

During 2013-14, **PORH**'s rural health farm worker protection safety specialist traveled more than 15,000 miles throughout the state, providing more than 250 assistance visits and presenting a dozen talks on WPS at trade group and pesticide meetings. Individual farm visits also allowed the program specialist to promote additional safety and health resources beyond the WPS, including information on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)'s Health Insurance Marketplace, information and resources on Lyme disease, and other regulatory information of interest to the growers.

Also in 2013-14, a WPS training DVD for the nursery industry was completed and a DVD on "Take Home Pesticides Exposures," targeting the families of farm workers, is under development. These videos expand the existing "Safety in the Field" DVD series.

The program continues to be a collaborative effort among **PORH**, the Penn State Pesticide Education Program, and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

*This publication is available in alternative media on request. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.  
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# Enhancing the Health Status of Rural Pennsylvanians

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PENNSTATE

2013-2014 ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

# Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health

Since its inception in 1991, the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health (**PORH**) has worked with local, state, and federal 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 (main) campus, **PORH** is a joint effort of the Penn State College of Health and Human Development, Penn State Outreach, and Penn State Extension.

One of 50 State Offices of Rural Health in the nation, **PORH** is funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and state agencies focused on health and agriculture. **PORH**’s areas of expertise center on rural health, agricultural health and safety, and community and economic development.

### Mission

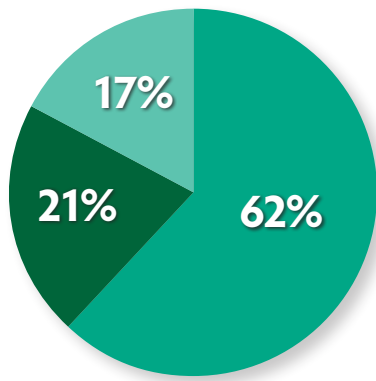
To enhance the health status of rural Pennsylvanians through education, outreach, advocacy, applied research, and special programs and projects.

### Services

Technical assistance, information dissemination, partnership development, continuing education, policy development, small rural hospital and rural health care provider support, research, and agricultural outreach.

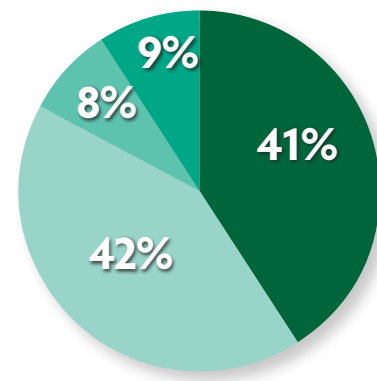
### PORH Funding

Sources of Support



Federal	62%
State	21%
Penn State	17%

Categories of Expenditures



Grants/Contracts	41%
Overhead	9%
Operations	8%
Personnel	42%

## Highlights of Accomplishments

### Providing Technical Assistance to Health Care Providers and Communities

Advocating for the needs of rural residents is one of the highest priorities of **PORH**. **PORH** staff serves on a wide range of boards, committees, task forces, and work groups at the national, state, and local levels. Affiliations with the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, the National Rural Health Association, the Pennsylvania Rural Health Association, Pennsylvania Rural Partners, and other advocacy organizations provide a needed voice at national and state levels.

Providing technical assistance to rural communities and the health care delivery systems that serve rural areas is one of the core mandates of the State Office of Rural Health program. In 2013-14, **PORH** staff provided more than **590** 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 that helped to strengthen the health of rural residents.

### Enhancing the Health of a Community Through Population Health Initiatives

Not-for-profit community hospitals have long been committed to community outreach activities. Assessing health care needs and providing quality health and wellness services is one way in which the hospital serves its community. The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) mandated that not-for-profit hospitals formalize this outreach by conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years.

In an effort to assist Pennsylvania’s small rural hospitals with the CHNA process, **PORH** engaged the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) at the University of California-Berkeley to implement their web-based data collection and presentation tool for use with planning, decision support, evaluation, quality improvement, and partnership-building. Eleven contiguous rural counties in Pennsylvania are included in the HCI project. The small rural hospitals that are part of the project now have access to local community data for more than 100 measures. HCI also provides evidenced-based implementation strategies associated with many of the most promising practices from across the nation.

This project was funded through federal and state sources of support.

### Health Insurance Marketplace Enrollment Assistance

PORH collaborated with faculty and educators from Penn State Extension to launch an initiative designed to educate consumers, consumer advocates, and small businesses on the Health Insurance Marketplace established through the Patient Protection

and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The team developed a website “Health Insurance and You,” which provides information and resources on the benefits of health insurance, an overview of the ACA, and links to the Health Insurance Marketplace and Patient Navigator resources in the state. Webinars and in-person presentations complemented the website and the outreach and training. For more information, see [extension.psu.edu/health/insurance](http://extension.psu.edu/health/insurance).

### Other State and Community-based Efforts

- 2013 National Rural Health Day Celebration
- 2013 Pennsylvania Rural Health Week Proclamation
- Recognizing Rural Health Leaders in Pennsylvania

### Continuing Education Activities

- Community and Public Health Conference (October 2013 and 2014)
- East Coast Migrant Stream Forum (October 2014)
- Community Health Worker Summit (May 2015)
- Swimming Pool Pesticide Applicator Training (Each Spring and Fall)

### Assisting Pennsylvania’s Agricultural Producers in Using Pesticides Safely

The Pennsylvania Rural Health Farm Worker Protection Safety Program continued to provide technical and compliance assistance to Pennsylvania’s agricultural producers in understanding and implementing the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulation. This regulation gives agricultural workers the basic principles and practices of pesticide safety, including pesticide safety training, application information, and decontamination supplies. All outreach is designed to be culturally appropriate and accessible by English-speaking; Hispanic; and Amish, Mennonite, and other Anabaptist farmers.