

MCRH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January 2025
Volume 6, Issue 1

OUR MISSION

To coordinate, plan, and advocate for improved health for Michigan's rural residents and communities

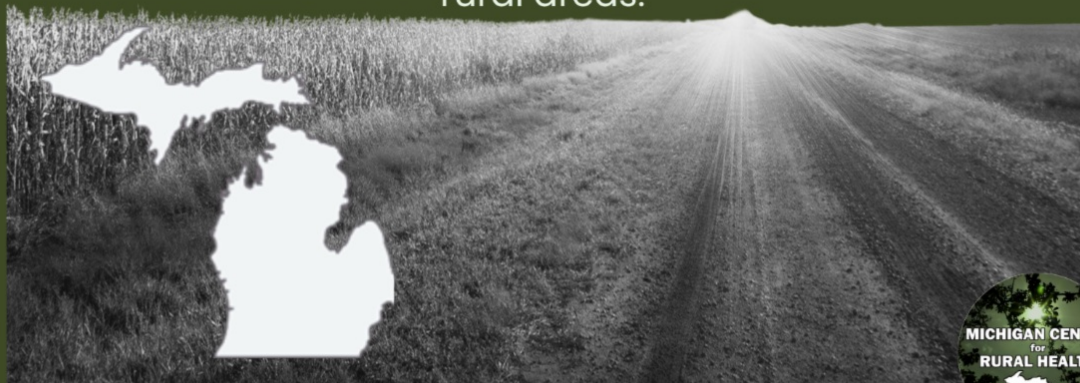


Nominate the 2025 Rural Health Professional of the Year

Nominations Are Being Accepted Until March 7

2025 RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Presented to individuals deserving of recognition for their efforts in carrying out exemplary work promoting health in rural areas.



Nominations Due March 7, 2025

Since 1994, the Michigan Center for Rural Health (MCRH) has celebrated an outstanding rural health professional for achievements they have directed to advance Michigan's rural health initiatives. The recipient is chosen through a

nomination process and will be celebrated with a special award during the 28th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference on April 24, 2025, at Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

“The Rural Health Professional of the Year Award” formally acknowledges someone deserving of recognition for their distinctive efforts to elevate rural health in Michigan.

The award is granted to an individual who has carried out exemplary work promoting health in rural areas, shown excellent leadership in improving health care services in rural Michigan, and made worthy contributions to improving the health of the people in rural Michigan.

If you know someone who fits this description – nominate them TODAY!

Please contact Laura Mispelon (laura.mispelon@affiliate.msu.edu) for more information about the Rural Health Professional of the Year nomination process.

[Rural Health Professional of the Year Nomination Form](#)

[Additional Information](#)

Partnership Opportunities Available For the 28th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference



Consider becoming an exhibiting or sponsorship partner at the 28th Annual Michigan Rural Health Conference being held April 24-25, 2025 at Soaring Eagle Resort in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

We offer three exhibitor packages to help you reach attendees. You can also sponsor our charging stations, conference app, or Thursday evening reception entertainment to promote your brand.

If you have additional questions regarding partnerships for the Michigan Rural Health Conference, please contact Jeanne Marriott (jeanne.marriott@affiliate.msu.edu).

[Full Partnership Prospectus](#)

[Partner Registration](#)

Apply Today to Participate in MCRH's New Community Based Palliative Care Project

Apply by February 16, 2025



APPLY TODAY!

CULTIVATING COMFORT: ENHANCING PALLIATIVE CARE IN RURAL MICHIGAN

A Project Opportunity
for Rural Communities
January 2025 – December 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE

 **February 16th, 2025**

ABOUT

A two-year grant, funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to start or strengthen palliative care services in five rural Michigan communities.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Rural Community teams must be multi-site and interdisciplinary, possible representatives from hospitals, clinics, home health agencies, nursing homes, hospice programs, and tribal health organizations.

Benefits of Participation

- ✓ Training and consultation to create a palliative care action plan.
- ✓ Educational and visioning workshop with community stakeholders.
- ✓ A support coordinator to assist with resources and implementation efforts.
- ✓ Individualized follow-up and support.



Amanda St. Martin, Hospital Programs Manager
amanda.saintmartin@affiliate.msu.edu



The Michigan Center for Rural Health, in partnership with Stratis Health—a leader in community-based palliative care programs—invites rural communities to apply for the *Cultivating Comfort: Enhancing Palliative Care in Rural Michigan* project. This two-year learning and planning initiative aims to help communities establish or strengthen palliative care services. The project will run from January 2025 through December 2026.

Eligible applicants must form multi-site, interdisciplinary teams, which may include representatives from hospitals, clinics, home health agencies, nursing homes, hospice programs, tribal health organizations, and other key stakeholders. Up to five

rural communities in Michigan will be selected to participate, with funding provided by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund.

A designated organization must apply on behalf of the community team, demonstrating a clear commitment from all participating providers and organizations. While there is no fee to participate, selected teams must dedicate staff and resources to the initiative.

We encourage communities ready to enhance palliative care services to take advantage of this opportunity. Join us in strengthening care for rural Michigan—applications are open now, and selected communities will be announced on March 14, 2025.

Additional Information & Application Materials

Exciting Mini-Grant Opportunities for Improving Health in Rural Communities



The American Heart Association is proud to announce two mini-grant programs designed to foster healthier lives in the rural Midwest. These grants are tailored to address pressing health challenges, from managing chronic diseases to tackling social drivers of health in innovative and sustainable ways.

The **Blood Pressure & Beyond Mini-Grant** offers up to \$2,000 to healthcare organizations for implementing evidence-based policies and practices that enhance chronic disease management. Applicants can use the funding to adopt new blood pressure measurement practices, develop collaborations addressing social drivers of health, or create innovative workflows connecting patients to community resources like nutrition assistance or blood pressure self-monitoring.

The **Meeting People Where They Are Mini-Grant** provides up to \$1,500 for community-based organizations committed to improving health in trusted local spaces, such as libraries, food pantries, and community centers. Projects may include empowering residents to monitor their own blood pressure, enhancing access to nutritious food, or improving cardiac emergency response planning.

Don't miss this chance to secure funding that supports impactful and sustainable health improvements in rural communities.

Applications for both grants are due soon.

Office for the Advancement of Telehealth Policy
Update



Recent **legislation** authorized an extension of many of the Medicare telehealth flexibilities. This includes:

- Waiving geographic and originating site requirements through March 31, 2025.
- Expanding practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services through March 31, 2025.
- Allowing Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics to serve as distant site providers through March 31, 2025.
- Delaying in-person requirements for tele-mental health services through April 1, 2025.
- Allowing audio-only telehealth through March 31, 2025.

Other recent updates include Medicare telehealth policies in the **Calendar Year 2025 Physician Fee Schedule** and a temporary extension for **prescribing controlled substances via telehealth**.

Additional Telehealth News & Resources

2025 Michigan State Loan Repayment Program Application Cycle Begins



The Michigan State Loan Repayment Program (MSLRP) helps employers recruit and retain primary medical, dental, and mental healthcare providers by providing loan repayment to those entering into MSLRP service obligations. MSLRP service obligations require participants to provide full-time primary healthcare services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (**HPSA**) at not-for-profit health clinics for two years.

MSLRP will assist those selected by providing up to \$300,000 in tax-free funds to repay their educational debt over a period of up to ten years. Participants will enter into consecutive two-year MSLRP service obligations requiring them to remain employed for a minimum of 40 hours per week for no less than 45 weeks per year at eligible nonprofit practice sites providing primary healthcare services to ambulatory populations.

The FY26 MSLRP Application Period begins February 3, 2025 and continues through April 30, 2025 for two-year contracts starting October 1, 2025. Northern Obstetric Service Providers, Genesee County Applicants, and Inpatient Pediatric

Providers including only Psychiatrists, Physician Assistants, and Nurse Practitioners remain the program's top priority this year. Additional eligibility information can be found [here](#).

Additional Information Regarding MSLRP

Collaborative Interagency Health in All Policies Workgroup Launched

In December, the Health in All Policies Interagency Workgroup relaunched with partners from thirteen departments, including representatives from the Michigan Poverty Task Force and the Racial Disparities Task Force. Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improving health outcomes, by integrating health and healthy equity into decision-making and policymaking across sectors. The objective of the workgroup is to foster a shared understanding of health and health equity across departments.

The workgroup convenes departmental leadership who will serve as key advisors on the strategic direction of initiatives and guide the state's adoption of a Health in All Policies approach to policymaking statewide. The workgroup will meet quarterly through 2025 and will focus on aligning departments, engaging interagency partners, and supporting effective collaboration. You can learn more about Health in All Policies in the link to the right.



Health in All Policies Interagency Workgroup

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: Insights into Michigan's Health



Understanding the health and well-being of Michiganders is a cornerstone of creating effective policies and programs to address social determinants of health (SDOH). One of the most valuable tools we use for this purpose is the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), an annual survey conducted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The BRFSS is the largest, continuously conducted health survey in the world and has been operating in Michigan since 1989. This telephone survey gathers critical data about the health behaviors, chronic conditions, and preventive health practices of adults across the state. The findings help inform decisions that shape public health interventions, programs, and funding allocations, directly impacting Michigan residents.

Data from the BRFSS allows MDHHS and its partners to identify and address the barriers that prevent Michiganders from achieving optimal health. For example, BRFSS data can help inform programs aimed at improving food security, addressing transportation barriers, and increasing access to preventive health services. These efforts align with Michigan's broader strategy to reduce health disparities and promote health equity.

The results of the BRFSS are available to researchers, policymakers, and community organizations through the MDHHS Chronic Disease Epidemiology Unit. These insights can guide the development of targeted initiatives to address community-specific needs.

Additional Information on MiBRFSS

NURSES Grant: Seeking Partners for the Spring 2025 Semester



The primary goal of the NURSES Grant is to provide community-based outpatient clinical experiences to BSN students. This initiative addresses the nursing shortage in rural Michigan by offering comprehensive student support. The grant covers mileage and lodging for clinical rotations and provides additional funding for paid internships. We are excited to welcome Rural Health Clinics to participate in this impactful program, developed in collaboration with the Michigan Primary Care Association.

If you are interested in learning more about the NURSES Grant opportunities, please contact Kyra Burkeen, Workforce Initiative Manager, at kyra.burkeen@affiliate.msu.edu

[NURSES Grant Internship Information](#)

[Additional Details on the NURSES Grant](#)

MBQIP Upcoming Deadlines, Reporting Reminders and Resources



MCRH continues to provide monthly Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) updates that will help improve the quality of care provided in Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs).

MBQIP Reporting Updates

MBQIP 2025 Assistance

Not sure where to start with reporting the [new MBQIP 2025 core measures](#)? The Data Submission Guides are a great place to start! These guides are designed to meet hospitals where they are at in their reporting journey, such as:

- Rural relevancy and buy-in
- Measure specifications
- Data collection and hospital implementation
- Data submission
- Understanding outcomes and quality improvement

MBQIP Data Submission Deadlines

Safe Use of Opioids-Concurrent Prescribing Deadline Extension

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has notified eligible hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAHs) participating in the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program and/or the Medicare Promoting Interoperability Program of a deadline extension. The deadline for the submission of electronic clinical quality measure (eCQM) data for the calendar year (CY) 2024 reporting period, pertaining to the fiscal year (FY) 2026 payment determination, has been extended from Thursday, February 28, 2025, to **Friday, March 14, 2025** at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time (PT).

January 31, 2025

- Emergency Department Transfer Communication (EDTC) Q4 2024 encounters (10/1/24-12/31/24) is due **January 31, 2025**. Connect with your State Flex Program for submission process details.

February 3, 2025

- Reporting Median time from ED arrival to ED departure (OP-18) Q3 2024 encounters (7/1/24-9/30/24) is due **February 3, 2025**. Submission is through the HQR Secure Portal-Outpatient. CART version 1.25.0. [Outpatient Quality Reporting Specifications version 17.0b](#). For questions on CART submission and requirement details connect with your State Flex Program.

March 1, 2025

- The Antibiotic Stewardship CDC NHSN Annual Facility Survey reflecting CY 2024 activity is due **March 1, 2025**. Submission is through NHSN.

March 14, 2025

- Safe Use of Opioids- Concurrent Prescribing CY 2024 encounters is due **March 14, 2025**. Specifications [CMS eCQM ID CMS506v6](#). Submission is through the HQR Secure Portal. Note: This measure is not currently being submitted for MBQIP but is available for reporting to CMS.

April 2, 2025

- Reporting Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems

Critical Access Hospital Quality Inventory and Assessment

Extensive resources (including a [document with all of the questions](#) and a [CAH Fact Sheet](#)) for the Assessment can be found [here](#). When you have collected the responses to the Assessment questions, please [go to the portal here to submit your answers](#). If you have any questions, please contact your state's Flex Program or the Flex Monitoring Team (lahrx074@umn.edu).

MBQIP Data Submission Deadlines are on the RQITA Resource Center website under Data Reporting, linked below.

[Data Reporting | Telligen](#)

For more on MBQIP, please contact Amanda St. Martin, Hospital Programs Manager, at amanda.saintmartin@affiliate.msu.edu.

January's Strength of Rural Spotlight: Michigan's Centers for Independent Living



Full Length Spotlight Story on Centers for Independent Living

Each month, the Michigan Center for Rural Health highlights people and organizations who uplift rural health through the Strength of Rural Spotlight Series. In January, MCRH spotlights Centers for Independent Living, and their impact, across Michigan.

Do you have a story to share? Know a rural organization or individual making a difference? Email Laura Mispelon, Social Drivers of Health Manager, at laura.mispelon@affiliate.msu.edu, and let us share your story!

Designated under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) have been supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities across the country since 1973. The first CIL in Michigan, the fourth in the nation, was established in Ann Arbor. Today, there are 15 CILs across the state with the mission of removing barriers for people with disabilities and promoting self-sufficiency, as well as creating inclusive and accessible communities.

The independent living philosophy focuses on the fundamental civil rights of all individuals with disabilities, advocating for their autonomy to make personal decisions, exert control over their lives, and experience equal participation and inclusion within society.

Upcoming MCRH Educational Events

Grand Rounds:

February 12, 2025, 12-1 PM EST

Special Populations Grand Rounds: Understanding Veteran Culture to Overcome Bias

Speaker: Adam McGuire, PhD and Emre Umucu, PhD

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Community Health Workers

February 18, 2025, 12-1 PM EST

Special Topics Grand Rounds: Effective Communications: How We Do It In Palliative Care

Speaker: John Mulder, PhD, FAAHPM, HMDC

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Community Health Workers

Project ECHO:

February 19, 2025, 12-1 PM EST

Infectious Disease ECHO: H5N1 High Risk Avian Influenza Update

Speaker: Dr. Peter Gulick, DO

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided for Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, and Nurses

EMS:

February 12, 2025, 6-7 PM EST

Medical Legal Rounds

Speaker: Scott Moore, Moore EMS Consulting

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided

March 12, 2025, 6-7 PM EST

MCI/ICS Overview

Speaker: Patrick Fox, MPA, NRP, EMSIC

[Register Here](#)

CE Provided

ADDITIONAL NEWS & RESOURCES:

RURAL EMERGENCY HOSPITALS:

[Thinking of Converting to REH? Key Observations from Financial Modeling](#)

[Updated Guidance for Rural Emergency Hospitals \(REHs\)](#)

CYBERSECURITY:

[AHA Helps Secure New Cybersecurity Resources from Microsoft and Google to Assist Rural Hospitals](#)

[Information on Microsoft Cybersecurity Program for Rural Hospitals // SIGN UP](#)

TELEHEALTH:

[Expanding Dental Care to Children Through Telehealth](#)

[Building Michigan's State Broadband Plan](#)

[VIDEO: How Broadband Access Positively Impacts the Growing American Workforce](#)

HOSPITAL PROGRAMS:

[CMS Updates Hospital Policies for Fiscal Year 2025 and Finalizes a New Payment Model for Select](#)

[Surgeries](#)

PRIMARY CARE:

[CMS Enhancing Coverage of Preventive Services Under the Affordable Care Act](#)

[CMS Finalizes New Model to Improve Access to Kidney Transplants](#)

[Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute \(PCORI\) Funding: Improving Mental and Behavioral Health – Letters of Intent January 14](#)

[CMS Announces New Lower Drug Prices for 2026 / Negotiated Pricing Fact Sheet](#)

[CMS Innovation in Behavioral Health Model](#)

[New Changes to Behavioral Health Intensive Outpatient Program Coverage in Medicare](#)

[Medicare Advantage Plan Growth in Rural America: Availability of Supplemental Benefits](#)

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH:

[Physician Engagement in Addressing Health-Related Social Needs and Burnout](#)

[A Toolkit for Developing Local Multisector Plans for Aging in Rural Areas](#)

[HHS Launches New "Food as Medicine" Resources](#)

[A Healthy Mouth for Every Body - A Look At The Connection Between Oral Health and Overall Health](#)

[Engaging Policymakers for Healthier Communities | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

[Healthy People 2030 Webinar Recording: Planning for Individual and Community Health](#)

[The U.S. Playbook to Address Social Determinants of Health](#)

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER:

[Take 10! Transforming Care for Women with Substance Use Disorders \(SUDs\) and Their Families Webinar Series](#)

[Opioid Settlement Resource Center - The Michigan Association of Counties \(micounties.org\)](#)

[Opioid Settlement Overview Table](#)

[Recovery-Ready Workplace Toolkit for Businesses](#)

[Model Recovery Ready Workplaces Act](#)

WORKFORCE:

[HRSA Nurse Faculty Loan Program – February 24](#)

[CMS Awards Third Round of Medicare-funded Residency Slots to Hospitals](#)

[Statewide Investment Helps Youth Explore Future Careers In Michigan](#)

[Mental Health in the Rural Workplace](#)

[Mobilizing Health Care Workforce via Telehealth](#)

[Well-being Interventions for Rural Health Professionals: A Scoping Review](#)

[Navigating Workplace Violence: Safety Strategies for Managing Agitation and Aggression](#)

VETERANS:

[Sign up for Veterans Health Updates](#)

[Assisting Veterans with Oral Care to Prevent Pneumonia](#)

[Military and Veteran Caregiver Network Offers Peer Support, Resource Library - VA News](#)

[Veterans, be aware of fraud schemes - Disability and Pension Benefits](#)

[Benefits & Loan Fraud](#)

[National Association of Community Health Centers Veterans Interest Group](#)

[Find Your County's Veteran Service Officers](#)

[Updated Veterans Educational Videos from the IREACH Program](#)

[Questions about VA healthcare? Attend the Veterans Healthcare Workgroup Monthly Meeting on the Second Monday of Every Month at 1 PM EST \(Zoom Link\)](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[Access to Justice Prize: Closing the Rural Justice Gap](#)

[Targeted Technical Assistance for Rural Hospitals Program](#)

[Associations Between Rural Hospital Closures and Acute and Post-Acute Care Access and Outcomes](#)

[Financial Performance Gaps Between Critical Access Hospitals and Other Acute Care Hospitals](#)

[Obstetric Care Access at Rural Hospitals in the United States](#)

[CMS Creates New Prescription Drug Resource Hub](#)

[Updated Catalog of Value-Based Initiatives for Rural Providers](#)

[New Birthing Friendly Hospital Designation Available on Care Compare Website](#)

[New Map Shows Rural Emergency Hospitals](#)

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