

2020-2021 Year-End Report

**OREGON**

**OFFICE**

**OF RURAL**

**HEALTH**

IMPROVING THE QUALITY, AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HEALTH CARE FOR RURAL OREGONIANS



# About the Oregon Office of Rural Health

The Oregon Office of Rural Health (ORH) has been the focal point for rural and frontier health in Oregon since 1979. Supported by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, the state of Oregon and Oregon Health & Science University, ORH offers assistance to hospitals, clinics and communities to strengthen the rural and frontier health care delivery system.

Oregon's rural communities and health care delivery system were heavily impacted by COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021. ORH staff was unable to travel but worked to meet the needs of our communities by adapting to virtual technical assistance.

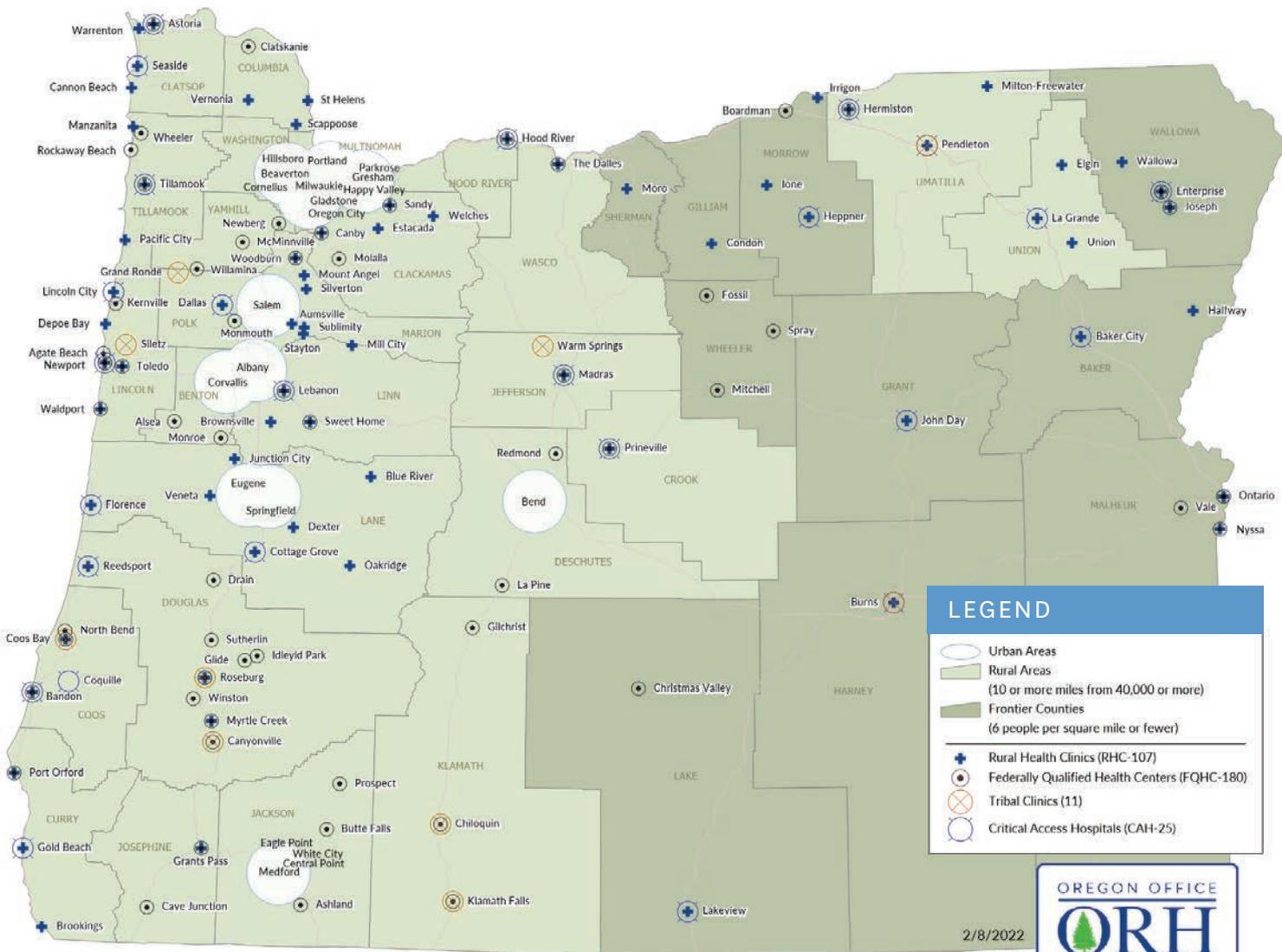
**OUR MISSION** *To improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care for rural Oregonians.*



# What Is Considered Rural and Frontier?

*34.9% of Oregon's population lives in rural and frontier communities*

The Oregon Office of Rural Health defines rural as all geographic areas in Oregon 10 or more miles from the centroid of a population center of 40,000 people or more. Frontier counties are defined as those with six or fewer people per square mile. Ten of Oregon's 36 counties are frontier.



## OREGON RURAL HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

For more information on what is considered rural and frontier, or to determine if your community is rural or frontier, visit our website:  
[www.ohsu.edu/orh](http://www.ohsu.edu/orh).



ORH's Work Is Aligned Under the Following Service Areas:



## FIELD SERVICES

### DATA & ANALYSIS

ORH provides data and analysis about rural and frontier health to providers, elected officials, government agencies, educators and members of the public.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ORH offers technical assistance to rural and frontier communities and health care facilities to strengthen their health care delivery systems.

## WORKFORCE SERVICES

### PROVIDER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

ORH works with rural practice sites to help them recruit and retain practitioners, and with practitioner candidates to help them find suitable rural and frontier Oregon practice sites.

### PROVIDER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

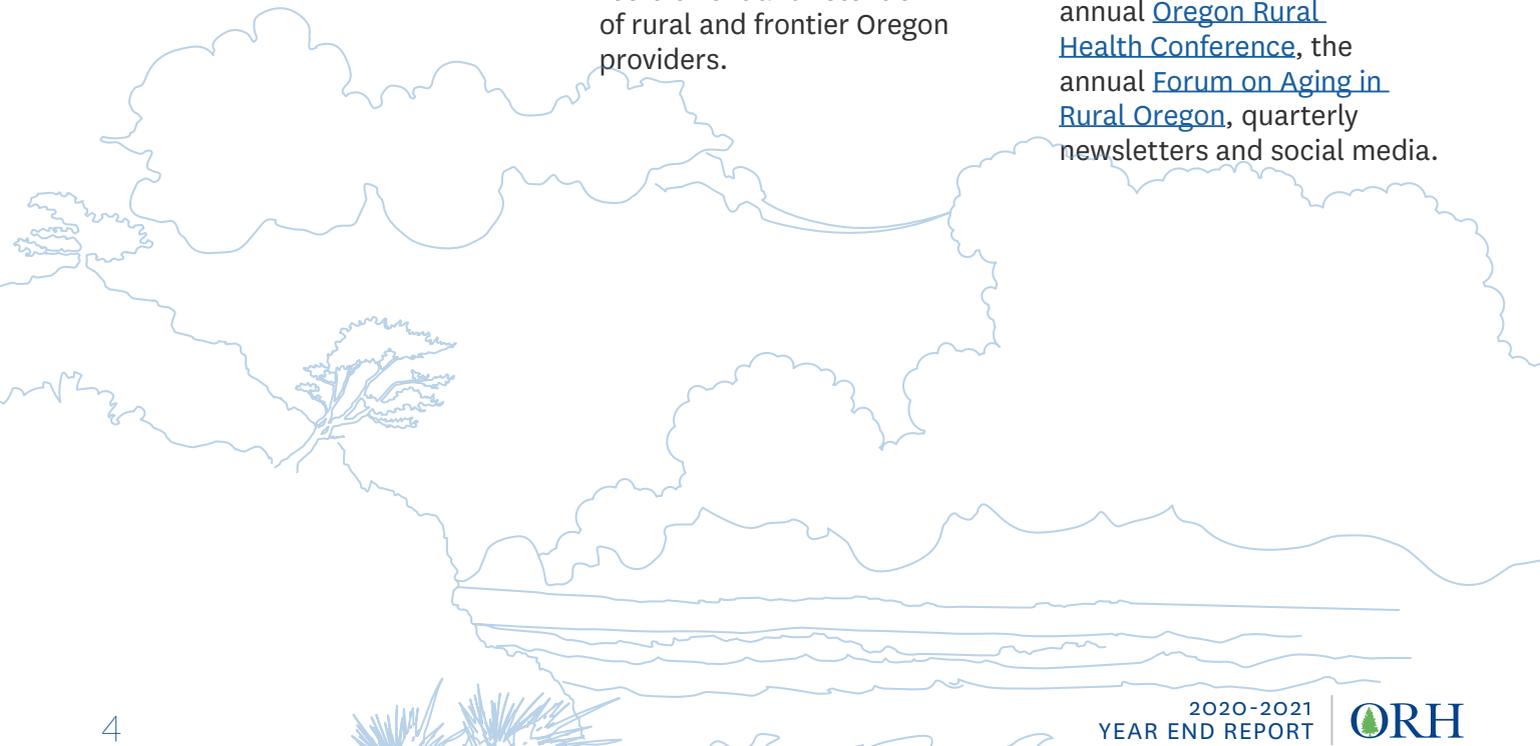
ORH manages loan repayment, loan forgiveness, tax credits and malpractice subsidy programs to incentivize the recruitment and retention of rural and frontier Oregon providers.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

The state legislature has charged ORH with “coordinating” the provision of health care to rural Oregonians and developing legislative proposals to benefit the health of rural Oregonians.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

ORH keeps its constituents informed through the annual [Oregon Rural Health Conference](#), the annual [Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon](#), quarterly newsletters and social media.

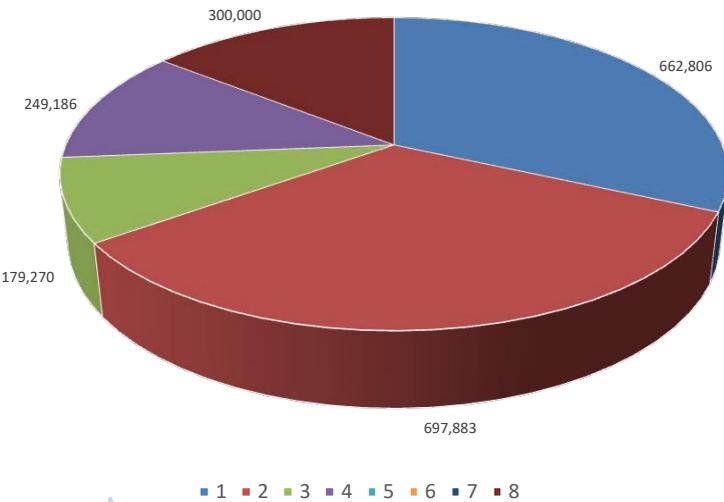


# Funding Sources

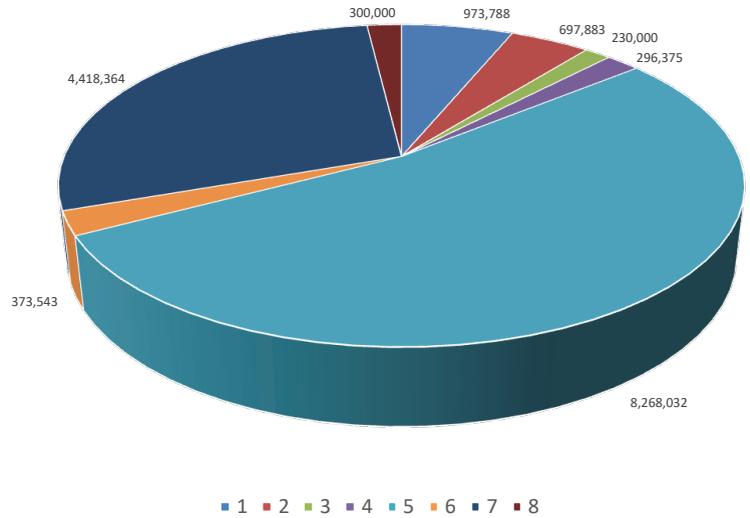
The 2020 and 2021 budgets for the Oregon Office of Rural Health were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional federal and state funds became available to support rural health facilities.

	FY 2020	FY 2021
State/OHSU Support	\$662,806	\$937,788
Federal Grants		
SORH	\$179,270 (#3)	\$230,000 (#3)
Flex	\$697,883 (#2)	\$697,883 (#2)
SLRP	\$300,000 (#8)	\$300,000 (#8)
SHIP (regular)	\$249,186 (passed directly to facilities) (#4)	\$296,375 (passed directly to facilities) (#4)
SHIP (COVID)		\$8,268,032 (passed directly to facilities) (#5)
COVID Testing Funds		\$373,543 (#6)
Long Term Care COVID Testing		\$4,418,364 (#1)

FY 20



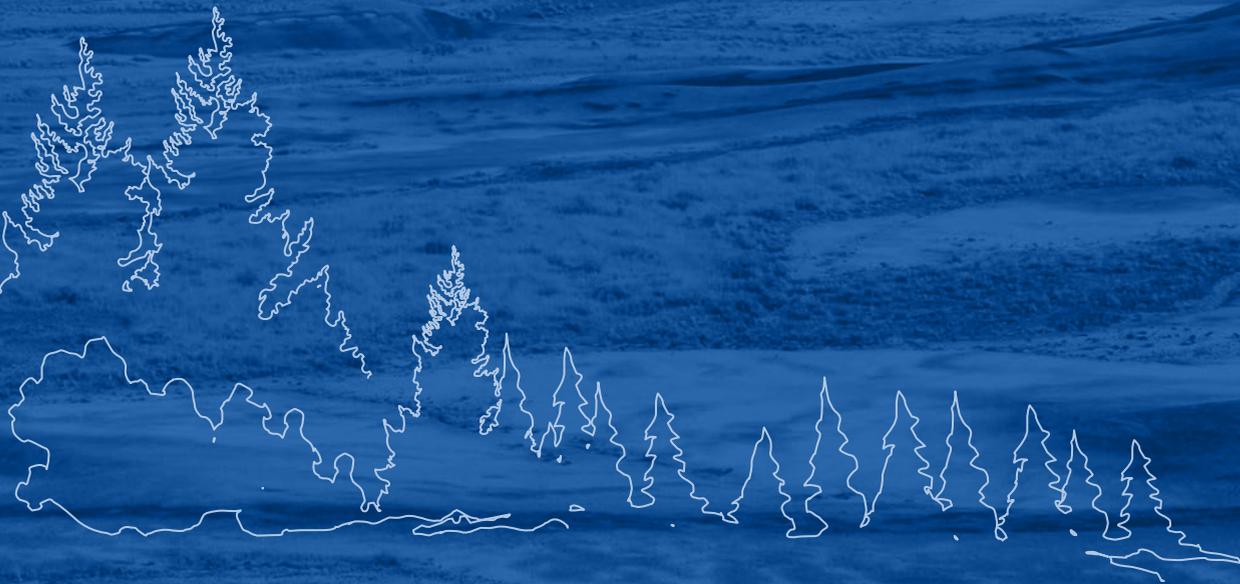
FY 21





# Workforce Services

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## Health Care Provider Candidate Sourcing

ORH sources candidates through direct outreach to students, residents and practicing providers throughout the country. We work directly with candidates reached through the national non-profit Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet) and through the scholarship and loan repayment programs we administer. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened a challenging workforce shortage that already existed. Focusing on meeting the workforce needs of our rural and underserved communities remains a priority.

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ORH reached 1,370 providers during 2020 and 848 providers in 2021 who had an interest in practicing in Oregon.

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## Practice Opportunity Sites

Workforce Services provides technical assistance to rural clinics, federally qualified health centers, hospitals and communities to recruit and retain their provider workforce. ORH markets rural Oregon communities and practice opportunities to health care providers nationwide through its membership in the national, non-profit Rural Recruitment & Retention Network ([3RNet](#)).

## Health Care Provider Incentive Programs

[Loan repayment](#) is a financial incentive for clinicians to work in an underserved location in exchange for a service commitment. ORH administered three loan repayment programs in 2020 and 2021: **State Partnership Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)** 2020 - \$459,384 awarded to 12 providers: 3 NPs, 6 PAs, 1 DO, 2 MDs. 2021- \$462,693 awarded to 8 providers: 2 NPs, 1 PA, 1 DO, 3 MDs, 1 PharmD.

For additional information, contact the ORH Workforce

Services team at [ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu](mailto:ruralworkforce@ohsu.edu).

**Oregon Health Care Provider Incentive Loan Repayment (PILP)** 2020 - \$2,300,00 awarded to 36 providers: 9 DDS, 3 EPHDs, 1 LMFT, 1 LPC, 1 ND, 2 DOs, 5 MDs, 5 NPs, 3 PharmDs, 4 PAs, 2 pre-licensed PCs. 2021 - \$4,000,000 awarded to 58 providers: 14 DDS, 5 EPHDs, 2 LCSWs, 1 LMFT, 2 LPCs, 2 NDs, 8 MDs, 1 DO, 6 NPs, 5 PharmDs, 5 PAs, 1 PsychD, 3 pre-licensed CSWs, 3 pre-licensed PCs.

**The Oregon Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Program (OBHLRP)** 2021 - (This program was not in operation during the 2020 FY) \$1,800,00 awarded to 58 behavioral health providers: 1 CADC II, 2 Case Managers, 12 LCSWs, 4 LMFTs, 2 LPC, 2 NPs, 10 QMHAs, 9 QMHPs, 2 RNs, 6 pre-licensed Clinical Social Workers, 2 pre-licensed Clinical Psychologists, 6 pre-licensed Professional Counselors.

[Loan forgiveness](#) is an incentive program in which students receive loans during their education, which are forgiven when they complete a service obligation after graduation. Participating institutions are Western University of Health Sciences (CompNW), Pacific University, and OHSU.

[Primary Care Loan Forgiveness Program \(PCLF\)](#) was designed to meet workforce needs in rural Oregon for primary care providers. 2020 - \$697,500 awarded to 14 providers: 4 DNPs, 2 PharmDs, 6 PAs, 1 DO, 1 MD. 2021 - \$375,000 awarded to 7 providers: 1 DMD, 3 PharmDs, 2 PAs, 1 MD.

[Scholars for a Healthy Oregon Initiative \(SHOI\)](#), gives students the opportunity to make a difference in an underserved community in Oregon by offering full tuition and fees at an approved OHSU medical program in exchange for a service obligation upon graduation. 2020 - \$2,500,000 awarded to 15 future providers: 3 DMDs, 5 DNPs, 5 PAs, 2 MDs. 2021 - \$2,500,000 awarded to 24 future providers: 7 DMDs, 11 DNPs, 4 MDs, 3 PAs.

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ORH supported 30 rural health care facilities in the 2020 Recruitment Academy and 45 in 2021. The Academy provides training staff responsibility for the recruitment of Oregon's rural health care workforce.

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# Field Services





## Areas of Unmet Health Care Need (AUHCN) Report

Since 1998, the Oregon Office of Rural Health has published the [Areas of Unmet Health Care Need \(AUHCN\) Report](#).

The report includes nine variables that measure access to primary physical, mental and oral health care. This report can be used by state partners to prioritize financial and technical assistance, and by community health care stakeholders to advocate for their unmet needs. For more on the variables used, see page 12 of the report.

The report provides a total unmet need score for each primary service care area in Oregon. An area's score can be compared to other service areas as well as to overall scores for the state, all urban, all rural and all frontier areas. Additionally, if a score is low, it identifies which of the nine variables are negatively impacting the service area. The report can be used to quantify how well communities are able to access physical, mental and oral primary health care.

For more information, please contact Emerson Ong | [ong@ohsu.edu](mailto:ong@ohsu.edu).



## Small Hospital Improvement Program Grants (SHIP)

With funding from HRSA, ORH offered the following grants in 2020 and 2021.

### SMALL HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SHIP) GRANTS

The SHIP grant is available annually to small, rural hospitals with 49 or fewer beds. Funding may be used in support of value-based purchasing, shared savings, accountable care and payment bundling programs, and to purchase related health information technology, equipment software and/or training.

#### FY 2020

During the FY 20 annual grant cycle, \$257,700 in direct funding provided awards of \$10,308 each to 25 hospitals. This represents 78% of Oregon's eligible SHIP facilities. Ninety percent of FY 20 Oregon SHIP hospitals chose to expend their awards on activities in support of Value-Based Purchasing (VBP).

FY 20 projects include:

- 34 nurses enrolled in a Trauma Care After Resuscitation (TCAR) course to train inpatient providers to identify, understand, and anticipate changes for patients with traumatic injuries.
- Work to create a surgery block utilization dashboard. The dashboards are reviewed by leadership and steering committees to inform implementation of surgical best practices.
- Multiple facilities purchased hardware, including tablets, to enable quicker and greater CAHPS data collection. Additional software also expanded tracking and trend analysis to support targeting of quality improvement efforts- including maintenance of CMS star ratings.

FY 2021

The total award was funded at \$333,736 to provide \$11,161 in direct support to each hospital. This represents an increase of \$981 per awardee.

FY 21 projects include:

- The acquisition of, and training for, software to perform credentialing activities electronically, in support of quality reporting and data collection data.
- Nursing and provider training on the use of inpatient continuous glucose monitors (CGMs). The goal for use of CGMs is to improve patient safety by enabling providers to make better decisions for inpatient diabetes management using real time data.
- Implementation of a regional health network accountable care organization.
- Continued support of HCAHPS vendor fees and performance improvement training at multiple sites. Projects build on previous years' achievement, and seek to provide ongoing adjustment to CAHPS goals as needed by individual hospitals.

For more information, please contact Sarah Andersen | [ansarah@ohsu.edu](mailto:ansarah@ohsu.edu)

[2020 CARES Act Funded SHIP Supplement \(SHIP COVID\) & 2021 American Rescue Plan Act Funded SHIP Supplement \(SHIP ARP\)](#)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ORH, through the SHIP award mechanism, awarded two supplemental cycles:

2020 – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) provided \$2,698,144 in direct aid. Oregon's 32 qualified SHIP hospitals received \$84,317 each. Awards supported increased staffing cost, purchase of personal protective equipment, testing and sequestration of infected patients and public health work.

2021 - The American Rescue Plan Act funded supplemental SHIP ARP awards. The award provided \$258,376 per SHIP eligible hospital for a total of \$8,268,032. Awards were funded to support the ongoing work of COVID-19 testing and mitigation, through December 2022.

## Telehealth and Project ECHO Assessments

In response to COVID-19 and the growing utilization of telehealth, ORH partnered with the Telehealth Alliance of Oregon (TAO) and the NW Regional Telehealth Resource Center (NRTRC) to publish an ArcGIS Story Map: Oregon Rural Health Clinic Telehealth: 2020. The story map catalogs the health care services Oregon's RHCs are able to deliver via telehealth. Visit the website or contact Stepha Dragoon | [dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:dragoon@ohsu.edu).





- Initiation of community health worker led smoking cessation support/education groups at Evergreen Family Medicine
- Improved patient health outcomes through enhanced data reporting;
- Best practice RHC certified billing/coding education and training to clinic staff to improve compliance, increase revenue and sustainability at Grant County Health Department;
- Improve patient access to community health workers (CHW) by increasing the number of CHWs;
- Build a robust case management program and improve patient care through training and education of community health workers and case managers. In addition, add a case management program data reporting module to the EHR at Dunes Family Health Care

## Clinic Technical Assistance

ORH provides technical assistance to rural and frontier health care clinics on general operations, Rural Health Clinic (RHC) designation and RHC compliance. ORH provided technical assistance to Oregon's 107 certified RHCs throughout 2020 and 2021. Assistance included focus on the Public Health Emergency requirements, COVID-19 assistance and support. In addition, ORH hosts a Rural Health Clinic Workshop each year at the Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference. For more information on clinic related technical assistance, please visit the ORH website or contact Rondyann Gerst | [gerst@ohsu.edu](mailto:gerst@ohsu.edu).

## Supporting Rural Health Clinics

ORH supports RHCs by providing regular updates on the changing regulations and changes at the federal and state levels. ORH offers the RHC newsletter, which is a bi-monthly newsletter providing the clinics with the latest information on topics from Medicare and Medicaid, billing and coding to education opportunities. During the Public Health Emergency, the newsletter kept Oregon's RHCs updated on the latest CDC and OHA regulations.

## RHC Scholarships and Training

Innovation is key to meeting our health care needs. RHC Innovation Grants support innovation projects that seek to improve operations, increase revenue, and/or improve workflow within primary care practices. Grants support clinic projects focused on:

## Critical Access Hospital Community Benefit Report

The Oregon Health Authority collects, analyzes and publishes Hospital Community Benefit data annually for 60 Oregon hospitals. ORH partnered with the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems to collaboratively publish [Community Benefit Reporting Highlights](#) of fiscal year 2017 for Oregon's 25 Critical Access Hospitals. The 2018 report also outlines federal requirements for 501(c)(3) charitable hospitals and provides resources for 501(r) compliance. Please note: these reports are updated as data are available. The 2019/2020 report will be published in the summer of 2022. For more information, please contact Sarah Andersen | [ansarah@ohsu.edu](mailto:ansarah@ohsu.edu).

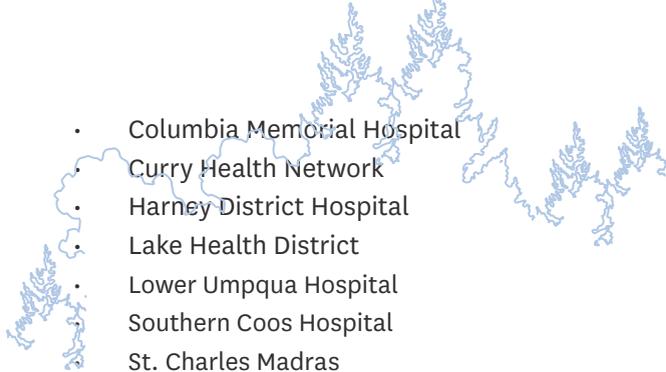
## Critical Access Hospital Scholarships

ORH continues to support training and staff development for Oregon's CAHs. From quality to leadership, investing in staff and programs improves CAHs' ability to offer high quality care to their communities. The following programs were offered to CAHs in FY 20 and FY 21.

### National Association of Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) Memberships:

Members awarded to 11 CAHs.

- Adventist Health Tillamook
- Blue Mountain Hospital



- Columbia Memorial Hospital
- Curry Health Network
- Harney District Hospital
- Lake Health District
- Lower Umpqua Hospital
- Southern Coos Hospital
- St. Charles Madras
- St. Charles Prineville
- West Valley Medical Center

**Sigma Med Solution’s Thrive Don’t Just Survive Collaborative:**

Awarded to five CAHs:

- Blue Mountain Hospital
- Grande Ronde Hospital
- Samaritan North Lincoln
- Southern Coos Hospital
- St. Charles Prineville

**CAH Quality 101 Series-promoting peer-to peer learning and sharing:**

Participation by 35 individuals across 15 CAHs.

- Blue Mountain Hospital District
- Columbia Memorial Hospital
- Coquille Valley Hospital
- Curry Health Network
- Good Shepherd Hospital
- Harney District Hospital
- Lower Umpqua Hospital
- Pioneer Memorial Hospital
- Saint Alphonsus Medical Center - Baker City
- Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital
- Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital
- Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital
- Southern Coos Hospital and Health Center
- St. Charles - Prineville
- Wallowa Memorial Hospital

**NAHQ NEXT Conference Scholarships:**

Awarded to 15 individuals from 13 CAHs:

- Adventist Health Tillamook
- Blue Mountain Hospital
- Columbia Memorial Hospital
- Curry General Hospital

- Grande Ronde Hospital
- Harney District Hospital
- Lake Health District
- Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital
- Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital
- St. Charles Prineville
- Wallowa Memorial Hospital
- West Valley Medical Center
- Lower Umpqua Hospital

For more information on quality improvement assistance, please contact Stacie Rothwell | [rothwels@ohsu.edu](mailto:rothwels@ohsu.edu).

**Support for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

ORH continues to support rural and frontier EMS. In 2020 and 2021, ORH provided funding to support the training and retention of rural volunteer EMS service personnel and well as technical and financial assistance to support the operations of EMS agencies.

EMS is provided by volunteers in much of rural Oregon. Their service requires time off from work and away from their families, in addition to great personal expense for training. ORH provided funding to support the training and retention of rural volunteer EMS service personnel as well as technical and financial assistance to support the operations of EMS agencies. The Helping EMS in Rural Oregon (HERO) Program awarded nine grants in FY 20 totaling \$23,500 as well as eight grants in FY 21 totaling \$19,575. Additionally, ORH supported the 2020 Oregon Medical Director’s Forum and provided scholarships to nine EMS agencies to attend the virtual National Rural EMS Conference (the FY 20 conference was canceled due to COVID-19).

ORH also offers CAH-EMS Partnered Innovation Grants to support the coordination of pre-hospital and hospital care. In FY 20, ORH granted one \$4,000 award and in FY 21 it awarded two \$5,000 grants. Additionally, ORH supported two \$6,000 trauma simulations in FY 21.

Technical assistance is a hallmark of ORH’s work. Between FY 20 and FY 21, it provided 320 technical assistance encounters.

Please contact Sarah Andersen | [ansarah@ohsu.edu](mailto:ansarah@ohsu.edu) for more information on ORH’s EMS programming.

# Policy Development & Advocacy

The Oregon Office of Rural Health is mandated by the Oregon Legislature to “coordinate statewide efforts for providing health care in rural areas” and “develop enabling legislation to facilitate further development of rural health care delivery systems.”

The obstacles facing health care delivery in rural communities are as diverse as the communities themselves, and include economic, cultural and social differences. In some cases, the isolation of living in remote areas can be an impediment to health. The COVID-19 pandemic and Public Health Emergency only added to those challenges.

ORH worked with the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Oregon Rural Health Association (ORHA), and other partners to support rural health facilities and providers during these challenging times. ORH remained focused on addressing health care workforce shortages in rural Oregon. The Oregon Legislature continued funding for the Oregon Health Care Provider Incentive Program (OHCPIP) and Rural Provider Tax Credit. The OHCPIP funded loan repayment, loan forgiveness and the Rural Medical Practitioners Insurance Subsidy Program.

At the federal level, ORH works with the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) to support rural Oregon health care delivery through federal financial support.

## Oregon Rural Health Conference

Like so many organizations, ORH held the 37th Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference in a virtual format in 2020 and 2021. This conference is the largest gathering dedicated to the issues impacting health care in rural Oregon.

Over 20 conference sessions were offered, each year addressing issues affecting workforce, quality, EMS, financial and operations issues and pandemic related topics.

Conference presentations and information can be found on the [ORH website](#).

## Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

ORH offered the 2020 and 2021 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon in a virtual format. The Forum brought together elder care professionals, caregivers, clinical providers, community members, policymakers and philanthropists to make rural communities the best places to age. The 2020 event attracted nearly 400 attendees and the 2021 event had over 1,500 attendees.

Forum presentations and information can be found on the [ORH website](#).

## Elder Service Innovation Grants

ORH is dedicated to assisting rural Oregonians to age in place. In FY 20 and 21, it offered \$22,500 in Elder Service Innovation grants to three agencies to assist their efforts to innovatively address aging solutions in rural communities. Projects included telehealth services in a long-term care facility, support for an innovative intergenerational program, and a program that provides durable medical equipment to local seniors.

## COVID-19 Special Projects

ORH has been honored to assist the health care heroes who tirelessly worked to address COVID-19 in their communities throughout FY 20 and FY 21. From the start, ORH dedicated itself to curating COVID-19 related information and supporting rural clinics and hospitals in navigating the flurry of quick-hitting information. It also partnered with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to build a network of rural clinics to provide COVID-19 testing in long-term care facilities across the state. This project continues through at least May 2023. Additionally, ORH partnered with OHA to provide COVID-19 tests to rural clinics and hospitals. To date, ORH has delivered nearly 100,000 COVID-19 tests to rural communities throughout the state.



## Get in touch

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### ON SOCIAL

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 /oregon\_office\_of\_rural\_health

The Oregon Office of Rural Health has been a partner of Oregon Health & Science University since 1989.



## ORH Partners



### STATE

Oregon Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS)  
Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN)  
Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS)  
Oregon Health Authority (OHA)  
Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)  
Oregon Health Care Workforce Institute (OHWI)  
Oregon Medical Association (OMA)  
Oregon Nursing Association (ONA)  
Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA)  
Oregon Rural Health Association (ORHA)  
Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network (ORPRN)  
Pacific University  
Telehealth Alliance of Oregon (TAO)  
Western University of Health Sciences –Comp NW



### NATIONAL

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)  
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)  
National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH)  
National Rural Health Association (NRHA)  
National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet)