



## Top Stories

### The Long Drive to Maternal Care

Rural communities are increasingly losing access to maternal care services, resulting in longer distances to travel for mom and baby to receive obstetric and delivery services. Rural access to maternal care was recently highlighted **in Wisconsin**. Now, Bloomberg Law **takes a look** at the factors leading into dwindling rural access to maternal care.



Jankco Ferlic on Unsplash

[Read more](#)

### Examining Barriers to Rural Home Health

A new study finds that home and community health care could save state Medicaid agencies money, but there are a number of barriers for rural patients seeking to use those services. The study, which collected stakeholder perspectives from fourteen states, found that common barriers cited in rural areas include workforce retention, a lack of service providers, transportation issues, and limited connectivity.



Photo: Myfuture.com on flickr

[Read more](#)

### Shortage of Volunteers Prompts Staffing Overhaul

Fire departments across the nation are cutting services or shutting down due to a lack of volunteers willing to staff the services. As a result, departments are realizing they need to shift their recruitment and retention models--and pay for labor that was once free. A commission of fire and emergency service organizations in Pennsylvania recently recommended a few solutions: better online marketing, increased incentives, and more funding for training and equipment.



Stephen Radford on Unsplash

[Read more](#)

## More News

- Wisconsin lawmakers are considering a bill that would enable pharmacists to **administer vaccines to children younger than 6 years old**. The move comes as a way to increase immunization access, particularly in rural and medically underserved areas.
- According to policy experts, some hospitals--and struggling rural centers in particular--**would close virtually overnight** if "Medicare for all" abolished private insurance and reduced rates to Medicare levels.
- The population in non-metropolitan counties grew slightly for the second year in a row, according to newly-released **Census Bureau data**.
- A group of medical educators is trying to normalize the more **judicious ordering of tests**.
- Treating pain responsibly in the midst of an opioid epidemic can be difficult. How does your organization balance pain management with the potential for opioid abuse? Do you have a personal story to share? A rural issues reporter would like to

## Funding & Opportunities

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will provide grants for **action-oriented research that advances health equity** and informs policy making on income supports for low-income families. Submit a brief proposal by May 21.
- Grants for health networks in a pilot program to develop sustainable approaches to **coordinating maternal and obstetrics care within a rural region**. Deadline: May 24th.
- Loans and grants to help **expand broadband infrastructure** and services in rural areas. Deadline: May 31 for grants, June 21 for loan/grant combinations, and July 12 for low-interest loans.
- Grants to fund public food program service providers, tribal organizations, and private nonprofit entities to **enhance community food projects**. Deadline: June 3.
- Grants to help improve housing and community facilities and to spur community and economic **development in rural communities**. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that will combat substance use disorder in high-risk rural communities. Deadline: June 5.
- Two-year grants for **disseminating training and technical assistance** to rural communities addressing opioid abuse issues. Deadline: June 7.
- Grants to nonprofits and public agencies for **programs that provide group activities** for participants with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias and respite for caregivers. Deadline: June 26.
- An initiative to **expand Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)** will grant an estimated eleven awards to those in rural counties. Deadline: July 1.

## Events

- April 27: It's National Prescription Take Back Day. Disposing of unwanted, unused, or expired prescription medications properly is an important public safety issue, so **locate a collection site near you**.
- May 3: A Wausau **conference** that will center around trauma patient care is intended for all EMS providers, hospital trauma nursing staff, and others.
- June 12-14: The WHA Rural Health Conference is designed for hospital and rural health leadership. An **agenda** and **registration details** are now available.
- June 24: Risk managers in rural hospitals are invited to attend a **risk management workshop** in Sauk City. Register by June 3rd.

