

Primary Care Office (PCO)

The PCO is federally funded and administered by the Iowa HHS to improve access to healthcare in rural and underserved communities. The PCO supports workforce recruitment and retention through tools like the Iowa Rural Healthcare Workforce Connection website, 3RNET job resource, and health professional shortage areas (HPSA). By aligning resources and data, the PCO helps address gaps in care and strengthens Iowa’s healthcare infrastructure.

Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP)

Using investments in hardware, software, education and training, SHIP provides funding to eligible small rural hospitals — those with 49 or fewer beds — to meet value-based payment and care goals, provide access to become or join accountable care organizations, and offer shared savings programs for prospective payment systems. Administered by Iowa HHS and funded through HRSA, this program strengthens rural healthcare infrastructure and enhances care delivery in rural communities.

State Office of Rural Health (SORH)

The SORH is federally funded and administered by Iowa HHS to support rural communities in addressing critical healthcare challenges. The SORH provides technical assistance, provides rural health outreach, coordinates



statewide efforts, and disseminates data and resources to strengthen healthcare infrastructure. By fostering collaboration among providers, organizations, and policymakers, the program helps improve access to quality care in Iowa’s rural areas.

Volunteer Health Care Provider Program (VHCPP)

The VHCPP strives to increase volunteerism of competent health care professionals by offering protection to eligible volunteer health care providers and eligible clinics providing free health care services. This program supports the work of free clinics across the state, providing care to the most vulnerable of Iowa’s population.



For more information, go to www.fciowa.org/.

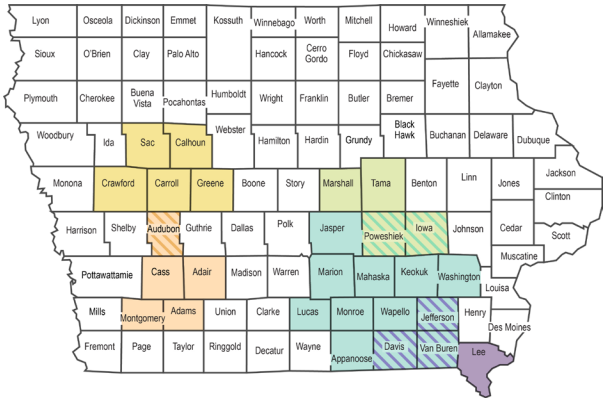
Rural and Community Health Programs & Opportunities

Who We Are:

The Rural and Community Health Bureau programs promote access to quality healthcare for all Iowans through healthcare infrastructure planning and development, systems building and addressing barriers affecting healthcare delivery.



Centers of Excellence



- Cass Health:** Adams, Adair, Audubon, Cass, Montgomery
- Grinnell Regional Medical Center:** Iowa, Marshall, Poweshiek, Tama
- Mahaska Health:** Jefferson, Appanoose, Davis, Iowa, Jasper, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Marion, Monroe, Poweshiek, Van Buren, Wapello, Washington
- St. Anthony Regional Hospital:** Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Sac
- Van Buren County Hospital:** Van Buren, Davis, Jefferson, Lee

Centers of Excellence are advanced care delivery models that focus on specific medical specialties, offering comprehensive services and treatments tailored to those areas. These centers play a critical role in expanding access to high-quality specialty care, particularly in rural regions where such services are often limited or unavailable. Currently, five Centers of Excellence operate across Iowa, with promising opportunities to replicate and expand this model statewide to further enhance regional healthcare access.

Direct Care Worker (DCW) Initiative

DCWs are essential members of the healthcare workforce, providing hands-on support to individuals managing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities. This state-funded initiative supports DCWs through outreach and engagement activities, education and training, as well as strategic planning.

Community Health Worker (CHW) Initiative

CHWs are frontline public health professionals who serve as trusted liaisons between healthcare systems and the communities they represent. Recognizing the importance of this workforce, the Iowa HHS has prioritized the training and development of CHWs to enhance their reach and impact across the state.

In addition to workforce expansion efforts, Iowa HHS leads the coordination of the Iowa CHW Alliance — a collaborative initiative that offers strategic guidance, educational resources, and capacity-building support. The Alliance is dedicated to strengthening Iowa's CHW network, fostering meaningful stakeholder engagement, and advancing sustainable, long-term strategies to ensure the continued growth and effectiveness of CHW programs statewide.

Iowa Community Corps

The Iowa Community Corps is a statewide AmeriCorps initiative that



places members at community-based organizations to support capacity-building efforts. Through strategic service placements, members help strengthen local infrastructure, expand organizational reach, and enhance the delivery of vital programs and services across Iowa communities.

Iowa Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement Initiative

The Iowa Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement Initiative leverages insights from local communities and key healthcare workforce stakeholders to develop targeted, actionable strategies aimed at strengthening Iowa's healthcare workforce. By aligning statewide priorities with grassroots input, the plan seeks to address workforce shortages, improve access to care in rural areas, and support sustainable healthcare delivery across the state.

Iowa Prescription Drug Donation Repository (SafeNetRx)

Iowa HHS supports SafeNetRx, a program that transforms discarded medications into lifesaving care — rescuing medicine that facilities would commonly destroy and delivering it to patients who need it most, solving waste and access in a single step.



For more information, go to safenetrx.org.

J-1 Visa Waiver (Conrad 30) Program

The J-1 Visa Waiver Program allows Iowa to recommend up to 30 international medical graduates (IMGs) each year for a waiver of the J-1 visa requirement to return to their home country for two years. To receive a waiver, IMGs must serve in health workforce shortage area for three years.

Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program

The Flex Program supports Critical Access Hospitals in improving healthcare quality, financial performance, operational efficiency, and population health outcomes in rural communities. Administered by Iowa HHS and funded through Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the program offers technical assistance, training, and resources tailored to each hospital's needs.



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Provider Training

Iowa HHS supports the delivery of NAMI Provider Training to eligible students of higher education. The training is designed to help healthcare professionals better understand the lived experiences of individuals with mental health conditions and their families. Participants gain deeper insight into the emotional and practical realities of mental illness, enhancing their ability to support recovery and resilience.

Physician National Interest Waiver (PNIW) Program

A PNIW allows foreign national physicians to bypass the standard job offer and labor certification requirements when applying for permanent residency, provided they commit to working full-time in healthcare workforce shortage areas. Physicians must serve for at least five years in a qualifying area or practice site, and a state public health department must attest that their work is in the public interest.