



**NATIONAL
NURSE-LED CARE
CONSORTIUM**
a PHMC affiliate

Rural Community Health Learning Collaborative Series

Session 1

August 11th, 2022



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The National Nurse-Led Care Consortium (NNCC) is a non-profit membership organization that supports nurse-led care and nurses at the front lines of care.

NNCC, in partnership with the CDC, works to support efforts to build COVID-19 vaccine confidence among nurses and the communities they serve.

Learn more at NurseLedCare.org

ABOUT THE SERIES

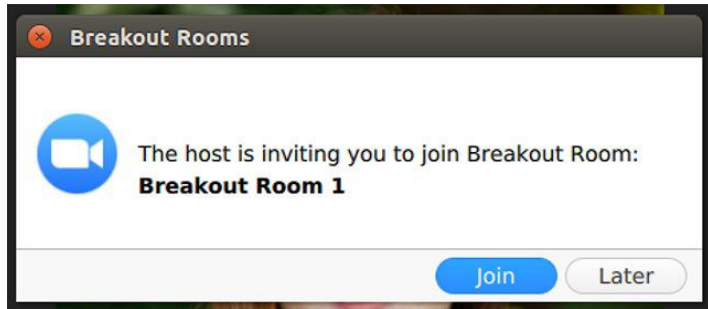
- Free 2-part learning collaborative series for nurses on community program planning, implementation and evaluation.
- 1.5 CEU will be offered for each session attended live. An evaluation will be sent out to attendees following each session, complete the brief questionnaire to receive CEU credit. Learn more [here](#).

This project was funded in part by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (grant number NU50CK000580). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this resource center do not necessarily represent the policy of CDC or HHS, and should not be considered an endorsement by the Federal Government.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SERIES

- To complete the pre-series survey and post-series surveys.
- Participate in both sessions of the series if able.
- Through this session, we intend to create a space where we can facilitate supportive conversations and learning across the nursing community.

Session Reminders



Zoom Group Chat

From Me to Everyone:
Hi everyone! We'll be getting started soon.

From Kevin to Everyone:
Great!
Can't wait!

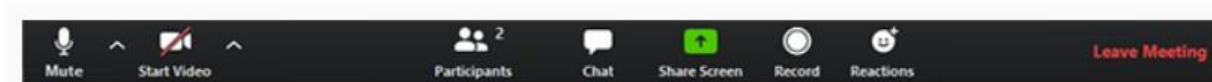
To: Everyone ▾

File ...

Type message here...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Share your video during breakouts. Snacks and lunch are okay! Take breaks when you need Respond and participate to breakout discussions.



AGENDA

- **NNCC Welcome/introduction**
- **Didactic Presentation**
- **Breakout Discussion**
- **Report Back and Q+A**
- **NNCC Wrap-up**

SPEAKER INTRODUCTION



Rachel Foster

MA, BSN, RN

Rural COVID-19 Program Manager
PA Office of Rural Health

Beyond Vaccinations and Masking: Effective Strategies for Impacting COVID-19 in Rural Communities

National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
August 2022

Rachel Foster, MA, BSN, RN
Rural COVID-19 Program Manager
Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health

This project is funded under a Grant with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Basic data were supplied by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The department takes no part in and is in no way responsible for any analyses, interpretations or conclusions.

Session Objectives

In rural communities:

- Identify issues effecting COVID-19
- Explore effective strategies for impacting COVID-19
- Pandemic 2.0: Identify innovative ideas, options and strategies beyond the basics

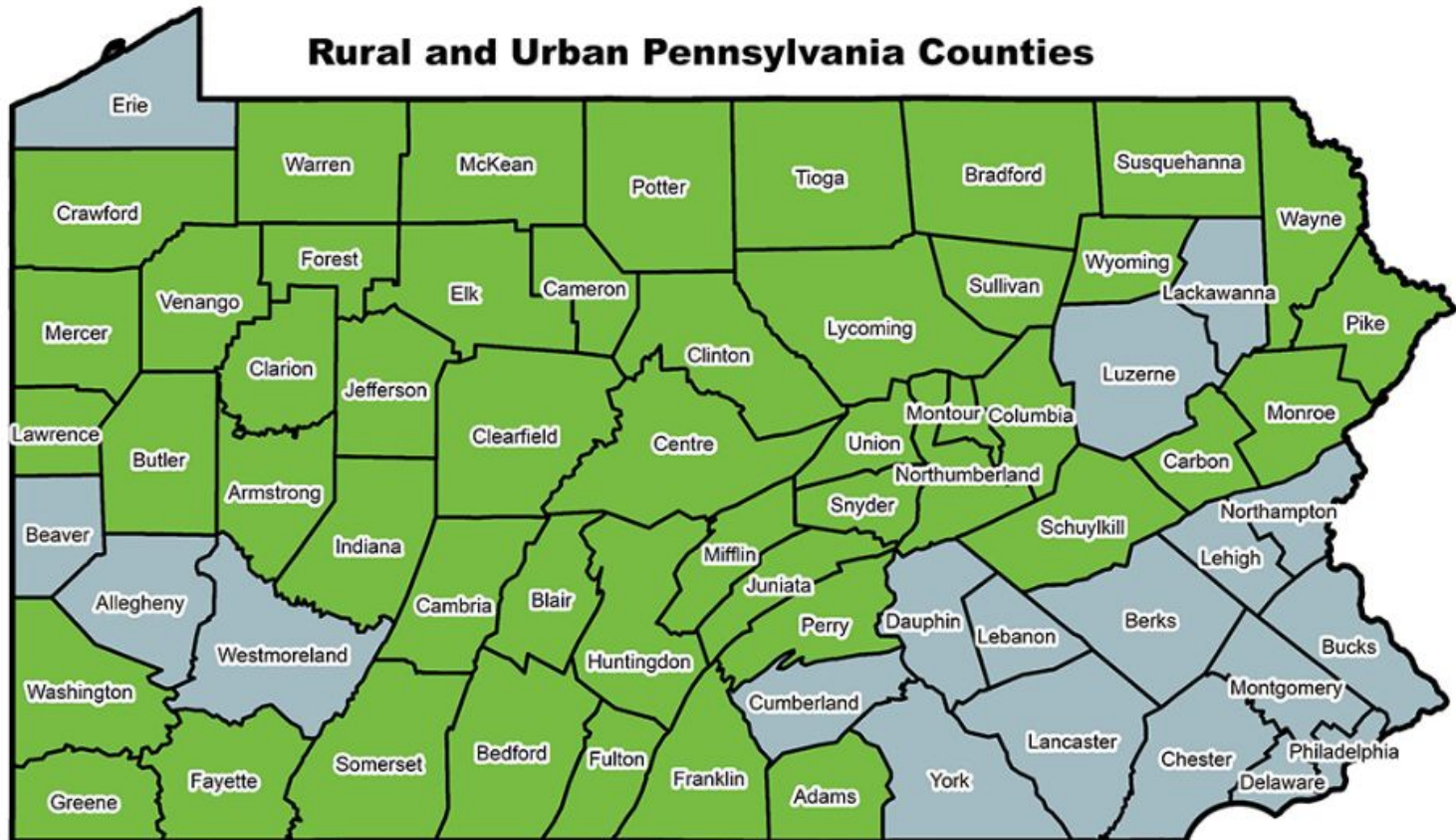




Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health

- One of 50 state offices of rural health
- Located at the Penn State University Park campus
- Mission is to enhance the health status of rural Pennsylvanians and ensure that rural residents have access to high-quality, affordable health care
- Source of coordination, professional development, quality assurance, technical assistance and partnership development

Rural and Urban Pennsylvania Counties



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census.



COVID-19 Rural Urban Divide

As of August 2022, Pennsylvania data indicates:

- The death rate in rural counties is 1.3 times higher than urban counties
- Rural counties have a higher incidence of cases (18 out of 24 counties in the red)
- All counties currently listed as high on the CDC COVID-19 by County dashboard are rural
- 94% (45/48) of rural counties have vaccination rates below the statewide average (63%)
- Hospital capacity

Sources: [PA Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard](#), [CDC COVID-19 by County](#)



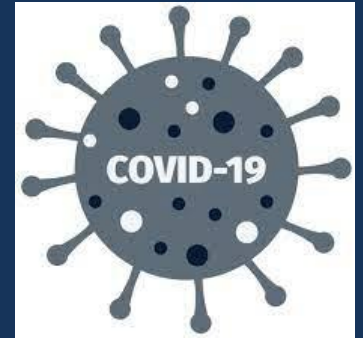
The Climate

- Reduced vaccine demand
- Few are masking
- Increased incidence
- COVID-19 fatigue
- “Distance” from COVID-19
- Pandemic to endemic thinking

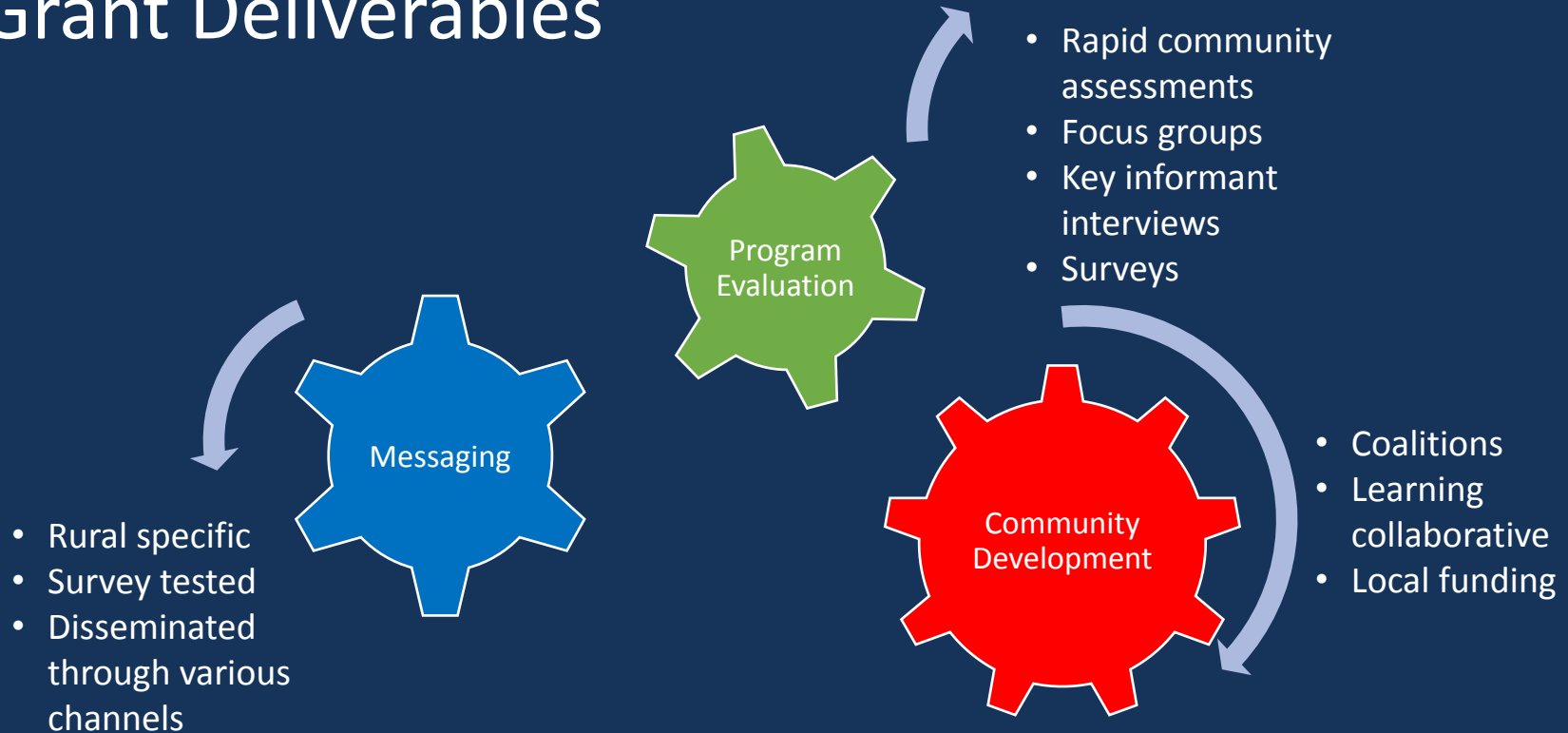


Health Initiative for Rural Pennsylvania (HIRP)

- Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health – CDC COVID-19 Health Disparities
- June 2021-May 2023
- Short-term objectives:
 - Reduce the incidence of COVID-19
 - Increase COVID-19 vaccinations
 - Promote pandemic preparedness and pandemic recovery
- Long-term objective:
 - Build lasting infrastructure in rural communities



Grant Deliverables



Cross-Sector COVID-19 Coalitions

- Health care organizations
- Pharmacies
- EMS
- County Commissioners
- School Superintendents
- Churches
- Colleges or Universities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local ARC chapters
- Penn State Extension
- Farm Bureaus
- United Ways
- Community Action Agencies
- Human Service Agencies
- Patient Safety Authority
- Department of Health



Community Development Process

Community
Needs
Assessment

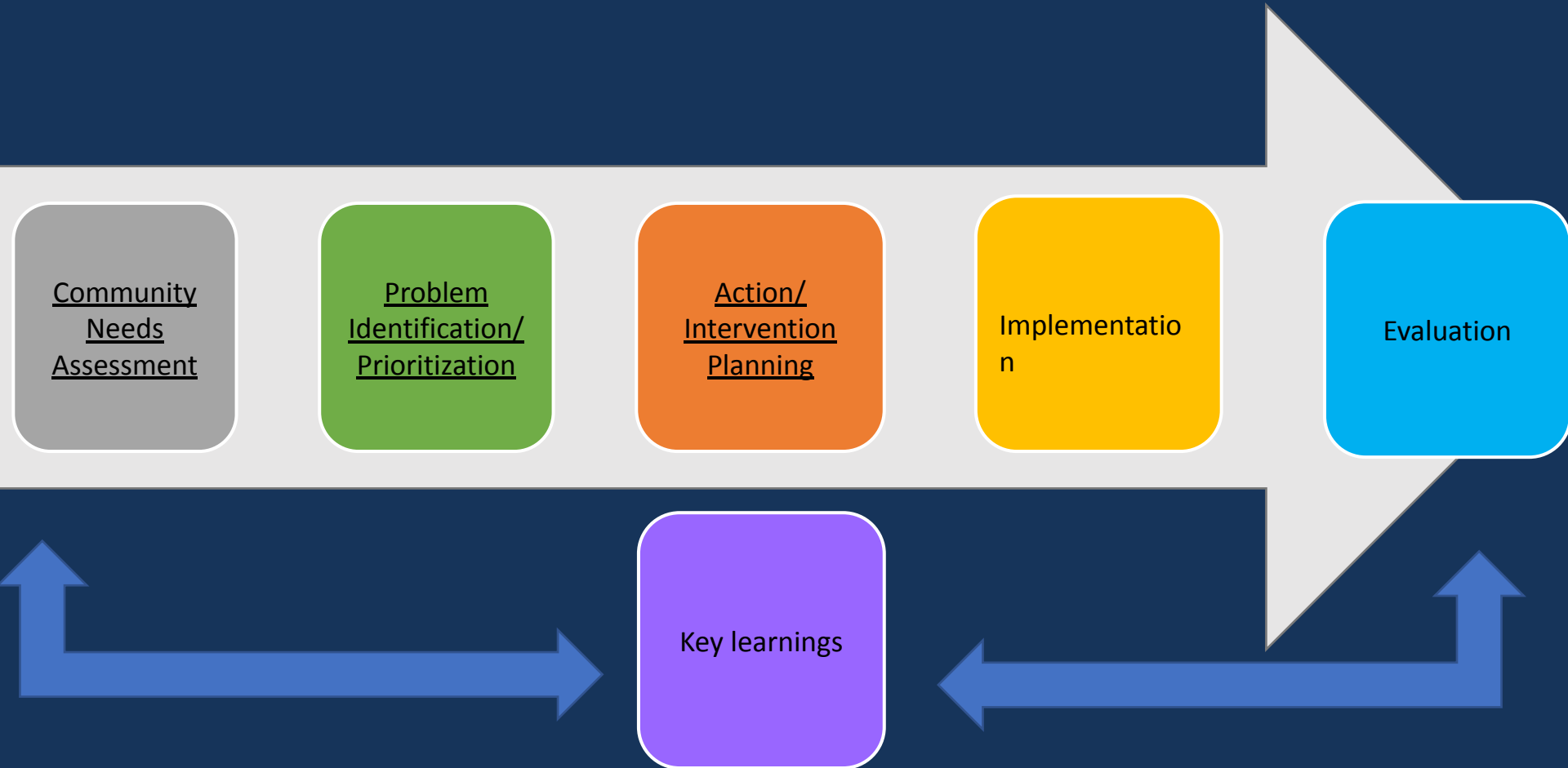
Problem
Identification/
Prioritization

Action/
Intervention
Planning

Implementatio
n

Evaluation

Key learnings



Progress to Date

- Finalized 20 community action plans
- Funded 18 counties through subcontracts for \$1.8 million dollars
- Developed the Rural Pennsylvania COVID-19 Learning Collaborative (240 members)
- Compiled and shared local best practices/lessons learned
- 24% increase in fully vaccinated rate from September 2021 – June 2022



Common Issues Across Counties

- Varied levels of local leadership and infrastructure
- High levels of vaccine hesitancy and “dug in” thinking
- Overriding negativity
- Local mandates may not be enforceable
- Altered perceptions of risk
- Unrealistic expectations for health care access
- Lack of reliable information
- Equity and access issues – health literacy
- Inability to isolate/quarantine



Program Evaluation Design

- Rapid community assessments
- Message testing
- Qualitative data collection
 - ✓ Focus groups
 - ✓ Key informant interviews
- Quantitative data collection
 - ✓ Program evaluation survey
 - ✓ *Resident survey**
 - ✓ *Organization survey**



*Results are not yet available



Health Initiative for Rural Pennsylvania

Rapid Community Assessments

Leading vaccine hesitancy reasons:

- Myths and mis/dis-information
- Perceived immunity from prior COVID-19 infection
- Faith and politics
- “Wait and see” approach
- Expressions of freedom and personal choice
- Rural mentality
- Urban only issue
- Ingredients in the vaccines

**Source: PORH, n=69, 13 Rural PA Counties*



Message Testing

- Tested messaging in five categories
 - ✓ Access/urgency
 - ✓ Positive
 - ✓ Negative
 - ✓ COVID-19 Mitigation
 - ✓ Rural specific
- n=316 rural Pennsylvania residents
- Ratings vs. effectiveness

*Source: [Red House Communications](#)



Communication Strategies

- Unvaccinated respondents were more likely to vaccinate after seeing mitigation and access/urgency messages
- These messages performed best across respondents
- Messages about "community" and "family" resonate
- Avoid rural specific (faith, politics) or negative messages (deaths, rural issues, scare tactics)



It's Not Too Late Messaging Not for Distribution



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE CAUTIOUS.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST FOR FACTS ABOUT VACCINE SAFETY.

PA UNITES AGAINST COVID

THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS 100% FDA
AND AVAILABLE TO YOU AT NO CHARGE

CHOOSING TO WEAR AN N95 MASK HELPS
SLOW THE SPREAD OF NEW VARIANTS.

PA UNITES
AGAINST
COVID

The Vax is for You Messaging Not for Distribution

Tough. No

The VAX is for you. Talk to

ANDREW SHAEFFER, HAZELTON



**Stoic. Independent.
Vaxed.**

The COVID vaccine helps you stay healthy and strong.
For yourself. Your coworkers. And your family.
The VAX is for you. Talk to your doctor.

**PA UNITES
AGAINST
COVID**



**PA UNITES
AGAINST
COVID**

Vaxed.

Key Informant Interview Results

- The pandemic worsened pre-existing health equity issues
- Staffing shortages are a key issue
- Strategies considered to have the greatest impact:
 - ✓ Disseminate scientific information
 - ✓ Minimize barriers to vaccination
 - ✓ Implement a long-term strategy
 - ✓ Increase communication from local leadership
 - ✓ Remove politics from healthcare

**Source: Penn State University, n=12, 11 rural PA counties were represented, diverse backgrounds including representatives from health care, faith, government, schools etc.*



Effective Strategies: Infrastructure Development

- Organization and communication
- Let the community lead
- Local endorsement from community leaders
- Develop/enhance local information hubs
 - ✓ <https://warrenvax.com/>
 - ✓ <https://inthistogethercambria.com/>
 - ✓ <https://www.facebook.com/healthygreenepa>



Effective Strategies: Education and Outreach

- Local storytelling
- Address mis/disinformation
- Tailored programming/trusted messengers (School Districts and Churches)
 - ✓ Schools (Philly Teen Vax Ambassadors)
 - ✓ Churches (St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 90% vaccination rate)
 - ✓ Local businesses (Proctor and Gamble)
 - ✓ Media Toolkit for local use and branding



Innovative Strategies: Pandemic Preparedness

- Develop a community specific, long-term plan
 - ✓ Connect with state and federal programs
 - ✓ Complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis ([template](#))
- Preparedness kits/resource centers – sustainable testing options
- Resource assistance for isolation or quarantine
- Discuss mitigation as part of a comprehensive health care program with less focus on vaccination



Innovative Strategies: Pandemic Preparedness

- Publicize local availability of newer programs or options
 - ✓ Reinvent and incentivize vaccination opportunities
 - ✓ Focus on pediatrics
 - ✓ Test-to-treat program
 - ✓ Proctored testing
 - ✓ New vaccination options (Novavax)



Innovative Strategies: Pandemic Recovery

- Mental health
- School meal vouchers
- Return to work incentives
- Celebration of essential workers
- Pray for those currently infected
- Memorialize loss
- Repair relationships



Post-Pandemic Mental Health

- Mental health impacts of COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Insomnia
 - Isolation
 - Burnout
 - Substance use
- Schools are noticing a rise in anxiety, depression, aggression and lack of coping skills
- Shortage of mental health professionals and services

Source: *Mayo Clinic*



Health Initiative for Rural Pennsylvania

Mental Health Strategies

For everyone

- Workshops focused on stress management, resilience, burnout and self-care
- Support groups
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Sustainable funding for providers

For Adults

- Activities to connect seniors through local Area Agencies on Aging
- Celebration of essential workers

For Children

- Mental health assessment, referral and connection to local LCSW/MSW programs
- Trauma informed cognitive behavioral therapy
- Art therapy
- Play therapy toys, games and sensory items



Program Evaluation Preliminary Results

Activities that will have the greatest impact:

- 34% preparedness for future surges
- 21% development and dissemination of pandemic preparedness kits
- 19% vaccination clinics
- 19% incentivize vaccinations
- 17% mental health outreach and education

Potential needs for ongoing funding:

- Affordable housing
- Transportation
- Mental health
- EMS crisis
- Broadband access

Source: Penn State University, Program Evaluation survey, n=52



Contact Information



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Health Initiative for Rural Pennsylvania

COVID WEBINAR

School Readiness and Advancing Student Health Through Collaboration

Friday, August 12th at 1:00 pm
Eastern Time



Tammy Alexander

VP of State Relations at the
School-Based Health Alliance



Clarissa Collier

School Nurse in the School
District of Philadelphia



Linda Mendonça, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC, NCSN, FNASN

President of the National
Association of School Nurses



COVID WEBINAR

Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Overview for Nurses

Friday, August 19th at 1:00 pm Eastern Time



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