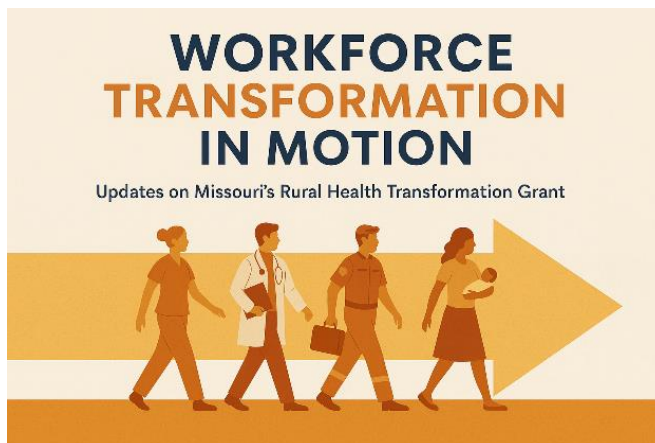


Health Workforce Transformation In Motion

Rural Health Workforce Strategies

Building Momentum Across Missouri

In rural Missouri, access to health care often comes down to whether there are enough workers in place to provide care. Through the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), Missouri is working across every part of the health workforce pipeline, putting new energy and resources in motion. Rural residents are finding new opportunities to learn, practice, and grow in the places they call home. With support from DSS, DHSS, DMH, and a dedicated network of partners, these efforts are opening doors for rural Missourians and strengthening the system of care that communities rely on.



Here are a few highlights from the first few months of the grant.

Creating onramps to rural training pathways

RHTP efforts are creating clearer, stronger onramps for rural residents to enter the health workforce or advance into higher-skilled roles. Here's what's moving:

- **EMS:** The [Missouri Emergency Medical Services Association](#) (MEMSA) is teaming up with training programs to expand instruction across more rural sites, making it easier for students to become advanced EMTs, paramedics, and community paramedics. More than 340 training spots are already filled, with additional students waiting to enroll.
- **Physicians:** Physicians often end up practicing in the communities where they complete their training, yet most clinical training still takes place in urban settings. To help address persistent physician shortages in rural areas, early exposure to rural practice is essential. In year one, RHTP is partnering with five rural hospitals to serve as core training sites for third- and fourth-year medical students to help prepare the next generation of physicians for successful practice in rural communities.
- **Oral health workforce:** The Office of Dental Health is partnering with State Fair Community College and Franklin Technology Center to help close long-standing oral health workforce gaps. State Fair is expanding their dental hygiene program using a hybrid model and Franklin Tech is adding a new dental assistant training program.
- **Behavioral health workforce:** The Department of Mental Health is partnering with Crowder Community College and East Central Community College in year 1 to expand behavioral health associate degree programs, and develop structured pathways designed to strengthen the pipeline for rural behavioral health employers. They are also looking for rural schools interested in offering education and on-the-job training for direct support workers providing residential support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or behavioral health support needs.

These programs help rural students step directly into the workforce and continue growing from there — a critical part of building tomorrow's workforce while meeting today's needs.

Closing Maternal Health Workforce Gaps and Moving Care Forward

Momentum is also building within the maternal health workforce as new training opportunities and supports take shape.

- **Certified nurse midwife training:** RHTP is supporting the MU Sinclair School of Nursing as it seeks pre-accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME), a key step toward launching a certified nurse midwife program that will expand access to high-quality maternal care.
- **Doulas:** RHTP is working with the Missouri Doula Association to strengthen recruitment pathways, training and enrollment in reimbursement structures, widening access to community-based doula services in the places that need them most.
- **Perinatal workforce:** In partnership with the Children's Trust Fund, RHTP is expanding perinatal home visiting programs in rural communities and strengthening the workforce through targeted training and support.
- **Access to specialty care providers:** Through the [Maternal Health Access Project](#), rural providers have real-time consultation lines at their fingertips—connecting local OB, family practice, and behavioral health clinicians with specialized expertise, building confidence, and improving the quality of care delivered close to home.

Mobile Integrated Healthcare: Bringing Care Home

Through a \$6.5 million investment, MEMSA is expanding Mobile Integrated Healthcare and Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) programs in rural areas. MIH-CP flips the care model on its head — letting trained paramedics deliver preventive and community-based care directly in homes, connecting seamlessly with primary care, behavioral health, hospitals, and social service providers. Today, MIH-CP reaches over 30% of rural Missouri. Funding will support up to 14 rural MIH-CP sites over five years, create charting systems for coordinated care, and strengthen EMS integration across entire regions. Year 1 MIH-CP projects will add six new programs and expand one network to increase reach by 212,000 rural Missourians—a **26.8% increase!**

Keeping Providers Rooted in Rural Communities

A strong workforce can't thrive without the basics. RHTP recognizes that rural communities face unique challenges: housing shortages, long travel distances, and limited childcare options. Local hubs will be able to apply for funding to create community-driven solutions to these barriers — making it easier for workers to build stable careers in the places they call home. Investing directly in these supports strengthens not just the workforce, but the future of every rural community.

- **Childcare access:** RHTP is partnering with Kids Win Missouri to expand childcare options, including [a cost-sharing program](#) to help rural health workers afford the childcare they need to stay employed — an often unseen but essential part of workforce stability.
- **Access to pediatric psychiatry providers:** The [Missouri Child Psychiatry Access Project \(MO-CPAP\)](#) gives primary care and maternal-child health providers near real-time access to child and adolescent psychiatric expertise. With consultation support, care coordination, and guidance on community resources, providers can address behavioral health needs earlier and deliver care close to home.

What This Means for Rural Missouri

Missouri is investing in the people who make care possible — and doing it in ways that are coordinated, community-anchored, and built to last. These efforts won't solve every shortage overnight, but they are setting meaningful change in motion. Most importantly, they're laying the foundation for healthier families and stronger local systems for generations to come.

If you have any questions about Missouri's RHTP please contact dss-rhtp@dss.mo.gov.