



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Over \$3M Awarded to Improve Health Outcomes in NBRC Communities

*Funds will support expansion and delivery of
new and enhanced services in all four Northern Border states.*

(September 18, 2024) The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is pleased to share that \$3 million in federal funds have been awarded to healthcare providers throughout the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Grant recipients will use the resources to promote and improve the delivery of healthcare services to rural underserved populations. These grants have been made possible through the agency's partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), through the agency's Rural Northern Border Region Outreach Program (RNBR-OP).

Providers located within underserved communities in the NBRC region were invited to apply for funding [earlier this year](#). Awarded projects address a wide variety of healthcare needs throughout the region, ranging from increasing maternal care in rural communities to expanding behavioral health services.

"Improving access to quality healthcare is essential for ensuring the vitality of our rural communities. By addressing gaps in the existing healthcare delivery systems, these investments will improve both the quality of life and the health outcomes for residents in our region," said Chris Saunders, Federal Co-Chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission. "In building a rural economy that works for all residents it is crucial to have a healthcare system that meets the needs of the people who live here."

HRSA collaborates with regional partners like the Northern Border Regional Commission to expand access to high-quality healthcare and services in underserved areas to address healthcare disparities, improve health outcomes, and strengthen local health systems, ensuring residents in these rural communities receive the care they need.

Thirteen grants, totaling over \$3 million in funds, have been awarded to the following projects:

Maine

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems,

Rural Northern Maine Respiratory Therapy Program (RNM RTP)

\$208,882

This project will support and strengthen matriculation, retention, graduation and successful employment of participants from an accredited respiratory therapy program serving rural northern Maine. The program will offer a hybrid remote and in-person modality with a focus on student support, retention, and sustainability, and will hire Registered Respiratory Therapists in rural healthcare settings with a focus on retention and professional growth.

The Harry E. Davis Partnership for Children’s Oral Health, Maine Dental Connection Clinical Consortium **\$250,000**

This project aims to increase access to dental care for children and families in Maines’ Northern Border Region counties by reaching children who are underserved by the traditional dental system. This includes expanding partnerships with Head Start Centers, providing dental care in additional childcare settings and through growing the workforce of Independent Practicing Dental Hygienists who will implement community-based care in the Dental Connection initiative.

Medical Care Development Inc., Seacoast Care Collaborative **\$249,972**

This project will work to serve unbridged island communities by facilitating access to and providing healthcare services through a strong collaborative and consortium; expanding the delivery of new or enhanced healthcare services through evidence-based telehealth models; and improving population health, health outcomes, and sustainability.

Maine Health, The Maine Rural GME Education (MERGE) Collaborative **\$167,334**

This Collaborative will work to improve access to maternal care in rural communities through the creation of a novel Rural Ob Training Intensive, providing clinical, didactic, and simulation-based education in rural obstetrics, supported by a new, publicly available Rural Ob Curriculum. The project will integrate patient, trainee and current maternal health provider input into development and ongoing management, and a new alliance with the NERHA and the ME-RMOMs team will build on and expand efforts to serve rural patients.

Rangeley Region Health and Wellness Partnership, Pathways to Wellness: Advancing Rural Health Care Delivery **\$250,000**

This project supports an effective, dynamic rural health network by expanding a multi-sector community health worker program that will utilize the Screening and Health Educator Model, Member of Care Team Delivery Model, and Community Organizer and Capacity Builder Model. Goals of this partnership include reducing health disparities by providing accessible healthcare services rurally and promoting healthy lifestyle choices through education and resources.

Health Acadia, The HEART Project **\$250,000**

The HEART Project will focus on expanding and enhancing the delivery of behavioral health services and improving health outcomes in Washington and Hancock counties. The goals of this project are to expand the existing regional Consortium, create a new behavioral health workforce development program, expand health navigation programming to include the broader population and to deliver education and training to providers and community members.

New Hampshire

Partnership for Public Health, Inc, Community Paramedicine & Health Worker Program **\$250,000**

This partnership between community paramedics and community health workers aims to increase preventative care access for underserved populations (older adults, homeless individuals) and improve chronic disease management and reduce hospital readmissions.

Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, ACHS Food as Medicine Portable Teaching Kitchen (FMPTK) and TRIP Marketplace for transportation (TRIP – MFT) **\$247,698**

This project aims to habituate food as medicine into the daily activities of cooking and eating to improve individual health and community population wellness by producing a hyper-local transportation solution tailored to the unique needs of rural communities.

The Littleton Regional Healthcare Mobile Integrated Healthcare (LRH-MIH) \$250,000

The LRH-MIH program was first launched in 2022 to offset the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diabetic population. This project will expand the scope of the existing program to include high utilizers of emergency medical care and those at risk for hospital admissions/readmissions in Coös and Grafton Counties, focusing particularly on low-income individuals, those requiring additional healthcare support, and older adults.

New York

**University of Rochester Medical Center, \$250,000
Clinical Workflow Change Management Project for Tri-County Family Medicine (TCFM),
and Finger Lakes Health (FLH)**

This project focuses on Integrating Health Information Technology to preserve and grow primary care, women's health, specialty care and rural community hospitals.

Carthage Area Hospital, Inc, NSHA Operations Center \$246,706

The NSHA Operations center will enhance hospital efficiency and patient care through real-time resource allocation, improved communication, and advanced data analysis, using dashboards to monitor bed availability, staffing, and patient flow. It will also provide ongoing staff training and support, maintain rigorous quality and safety monitoring, and engage stakeholders through regular updates.

**Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO), Inc., \$250,000
Using the Community Health Worker Model to Improve Clinical and
Social Outcomes of Rural High-Needs Individuals**

FDRHPO will engage the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living to provide 3 full-time equivalent Community Health Workers (CHWs) to engage target population members in primary and preventive care, including well visits, cancer screenings, immunizations, transitional and chronic care management, and provide connections to other clinical, behavioral, and social services as needed.

Vermont

**Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc, \$247,757
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Care Collaborative & Innovation Network**

This project aims to improve the capacity of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) services to survivors of sexual violence throughout Vermont. Project activities will include trainings to improve clinical competency, knowledge of best practices, and quality improvement skills. An online resource hub will be developed, and an annual impact report will be distributed to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

About the Northern Border Regional Commission (www.nbrc.gov)

Created in 2008, the Northern Border Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to catalyze community vitality and economic prosperity in the northern border region with flexible funding and strategic support.