail the practice of conversion therapy, but the first by a Republican governor with a Republican legislature. Conversion therapy has been a widely discredited practice, aimed at altering a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, and has been linked to suicide, homelessness, and drug abuse among LGBTQ youth.

For more information, please follow the link [here](#) to the article.

Utah Department of Health Announces Recipients of Medical Cannabis Pharmacy Licenses

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) announced the companies to which it intends to award 14 medical cannabis pharmacy licenses. The companies were selected from more than 130 applications submitted through a competitive bidding process. More than 60 different companies submitted applications.

The following businesses will be issued licenses:

- Beehive's Own (two licenses), Salt Lake City and location TBD but will be in Box Elder, Morgan, or Rich County

- Bloom Medicinals, Cedar City
- Columbia Care, Springville
- Curaleaf, Lindon
- Deseret Wellness (two licenses), Park City and Provo
- Dragonfly Wellness, Salt Lake City
- Justice Grown Utah (two licenses), Salt Lake City and St. George
- Pure UT, Vernal
- True North of Utah (two licenses), Logan and Ogden
- Wholesome Therapy, West Bountiful

Eight of the locations may open as early as March 2020 and six may open as early as July 2020. Some of the companies to whom the Department intends to award licenses do not yet have ownership of their proposed locations and in some cases, their proposed locations may change. Their operating plans are pending Department approval and their owners must still pass criminal background checks. The UDOH will make announcements regarding when each location may open at a later date.

License applications were evaluated and scored by an evaluation committee based on several criteria, including: experience in the medical cannabis or other highly regulated industries, disciplinary action or investigation in other jurisdictions, an operating plan that will best ensure the safety and security of cardholders and the community, the extent to which an applicant can reduce the cost of medical cannabis, connections to the local community, and a strategic plan that has a high likelihood of success.

For more information, please follow the link [here](#).

Utah Department of Health Campaigns



PROTECT YOURSELF. DON'T VAPE THC.

More than 90% of Utahns affected by the severe lung illness outbreak reported vaping THC cartridges.

The risks of vaping THC cartridges include severe lung damage and death.



Webinars

Rural Hospital CEO Certification

Let the world know you know how to run a rural hospital with excellence. Regardless of how successful you already are, the changing world of rural health care demands our CEOs have diversified skill sets while also being regarded as leaders in their communities. This program is designed and developed for you by tenured successful rural hospital CEOs with the support of NRHA.

The first class will be held **February 10, 2020.**

[For more information, please follow the link here.](#)



Addressing Revenue Cycle Management Challenges in Rural Hospitals

Key elements of this one hour webinar include the critical role each department plays in the revenue cycle, identifying RCM champions, and addressing over and under payments. Time for Q&A will be available following the presentation.

Sylvia Alcalá, MA, RHIA, CDIP, CCS, CPC-I will be the guest presenter. Ms. Alcalá is an approved ICD-10 trainer and AAPC approved instructor with more than 30 years of experience as a leader in HIM. Ms. Alcalá is an adjunct coding instructor at Texas State University and the Director of HIM at Connally Memorial Medical Center. In addition to having served as president of the ALAMO Health Information Association (AAHIMA) she has also served on the AHIMA committee for accrediting coding exam questions. If you have questions or wish to submit a question prior to the webinar, please email: cavila@tamu.edu.

[To register, please follow the link here.](#)

Dissemination of Rural Health Research: A Toolkit

The emphasis of knowledge translation is to ensure health providers, consumers, researchers, advocates, and policymakers are aware of, can access, and are able to use health research findings to inform decision-making. Differences among audiences make it imperative to know when and how to utilize various modes of dissemination for health research.

This toolkit aims to assist researchers with step four in the knowledge translation process, reaching their target audiences. By developing appropriate, timely, accessible, and applicable products, researchers have the opportunity to inform step five, a change in policy or practice. This toolkit provides descriptions for multiple



modes of dissemination and includes discussions of the purpose of each product, which product is appropriate given the topic and audience, and how to develop each. Effective examples are also provided.

[To access the toolkit, please follow the link here.](#)

Rural Suicide Prevention Toolkit

The Rural Suicide Prevention Toolkit compiles evidence-based and promising models and resources to support organizations implementing suicide prevention programs in rural communities across the United States. The modules in the toolkit contain resources and information focused on developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining rural suicide prevention programs. There are more resources on general community health strategies available in the [Rural Community Health Toolkit](#).

[To access the toolkit, please follow the link here.](#)

Utah Medical Cannabis Program 4-Hr Required Course

This course introduces the endocannabinoid system and its interaction with the components of the cannabis plant, and addresses administration, therapeutic use, drug metabolism, physiologic and cognitive effects, potential risks, and drug interactions.

The use of marijuana in obstetric patients, pediatric patients, adolescent patients, and elderly patients is discussed in detail. In addition, the health effects of marijuana and cannabinoids in epilepsy are reviewed. Important considerations for patients with ischemic heart disease, hepatic disease, psychotic illness, and those with a history of drug dependence are provided.

This course also informs the reader



about the legal and medical considerations in the recommendation of medical marijuana, and addresses the parts of H.B. 3001, including the Utah Medical Cannabis Act, that would be of interest to a Utah healthcare provider.

For more information about the course, please follow the link [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) Program



The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is accepting applications for the fiscal year 2020 [Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students \(SDS\) Program](#). The application cycle closes on March 3, 2020.

The SDS program increases the diversity of the health workforce by funding eligible academic institutions that are training health profession students. The institutions then make scholarships available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have financial need.

Eligible applicants are accredited schools of allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, podiatric medicine, optometry, veterinary medicine, public health, chiropractic, and allied health; schools offering a graduate program in behavioral and mental health practice; and programs for physician assistant training. Students should contact their financial aid office to find out if their school participates.

HRSA has **\$48,200,000** available to make approximately **79 awards** in FY 2020. No student may receive SDS funds greater than **\$40,000** per academic year.

[For more information and to apply, please click here.](#)

Please check our website for updated funding opportunities. You can find the table by following the link [here](#).

National Organizations

[Human Services to Support Rural Health](#)

[Oral Health in Rural Communities](#)

[Overdose Data to Action \(RFA-CE19-1904\)](#)

[HRSA US Fact Sheet by State](#)

[Rural Health Care Professional Job Posting](#)



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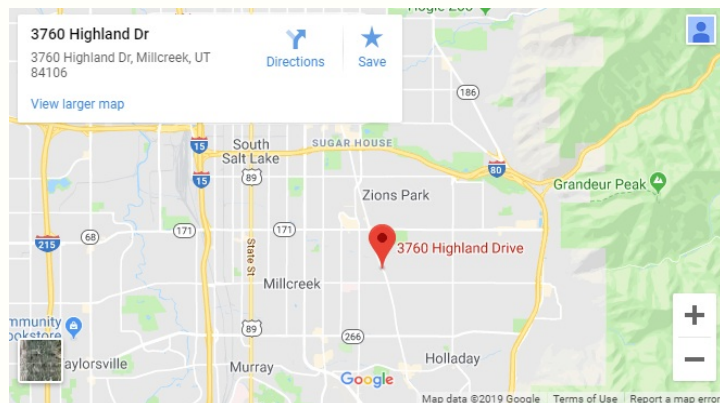
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The OPCRH provides support to our stakeholders and clients in the form of hands-on support, economic impact analysis, research, community health needs assessments, and healthcare workforce needs assessment. We also provide technical assistance and pertinent information on student loan repayment programs and grant opportunities

If you would like to be a part of our newsletter in the future and/or would like to submit a success story, announcement, or communicate any other information to us or your rural health partners, please contact Colton Gordon Program Specialist 801-273-6618, coltongordon@utah.gov

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