



**Pennington Biomedical
Research Center**
Louisiana State University

Pennington Biomedical
**Greaux
Healthy** 

Be the Reason Kids Greaux Healthy

Annual Childhood Obesity Conference

Rural Health Innovation in Pediatric Obesity Care

Presented by Julie Foster Hagan, MEd, MBA

Rural Health Innovation in Pediatric Obesity Care



Stevens Amendment

This project supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$208,374,447.57 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Overview



Overview of Federal Rural Health Transformation Program

- Section 71401 of Public Law 119-211 allocated \$50 billion over 5 years for transformative funding to rural health systems for infrastructure, workforce, and access:
 - 50% divided equally among states that were approved; and
 - 50% divided based on data-driven metrics, initiative-based activities, and state policy actions.
- Grant outlined appropriate use of funds and limitations.
- States receive funding allocation on an annual basis initially and then based on performance, with the ability to spend until the end of the following federal fiscal year.



Louisiana's Portion of RHTP

- Louisiana awarded \$208,374,447.57 for Budget Period 1 of Rural Health Transformation Grant.
- Estimated \$1.4 billion over 5 years.
- One of the top awards in the nation.

Every rural Louisianian deserves the same high-quality health and health care as anyone else in our state. Through a five-year investment, we are building sustainable access to care so rural communities can thrive – today and for generations to come.



Data-Driven Metrics Sample

- 44 of Louisiana's 64 parishes are designed as fully or partially rural.
- Approximately 29.1% of Louisiana's population lives in rural areas.
- Among rural adults in Louisiana:



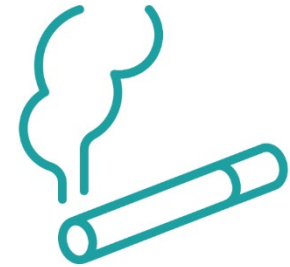
11% have heart disease, 32% higher than the urban prevalence of 8%



20% have diabetes, 42% higher than the urban prevalence of 14%



43% are obese, 21% higher than the urban prevalence of 38%



39% use tobacco, 12% higher than the urban prevalence of 27%

Data available on [WellAheadLA.com](https://www.wellaheadla.com)

RHTP Governance

- Governor's Executive Order
 - Established Office of Rural Health Transformation and Sustainability
 - Created Advisory Council for RHTP
 - Required data collaboration for needs assessment
- LDH Executive Committee, Steering Committee and Initiative Working Groups
- External Engagement
 - Think tanks – long term planning
 - Round tables – short term solutions
 - Town Hall Meetings – regional engagement
 - Monthly Webinar – first Thursday of every month: 9 – 10 am

CMS RHTP Budget Periods

Budget Period	Budget Period Timeframe	Deadline to Expend Sub-Awards
1	December 29, 2025 – October 30, 2026	September 30, 2027
2	October 31, 2026 – October 30, 2027	September 30, 2028
3	October 31, 2027 – October 30, 2028	September 30, 2029
4	October 31, 2028 – October 30, 2029	September 30, 2030
5	October 31, 2029 – October 30, 2030	September 30, 2031

Key Investment and Partnership Areas



Workforce



Technology Innovations



Innovative Care



Make Rural America Healthy Again



Sustainable Access

RHTP Initiative: Expand Physical Activity and Nutrition Interventions Through Community-Based Partnerships

- Access issues due to economic instability and environmental barriers underscore the need for care models that prioritize preventive care and address non-clinical barriers, like transportation and financial constraints
- Food insecurity is a critical issue, with up to 33% of residents relying on SNAP, compared to the national average of 12%
- Initiative expands interventions for chronic disease and maternal health
- Two-pronged approach: direct nutrition intervention through Food Is Medicine and broader nutritional and fitness programs
- Goal: Integrate prevention and community-based care into rural healthcare to sustainably improve access, coordination, and population health

RHTP Initiative: Expand Physical Activity and Nutrition Interventions Through Community-Based Partnerships

Key Stakeholders

Type	Stakeholder
Academic	Local Education Agencies State Agricultural Schools
Providers	Rural health facilities
Payers	MCOs and Private Health Insurer
Community	Community centers
Other	Pennington Biomedical Research Center Local groceries / farmers LDH: Office of Public Health, Office of Surgeon General

RHTP Initiative: Expand Physical Activity and Nutrition Interventions Through Community-Based Partnerships

Strategy: “Food FARMacy” program

- Partner with rural healthcare facilities to launch “food FARMacy” programs integrating nutrition into healthcare, combining access to healthy foods with education on diet, disease prevention, and meal planning.
- Collaborate with local farmers and community groups to expand access to fresh, healthy foods as part of evidence-based treatment and prevention
- Prevent and manage chronic disease sensitive to improvement through diet through food prescriptions and nutrition–focused care plans

RHTP Initiative: Expand Physical Activity and Nutrition Interventions Through Community-Based Partnerships

Strategy: Community-Based Nutrition and Fitness

- Support and expand community-based nutrition and fitness through partnerships with LA agriculture, fitness programs, nutrition for youth, and established institutions
- Promote healthy eating, increase access to nutritious foods, and provide fitness opportunities to foster lifelong healthy habits and prevent chronic disease

Opportunities To Engage

- Monthly webinars – First Thursday of the month, 9 – 10 am
- Advisory Council public meetings
 - Next Meeting: Thursday, November 5, 9 – 12, House Committee Room 3 or live stream
- Regional Visits to begin in January – watch website for Calendar of Events
- Think tanks and round tables on designated topics – Coming Soon!

Office of Rural Health Transformation and Sustainability

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Q&A

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Thank you for investing in our children's future!