

2016-2017  
IMPACT REPORT



*Enhancing* THE  
*Health Status*  
OF RURAL PENNSYLVANIANS



PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF  
RURAL HEALTH



PennState

# Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health

Since its inception in 1991, the **Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health (PORH)** has worked with local, state, federal, and private partners to achieve equity in, and access to, quality health care for Pennsylvania's rural residents. **PORH** strives to be the premier rural health leadership organization in Pennsylvania and one of the most effective State Offices of Rural Health in the nation. Located at the Penn State University Park campus, **PORH** is administratively located in the Department of Health Policy and Administration in the Penn State College of Health and Human Development.

**PORH's** areas of expertise center on rural health, agricultural health and safety, oral health, and community and economic development.

## *Vision*

To be recognized as the premier rural health leadership and information organization in Pennsylvania and to be one of the most effective state offices of rural health in the nation.

## *Mission*

To enhance the health status of rural Pennsylvanians and ensure that rural residents have access to high-quality, affordable health care.

## STATE AT A GLANCE

- State Population – 12.8 million (2016 U.S. Census Bureau)
- % of Population Considered to be Rural – 23%
- Critical Access Hospitals – 15
- Rural Hospitals – 48
- Rural Health Clinics – 72
- Rural FQHC/CHC Look-alike Sites – 91

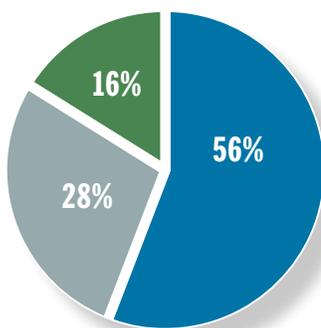
## *Services*

**PORH** staff provides technical assistance, information dissemination, partnership development, continuing education, policy development, small rural hospital and rural health care provider support, research, and agricultural outreach.

## *Funding*

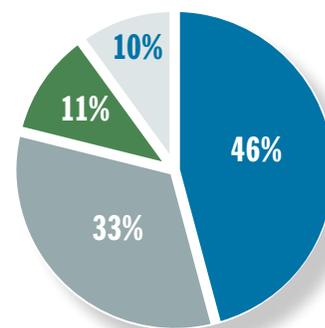
**PORH** is funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, other state and federal agencies, foundations, and with in-kind support from Penn State.

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT



Federal	56%
State	28%
Other	16%
Penn State	In-Kind

## CATEGORIES OF EXPENDITURES



Personnel	46%
Sub-contracts	33%
Operations	11%
Overhead	10%

## IMPACT AND HIGHLIGHTS

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY FOR HEALTHY RURAL COMMUNITIES

Providing technical assistance to rural health care providers and communities and disseminating information are two of the core functions of a State Office of Rural Health. In 2016-17, **PORH** staff provided technical assistance services to communities, state and local agencies, health care providers, educators, and consumers, which received information on funding opportunities, project development, grant reviews, best practices, referrals, tools, and more.

**PORH** advocated for strong rural health care delivery systems through participation on committees and task forces across Pennsylvania and at the national level, served state and federal agencies in designing new health care models of care, and much more!

### STRENGTHENING POPULATION HEALTH THROUGH COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES

**PORH** assisted Pennsylvania's small rural hospitals in addressing identified community health needs. **PORH** refined the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) web-based data collection and presentation tool for use in planning, decision support,

evaluation, quality improvement, and partnership-building. Twelve rural counties in Pennsylvania are included in the HCI project. The small rural hospitals that are part of the project, and the communities they serve, have access to local data for more than 100 measures. These data are used by hospitals and regional collaborations to update and evaluate their community health needs assessments and track progress on priority areas. Publically available data for participating counties can be accessed at [porh.psu.edu](http://porh.psu.edu).

### INCREASING ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

In partnership with the DentaQuest Institute, **PORH** continues implementation of the Medical Oral Expanded (MORE) Care Collaborative in Pennsylvania. Through the collaborative, solutions are identified to address the oral health disparities that exist in rural communities through integrated and coordinated oral health care. The first cohort of participating nine Rural Health Clinics has focused on pediatric patients and will begin expanding the program into additional populations. A second cohort of two Rural Health Clinics joined the collaborative in June 2017.

### PROMOTING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN RURAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

A primary emphasis at **PORH** is to assure high-quality health care in rural Pennsylvania, and in the state's fifteen Critical Access Hospitals (CAHS). In 2016-17, **PORH** launched extensive collaboration and training efforts with the quality improvement directors at those hospitals.

Initiatives include the development of an emergency department provider report card; collaboration with the state's hospital association on infection, sepsis, and antibiotic stewardship

### RECOGNITION OF LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE

- 2016 National Rural Health Day Celebration
- 2016 Pennsylvania Rural Health Week Proclamation
- 2016 Recognition of Rural Health Leaders in Pennsylvania

prevention; a partnership with the Pennsylvania Health Promotion Council on population health initiatives; on-site and group meetings to promote targeted and shared learning; and the development of a web-based portal for resources and information. Individual hospital Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP), Emergency Department Transfer Communication (EDTC), and Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) data are analyzed to determine areas for improvement and action plans that can be developed and implemented.

### PENNSYLVANIA SMALL RURAL HOSPITAL PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL QUALITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

For the second year in a row, the Pennsylvania Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program received the 2016 Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) Certificate of Excellence Award in recognition of outstanding Critical Access Hospital (CAH) state quality reporting and performance. The award was given by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). MBQIP is a quality improvement activity under the federal Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility grant program and is focused on improving the quality of care provided in CAHS by increasing quality data reporting and then driving quality improvement activities based on the data. Pennsylvania was one of the first states in the nation to have 100 percent participation in MBQIP.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Community and Public Health Conference
- Grant Writing Skill Building Webinar Series
- Federal Grants Webinar
- Penn State Ag Progress Days
- Quality Improvement for Rural Health Clinic Practices
- Pennsylvania Rural Legislative Briefing
- Swimming Pool Pesticide Applicator Training

# Assisting Pennsylvania's Agricultural Producers in Using Pesticides Safely

**T**hrough the Pennsylvania Rural Health Farm Worker Protection Safety Program, **PORH** staff provided technical and compliance assistance to agricultural producers on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Worker Protection Standard (WPS) to prevent illness or injury from pesticide exposures.



In response to the revisions to the WPS released by the EPA in 2015, the Rural Health Farm Worker Protection program staff significantly increased efforts to provide education and outreach to agricultural producers and redesigned program and training materials. Additional staff was added to assist with outreach, education, and curriculum and training development. The program promotes other health and safety resources to the agricultural community through farm visits and information booths. Program staff also increased their knowledge in order to offer additional resources for growers about other regulations.

The Pennsylvania Rural Health Farm Worker Protection Safety Program is a collaboration between **PORH** and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.



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*This publication is available in alternative media on request.  
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