

Assisting Pennsylvania’s Agricultural Producers in Using Pesticides Safely

Through 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 2015, the EPA released substantial revisions to the WPS. In response, the Rural Health Farm Worker Protection Safety 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**, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and Penn State.

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Enhancing the Health Status of Rural Pennsylvanians



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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 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, and community and economic development.

Vision

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

Mission

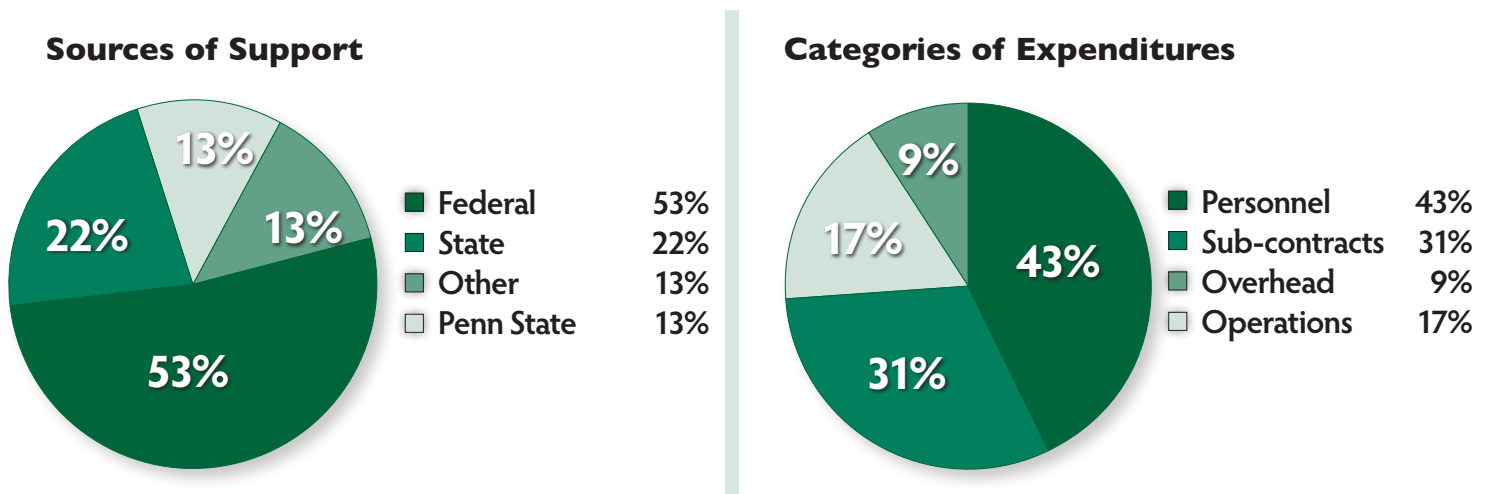
To enhance the health status of rural Pennsylvanians through education, outreach, advocacy, applied research, and special programs and projects.

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.



State at a Glance

- State Population – 12.8 million (2015 U.S. Census Bureau)
- Critical Access Hospitals – 14
- Rural Health Clinics – 74
- Population Considered to be Rural – 23%
- Rural Hospitals – 60
- Rural FQHC/CHC Look-alike Sites – 91

Highlights and Accomplishments

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 2015-16, **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, and served state and federal agencies in designing new health care models of care, and much more!

Population Health Efforts to Strengthen Community Health

PORH continued to assist Pennsylvania’s small rural hospitals to address identified community health needs. **PORH** launched the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) web-based data collection and presentation tool for use in planning, decision support, evaluation, quality improvement, and partnership-building. Eleven 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.

Community-based Health Care

In partnership with the DentaQuest Institute, **PORH** launched the Medical Oral Expanded (MORE) Care Collaborative in Pennsylvania to identify solutions to the oral health disparities that exist in rural communities. Oral health and primary care will be integrated into Rural Health Clinics in the state with an emphasis on the pediatric population. The program officially begins in September 2016 with learning collaboratives and practice site teams. Stay tuned for more!

Recognition of Leadership and Excellence

- 2015 National Rural Health Day Celebration
- 2015 Pennsylvania Rural Health Week Proclamation
- Recognizing Rural Health Leaders in Pennsylvania

Continuing Education and Training

- Assessing the Economic Impact of the Health Care Sector on the Local Economy
- Strengthening Primary Care Practices in Rural Hospitals and Communities
- Rural Health IT Challenges 2016
- Community and Public Health Conference
- Getting Ready for ICD-10 Conversion
- Primary Care Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Rural Health Clinics
- Rural Health Clinic Administration and Management Overview
- Grant Writing Skill Building Workshop
- Federal Grants Technical Assistance Workshop
- Pennsylvania Rural Legislative Briefing
- Ag Progress Days
- Swimming Pool Pesticide Applicator Training

Here’s what’s being said about our programs!

“This event provided a lot of connecting and gathering of ideas, information, insight, and connections for the future.”

“Excellent intervention strategies for helping underserved populations. Good variety of topics and presenters!”