

Office of Rural Health and Primary Care

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Maine is a rural state, with a large proportion of the population living in areas designated rural by the U.S. Census.

Medical care providers are more difficult to recruit and retain in rural areas. Small populations limit their practices. They may be long distances from hospitals where they can treat patients and consult with colleagues. They may find it difficult to keep up with changing knowledge, to know about changes in resources for patients. The facilities for their personal lives may not meet the needs of an individual and a family.

Residents who are a considerable distance from health care facilities may be hindered from getting care by problems with child care or elder care, lack of transportation, and with purchasing medications, special equipment, and services associated with health care, such as occupational therapy, rehabilitation care, or home care.



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The Office of Rural Health and Primary Care manages health personnel recruitment and retention programs, provides technical assistance for communities to receive grants that benefit health care and rural areas, and facilitates communication on rural health issues. The Office gathers and analyzes data to assess resources and makes recommendations for filling gaps and increasing access to primary care, mental health and dental health care services for underserved areas and populations.

Our Priorities:

- ❑ Increasing resources and reducing costs for health care statewide;
- ❑ Establishing communication among stakeholders in rural health;
- ❑ Increasing access to primary, mental and dental health care;
- ❑ Reducing barriers that prevent access to health care services.

Priority Populations:

The health care providers and consumers of Maine who live or work in rural and underserved areas.

Program Activities:

- ❑ Surveying Maine hospitals and underserved areas periodically to determine which hospitals/areas need health care providers and refer all inquiring providers to appropriate vacancies;
- ❑ Managing the state Rural Medical Access Program (RMAP) for family practice & OB/GYN physicians in underserved areas;
- ❑ Participating in state, regional and national rural health initiatives; convening forums on rural health issues; participating in task groups that plan, address, and improve the availability of services to rural and underserved populations;
- ❑ Administering the Critical Access Program, the Small Hospital Improvement Program and the Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants;
- ❑ Providing technical assistance to communities, health care providers and health care facilities;
- ❑ Identifying geographic areas and populations that are in need of additional health care professionals or services and recommending those areas for federal shortage area designation;
- ❑ Administering the Maine State Loan Repayment Program;
- ❑ Representing the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in Maine; interviewing applicants; Providing technical assistants to NHSC participants and sites;
- ❑ Coordinating the internationally trained physician J1 Visa Waiver Option program.

Funding Sources:

The U.S. Health Resources Services Administration; the Maine Department of Health and Human Services; the Maine Department of Professional and Financial Regulation; the Finance Authority of Maine.

Budget: \$950,767 (64% Federal Funds); \$539,375 (36% State Match Funds) - FY 06

Staff Count: 4