



## **Tools Available for New Network Planning Grants**

The National Center for Rural Health Works (NCRHW) is excited to share with you tools and resources that may assist you in the formation of your health network. For example, available tools include:

- An economic impact study of the health network
- Community health needs assessment (CHNA) toolkit
- Feasibility tool and templates

### **Economic Impact Study**

It is important to inform the community leaders of the economic contribution the healthcare network members have or will have on the local economy and on economic development. The importance of health networks in providing health services is understood, but few know the economic contributions the health network will make on the local economy. NCRHW has a model to measure the economic impact of health services on a local economy. The model measures the employment and labor income generated by the health service and all secondary economic activity generated in other businesses and industries in the local economy.

Results of an economic impact study can be used to gain community support for a health network. The economic impact study not only shows the jobs and labor income created but discusses the importance of health services to economic development. Once community leaders see how important health services are to economic development, they not only use and promote them but are also willing to support them with time and money. Likewise, these reports are extremely useful when seeking financial support from local foundations and other grant opportunities or funding mechanisms.

### **Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Toolkit**

The CHNA toolkit was developed to assist rural not-for profit hospitals to conduct a CHNA to meet the new legislative requirements of “The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” of 2010. The CHNA toolkit is very versatile and can be adapted for network planning grantees to utilize in assessing the needs in their community for planning and developing the health network.

The toolkit is designed for professionals/consultants to facilitate the process or for networks/ communities to conduct the assessment themselves. The toolkit is designed to be conducted through three or more community meetings. Community input will be

received through a community advisory committee, representing all sectors of the community economy. The toolkit includes the following:

- ✓ Community health needs survey
- ✓ Demographic & economic data report
- ✓ Health indicator/health outcome report
- ✓ Community survey results

The information gleaned from all of these will aid the community committee in determining the community's health needs and in prioritizing the needs for the health network. The CHNA process will result in:

- ✓ A prioritized listing of the community's health needs
- ✓ A strategy for addressing the needs and issues identified
- ✓ An action plan, including agency responsibilities for implementing the action plan and including each network facility's role in the network

### **Feasibility Tools and Templates**

Tools to determine the need for rural health services are available from NCRHW. For example, a tool has been developed to estimate the number of primary care providers a given medical service area can support. In addition, if the community wants to set up a specialty physician clinic, a template is available to estimate how many days a week that the community can support a given specialist.

### **Technical Assistance and Website Availability**

Technical assistance is available from NCRHW staff. More detail on the tools and templates is also available on the website:

**[www.ruralhealthworks.org](http://www.ruralhealthworks.org)**

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