



# NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Rural Health

## NC Office of Rural Health Quarterly Newsletter

August 2025

Welcome to the Service Area Teams' Quarterly Newsletter from the North Carolina Office of Rural Health (ORH).

ORH uses Service Area Teams (SATs) to facilitate collaboration across programs and provide strategic support to grantees and partners across the state. SATs are comprised of members from all programs within ORH including Community Health, Medication Assistance, Rural Hospital Assistance, Rural Health Operations, Farmworker Health, Placement Services, Health Information Technology and Telehealth, Analytics & Innovations, and Business and Contracts. We would love to hear from you! If you have a news story, comments or questions for the next newsletter contact [Leslie Wolcott](#) or [Justin Kearley](#).

### ORH Staff News



Rural Health Operations team members **Kimberly McNeil and Justin Kearley** joined many of their colleagues in completing their Certification in North Carolina Contract Management! When you see these credentials, it means the state employee has learned best practices in contract administration and negotiation to ensure efficient and effective government operations.

### ORH News and Deadlines

#### North Carolina to Apply for the Rural Health Transformation Program

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced it will begin preparing to submit its application to receive funding from the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). The program is part of H.R. 1, a federal bill signed into law by President Trump in July to address rural health concerns due to federal cuts to the Medicaid program. NCDHHS has created a website with a link for providers to give feedback on what should be considered for North Carolina's application. NCDHHS will host several opportunities for partner organizations to provide input for the state's RHTP application in the coming months. [Read the full Press release here.](#)

### Grant Opportunities

#### Wave 4 Now Open: NC DHHS Telehealth Infrastructure Grant –

Apply by August 31!

The North Carolina Department of Health



**Renee Clark wins gold in pickleball!**  
**Renee Clark, Rural Hospital Assistance Program, Telepsychiatry and Rural Hospital Specialist, is not just great at working with our Flex, SHIP and NC-STeP programs, she's also a recovering basketball player and current pickleball star.** Pictured, she and her doubles partner won gold at The Beat the Heat Tournament in Wake Forest, NC. Collaboration and teamwork are something that improve not only Renee's pickleball game, but also her work here at ORH. Athletes naturally know how to "pass the ball" in group projects — sharing credit and responsibility. Renee holds a bachelor's and master's degree in social work and has worked at ORH since 2018. To learn more about Renee's work visit [ncdhhs.gov/divisions/office-rural-health/office-rural-health-programs/north-carolina-rural-hospital-program](https://ncdhhs.gov/divisions/office-rural-health/office-rural-health-programs/north-carolina-rural-hospital-program).

## Regional News and Highlights

### Eastern SAT News and Highlights



**ORH Joins Pamlico County as They Gather Momentum for Rural Health Innovation**

and Human Services (NC DHHS) is pleased to announce the opening of Wave 4 of the Telehealth Infrastructure Grant Request for Applications (RFA), effective July 21, 2025.

This grant opportunity aims to strengthen and expand telehealth services in rural areas across North Carolina, with awards of up to \$250,000 per eligible organization. Funding Priority:

This wave gives preference to independent primary care and OB/GYN providers, so we encourage eligible practices to apply.

Key Dates:

- Launch Date: July 21, 2025
- Application Deadline: August 31, 2025

For full details and to apply, visit:

### **Telehealth Infrastructure Grant Program (Wave 4) | NCDHHS**

We strongly encourage early submission and invite you to share this opportunity with other providers and partners.

Together, we can expand access to high-quality telehealth care throughout North Carolina.

### **Request for Applications - Strong Minds, Strong Communities: Expanding Mental Health Access**

The NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is seeking applications from qualified community-based organizations across North Carolina. Become an implementation site for the "Strong Minds, Strong Communities" mental health intervention and help expand access to culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for underserved populations. Selected organizations can receive up to \$166,950 in year one funding to recruit, hire and manage a team of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and a licensed clinical supervisor. This is an opportunity to expand your organization's mental health programming, grow the CHW workforce and significantly increase access to culturally competent, evidence-based mental health care for underserved populations, especially racial/ethnic and linguistic minority groups, and those in rural areas.

Through this program, CHWs are trained in mental health knowledge and skills. Strong Minds equips CHWs with essential tools such as cognitive behavioral therapy exercises, motivational interviewing and mindfulness techniques. This training aims to enhance mental health access in marginalized communities by empowering CHWs to deliver effective, evidence-based

On June 25, 2025, the NC Office of Rural Health participated in the inaugural session of the Pamlico County Health and Wellness Conference Series, hosted at the new Pamlico County Library in Bayboro. Sponsored by the local nonprofit Imagine Pamlico, the series brought together local leadership, health care providers, and state and academic partners to build a shared vision for a healthier, more resilient rural future.

The June 25 convening focused on assessing current health services, identifying gaps, and laying the foundation for an integrated community-centered health and wellness model. Sessions throughout the day included insights from state and local experts such as Dr. Sharon Stephenson, Dr. Diana Silimperi, Lynn Hardison, RN, and Dr. Eugene Elliott. ORH was represented by Dr. Sebastian Gimenez, who also conducted a Telehealth Infrastructure Grant (TIG) site visit with the Pamlico County Health Department, a current ORH grantee. The Hope Clinic, another Pamlico-based TIG grantee, was highlighted during discussions as a model for innovative community-based care.

Dr. Gimenez contributed to the discussions by sharing success stories from the TIG program and recent economic analysis showing the potential local impact of expanding specialty services within the county. As cited in a recent [New Bern Sun Journal article](#), the broader goal of the series is to design a locally grounded, scalable model for wellness in rural eastern North Carolina.

The journey concluded with a site visit to the Pamlico County Health Department, where ORH staff reviewed the department's progress under the TIG program.

For more information on the TIG program or ORH initiatives in rural health innovation, please contact the ORH HITT team.

[\[BP1\]](#)Would add the link here



interventions directly within the communities.

Two organizations will be selected during this application cycle. The award period is Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2026, with an annual renewal option pending funding availability. **Applications Due:** Sept. 1, 2025

**Request for Applications:** [Download RFA](#)

**Submit an Application:** [Download More Information:](#) [Visit website](#)

**Questions:** [Email Claire Poindexter](#)

### **UNC LCCC COE Community Funding Program — next round!**

This round focuses on planning or implementing effective cancer screening programs.

The UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Office of Community Outreach and Engagement is offering funding up to \$20,000 to plan and implement evidence-based interventions for cancer screening in your community. In addition to funding, awardees will receive technical assistance and training on how to successfully complete their proposed work.

**FOR DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINK GO TO:**

[unclineberger.org/community-outreach/working-with-us-2/community-pilot-funding-program/](https://unclineberger.org/community-outreach/working-with-us-2/community-pilot-funding-program/)

### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Submit intent to apply via email (REQUIRED) by Aug. 14, 2025, to [CPFP@unc.edu](mailto:CPFP@unc.edu)** (note this deadline has passed, but a reminder that Applications are due October 2, 2025)

**Questions?** Email Veronica Carlisle ([veronica\\_carlisle@med.unc.edu](mailto:veronica_carlisle@med.unc.edu)) with Community Pilot Program in the subject line.

## **Events**

### **2025 ORH and CAH Regional Meetings**

## Samaritan Health Center Provides Nutrition Classes, Using Local & Seasonal Goods

Samaritan Health Center, a Free & Charitable Clinic in Durham County that has some great partnerships with a variety of agencies to offer patients wrap around care. One of their many services is nutrition classes with local and seasonal produce—as pictured below. They've also earned extensive coverage in Spanish language media in NC.

Spanish only - from Spanish language media

- **QuePasa**
- **Enlace Latino**
- **Revista Latina**
- **Univision**



## South Central SAT News and Highlights

### Black River Health Services and Manos Unidas Relaunch Mobile Outreach



Black River Health Services and their farmworker health program, Manos Unidas, successfully relaunched their medical mobile unit outreach program in June 2025. This was made possible through their partnership with Novant Health and the leadership of Dr. Bailey Minish and Manos Unidas' Outreach Director David Gasca. The mobile unit is additionally supported by the bilingual farmworker health outreach team and a volunteer nurse. Novant has provided the unit and driver time. The unit has gone out once per month since launching with plans to increase frequency. The team has reached farmworker camps and patients in Sampson, Bladen and Pender counties thus far. Mobile unit services are

The Rural Hospital Program administers two federal grants on behalf of Small Rural and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) called the Rural Medicare Flexibility Program, or Flex, and the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP). These grants help small rural and critical access hospitals improve their viability, quality of services and integration with the rest of the health care system. Hospitals are crucial for our rural communities, and those communities include many individuals and organizations that are connected to the hospitals. Many connected organizations are served by ORH, like our State Designated Rural Health Centers, CMS Rural Health Clinics and Community Health Grantees.

Thus a number of staff from teams across ORH, in partnership with the North Carolina Healthcare Foundation, traveled to Angel Medical Center in Franklin, Bertie Cooperative Extension in Windsor and Campbell University in Lillington for our regional meetings. The meetings covered upcoming policy changes, quality in health care, workforce development and whole-person care. Bringing together traditional health care partners with community members allowed each region to see what resources and connections they have available in order to ensure they can work together to deliver the best possible care. If you have any questions or would like to host next year's CAH Regional Meetings, please reach out to Renee Clark at [renee.clark@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:renee.clark@dhhs.nc.gov).

## Training Opportunities

incredibly valuable for NC's agricultural workers as they often live in isolated areas without access to transportation while working in roles with high occupational hazards and health risks.

## Western SAT News and

### Highlights:

National Rural Health Day

Save the date for National Rural Health Day and the Western Regional Meeting! Nov 20, 2025, MAHEC, Asheville, NC



**Renew NC** is North Carolina's long-term disaster recovery effort, committed to rebuilding impacted communities stronger so they are more resilient to future storms. The Renew NC Single-Family Housing Program is a centralized housing rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement program that will prioritize low-to-moderate income families with seniors aged 62 and older, children and/or disabled household members impacted by Hurricane Helene. The program has received at least 750 applications since its announcement.

**The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) will offer a free 60-hour certification training** to prepare community members as Recovery Coach Professionals, through an online program beginning in August and running into October.

The training is a collaboration between the county office, Recovery Friendly Workplace Program and Piedmont Triad Workforce Development Board. The training is open to everyone — people in recovery, family members, friends, allies and any community member interested in helping others on their recovery journey. Community members interested in the training should contact Edwards at [edwardsj@co.surry.nc.us](mailto:edwardsj@co.surry.nc.us) to discuss training expectations, access the

## Grant Writing 101 For Local Health Departments – open to all

### Description:

**Grant Writing 101** is a beginner level workshop for local health department staff focusing on the fundamentals of writing grants and other funding proposals.

Date and Time:

Thursday, Sept. 4, 2025

9 a.m. - Noon

Faculty:

Dawn Morrison, MPH

John W. Wallace, PhD, MSPH

Webinar Information:

This webinar will be broadcast with Zoom. Instructions to join the webinar will be emailed prior to the event. You can test your computer by going to the [Zoom Test Page](#).

### [Sweet Success: A Deeper Look at Diabetes in Primary Care](#)

Complete one or both of the interactive, self-paced eLearning modules on your computer or mobile device. Earn free contact hours!

**PART 1:** Designed to enable the practice staff to support the person with Type 2 Diabetes, this course uses case studies of familiar patients seen in primary care. Practical office-based clinical assessment and patient education concepts are presented. Basic pharmacology of diabetes drugs, laboratory tests used to assess and monitor the disease, and common physical exam findings are covered. Register online at [nwahec.org/75805](http://nwahec.org/75805).

PART 2: Managing diabetes requires much more than taking medicine and visiting the primary care provider's office — lifestyle changes at the heart of a person's very self are needed.

Part 2 builds on the case study presented in Part 1, so you are encouraged (but not required) to take both modules. Register online at [nwahec.org/75808](http://nwahec.org/75808).

There is no charge for either online course. Course registration is generously supported by the Division of Health Benefits.

### **Clinical Precepting Online Series**

Free online courses from Piedmont AHEC

These courses are for an interprofessional audience of clinical preceptors who work with students, residents, or other advanced learners

application link and learn more about this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those seeking recovery.

## Resources

### Get the NC Guide on Prevention and Management of Diabetes:

<https://www.diabetesnc.com/guide>

### Messaging about 988 and other helplines

**988 is for everyone.**

[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline | NCDHHS](#)

Anyone can call, chat or text 988. Crisis is individual and you can call for any reason. 988 can help you find additional resources that you or your family may need. It is free and confidential.

### Community Crisis Centers

Community crisis centers are safe places where you can get help without going to the emergency room. They offer immediate help with mental health needs and treatment for alcohol or drugs. Most are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You don't need an appointment. Crisis centers take Medicaid but you don't need insurance to get care at one.

[North Carolina Community Crisis Centers | NCDHHS](#) (searchable maps to find the nearest to you).

### Somethings.com

This mentoring program is free for all North Carolinians. Somethings connects teens with a Certified Peer Specialist Mentor and clinical provider to help every teen feel their best.

[Somethings® - Connecting Teens with Certified Peer Specialist Mentors](#)

*[Super cool note: At the DSS Director conference, one of the Directors shared that her daughter used Somethings and found it truly helpful. She shares it now with all the children in their custody.]*

### Suicide Prevention Resources

[Suicide Prevention Resources | NCDHHS](#)

who are completing academic or program requirements in a clinical environment. Participants may complete any combination of courses.

### Available Courses:

Click each link below to view the course description page and to register online.

- [Clinical Precepting 101: The Role of the Clinical Preceptor, Host Clinical Site, and Legal Considerations](#); 2.0 Contact Hours
- [Clinical Precepting 102: Planning for and Providing Clinical Learning Experiences](#); 1.50 Contact Hours
- [Clinical Precepting 103: Communication, Learner Self-Assessment and Preceptor Feedback](#); 1.50 Contact Hours
- [Clinical Precepting 104: Managing Difficult Situations in the Clinical Learning Environment](#); 1.5 Contact Hours
- [Clinical Precepting: Meeting the Standard: Applying Federal Accessibility Law in Clinical Education and Training\[BP2\]](#) ; 1.0 Contact Hours

## About ORH

**We would love to hear from you! If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for specific programs within our office, please feel free to contact the Operations Specialist facilitating your region's SAT below!**

ORH [Programs\[DB1\]](#) : Updated Information about who we are and what we do!  
[Provider Recruitment and Placement Program](#) provides recruitment efforts for medical, dental and psychiatric health professionals to North Carolina's rural and underserved areas and offers incentives to eligible providers.

[Provider Recruitment and Placement Program Profile](#)

[Rural Health Operations Program](#)

creates access to primary health care for vulnerable populations by supporting state designated rural health centers.

[Rural Health Operations Program Profile](#)

[Community Health Program](#) supports the primary care safety net system to increase access to primary care for vulnerable populations.

[Community Health Program Profile](#)

[NC Farmworker Health Program](#) provides medical, dental and enabling services to members of the North Carolina agricultural labor force and their families.

[NC Farmworker Health Program Profile](#)

[NC Rural Hospital Assistance Program](#) funds projects for the benefit of all critical access hospitals and eligible small rural hospitals in NC.

[NC Rural Hospital Program Profile](#)

[Medication Assistance Program](#) provides free and low-cost medications donated by pharmaceutical manufacturers to patients who cannot afford them.

[Medication Assistance Program Profile](#)

[Statewide Telepsychiatry Program](#) supports the psychiatric evaluation of patients through videoconferencing technology in emergency departments.

[Statewide Telepsychiatry Program Profile](#)

[Analytics and Innovations Program](#) assists ORH programs and grantees with using data and leveraging technologies to improve monitoring, evaluation efforts and innovative strategies.

[Health Professional Shortage Area Program Profile](#)

[Community Health Worker Program Profile](#)

[Rural Health Information Technology and Telehealth Program](#) works directly with the North Carolina Safety Net to assess needs and provide technical assistance throughout the state to improve the use of Electronic Health Record Systems.

[Rural Health Information Program Profile](#)

**SAT Facilitator Contact Information**

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[DB1] Create title that these are new and updated profiles or maybe just highlight the Office

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