

RHTP TOWN HALL – JANUARY 2026

North Carolina Rural Health Transformation Program (NCRHTP)

**Debra Farrington
Deputy Secretary for Health, North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services**

January 16, 2026

Housekeeping

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Live chat



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Open panel

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Housekeeping

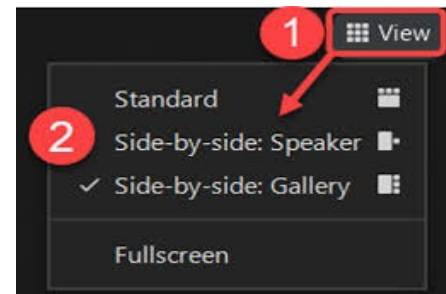
American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Closed-Captioning via Zoom.

- ASL Interpreters and Closed-Captioning options will be available for today's event.
- For closed-captioning options select the "Closed Caption" feature located on your control panel.



Adjusting Video Layout and Screen View.

- Select the "View" feature located in the top-right hand corner of your screen.



A copy of today's slide deck and recording will be available on our website at ncdhhs.gov/rhttp.

Welcome

Thank you for joining us for today's NC Rural Health Transformation Program Town Hall

Agenda:

- Opening remarks
- Overview of NCRHTP
- Panel discussion
- Q&A

**Debra
Farrington,**
Deputy Secretary
for Health,
North Carolina
Department of Health
and Human Services



**Dr. Devdutta
Sangvai,**
Secretary,
North Carolina
Department of
Health and Human
Services



Josh Stein,
Governor,
North Carolina



Purpose of Today's Town Hall

- Overview of NC's Rural Health Transformation Program (NCRHTP) award
- Highlights of NC's RHTP initiatives and governance
- Looking ahead and important next steps
- Panel discussion and Q&A

North Carolina Rural Health Transformation Program
CMS-RHT-26-001
North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services | Secretary Devdutta Sasaguri

North Carolina awarded \$213 Million for Rural Health Transformation Program
December 31, 2025 by WWAY News

Rural Healthcare

(Photo: PxHere / MGN)

RALEIGH, NC (News Release) — The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today [awarded](#) North Carolina \$213 million through the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). These funds will improve health care access for rural North Carolinians. In November, North Carolina [submitted its application](#) for these funds with [bipartisan support](#) from the state's congressional delegation. These funds are awarded for 2026, and North Carolina will be eligible for more funding each year for the next five years.

The Rural Health Transformation Fund is a unique, \$213M+ opportunity to transform rural health in North Carolina

Rural Health Challenges in North Carolina at-a-glance



28.4% of North Carolinians are rural (nearly 3 million people).



Chronic, perinatal, & mental health needs i.e., 17% higher diabetes rate compared to urban areas; 90 counties are mental health shortage areas; maternal care deserts and higher pregnancy-related mortality; higher infant death rates



Workforce shortages where 24 counties lack adequate primary care; shortages in behavioral health, oral health and EMS are acute.



Financial instability i.e., 12 rural hospitals have closed or converted since 2006 limiting access to emergency and inpatient care.

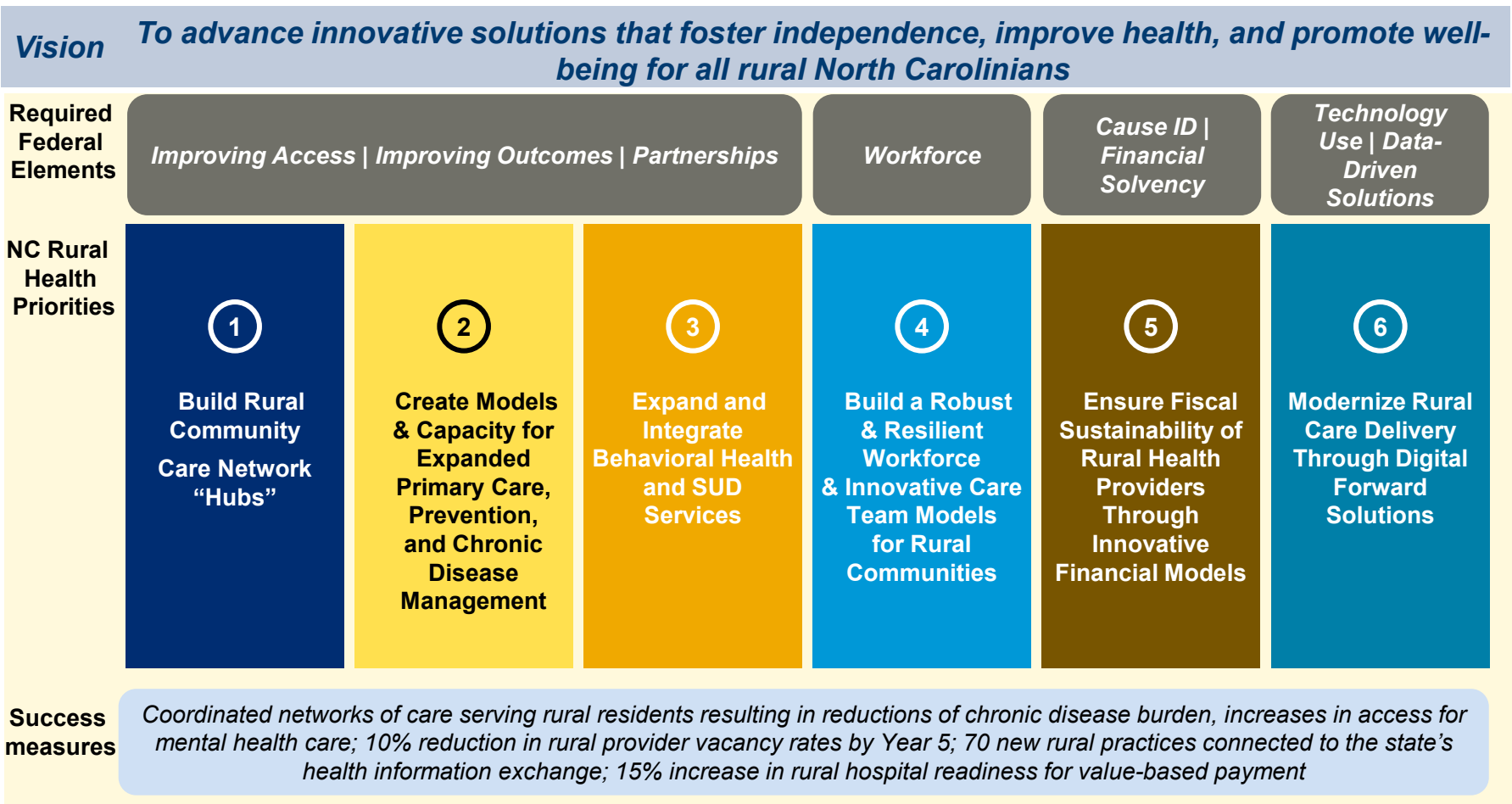


Digital divide including broadband gaps and low digital literacy limit telehealth and care coordination.

Guiding Principles for NCRHTP Implementation

- ✓ **Maximize resources for rural health**
- ✓ **Build out details on high level approaches**
- ✓ **Achieve quick wins**
- ✓ **Plan for long-term sustainability**
- ✓ **Prioritize measurable, community-level impact**
- ✓ **Employ flexible and agile approach; pivot when needed**
- ✓ **Communicate transparently and with integrity**

Six Initiatives Work Together to Achieve NCRHTP Goals



Timeline and Milestones for Project Year 2026*

January – March 2026

- Submit revised budget to CMS by January 30 for \$213M Year 1 funding.
- Establish statewide program management and governance structures.
- Release Request for Applications (RFA) for NC ROOTS Hub Lead entities.

April – October 2026

- Conduct award process for regional hubs; Select and onboard Regional Hub Lead entities; Regional hubs develop action plans and local governance.
- Expand reach of existing statewide efforts aligned with NCRHTP.
 - Expanded behavioral health/SUD services
 - Expanded perinatal mental health support
 - Increased HIE participation, digital literacy efforts, & Rural Health Innovation Fund
 - Workforce initiatives launched
- Submit first annual progress report to CMS.
- Maintain continuous engagement with stakeholders and CMS to monitor success and progress toward goals.

Note: Year-two funding is conditional upon Year-one success.

** Assuming timely approvals from CMS and state administrative process, follows federal fiscal year*

Immediate Next Steps

- **DHHS focus on Implementation activities**
 - Revise Implementation Plan
 - Build out requirements for prioritized initiatives/activities (Quick wins)
- **Continued stakeholder communication and engagement**
 - Use existing engagements to (i.e., information through divisions, conferences, and community partner engagements)
 - Design and implement advisory committee structure
 - Initiate DHHS standard communication to partners/vendors to protect procurement/potential Conflict of interest
- **How you can get involved**
 - Visit our website to obtain information including upcoming procurements and awards (e.g., NC ROOTS Lead Entity application process)
 - Respond to RFAs or other requests for information when posted
 - Engage with ROOTS Hubs as partners once selected
 - Participate in existing advisory groups, councils and meetings i.e. Side by Side to get information

Thank You!

Thank you for your continued contributions during the application and now to ensure the success of NCRHTP for our state!

We'll now begin our Q&A portion with our panelists.

**Learn more, including links to FAQs, Town Hall recording,
and other NC award information:
ncdhhs.gov/rhtp**

Meet Our Panel



**Debra
Farrington
(Moderator)**
*NCDHHS
Deputy
Secretary for
Health*



**Dr. Larry
Greenblatt**
*NCDHHS State
Health Director
and Chief
Medical Officer*



**Maggie
Sauer**
*NCDHHS
Director
Office of
Rural Health*



Kelly Crosbie
*NCDHHS Director
Division of Mental
Health,
Developmental
Disabilities and
Substance Use
Disorders*