

**HRHN HD CHW  
Program**

*Information on New  
Program*

*Job Opportunities  
Available.*

**COVID-19  
Update**

*Importance of  
Vaccinations*

*Funeral Assistance  
Available.*

**Quarterly Newsletter for July - September 2021**



# **Network News**

**The Latest on Network Initiatives, Member Updates, and Rural Health.**

***Central Florida Health  
Care- Child  
Vaccinations: It's Worth  
a Shot***

***Telemedicine Talk 6:  
Pilot Program teaches  
Seniors about  
telehealth***

***HRHN's iMAD Program  
Finishes the Year  
Strong***

***Looking for a Fiscal  
Agent? HRHN could  
be the perfect fit!***

***Tobacco Free Florida/  
Central Florida AHEC  
Quit Your Way***

***CFHC Minority  
Mental Health  
Awareness***

***FRHA Survey on Rural  
Community Provider Needs***

***Surveys Needing your  
Input!  
HPV FSHA FSHIP***

***NRHA Updates from their  
most recent Newsletter***





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# **Hardee DeSoto Community Health Worker Program**

As mentioned in our previous Newsletter, HRHN was recently awarded the HRSA Rural Outreach Grant which allow us to begin a new program later this year. This program, aimed at assisting the minority population, seeks to improve access to care and provide easy navigation of appropriate pathways for patients to receive all needed and requested care through the utilization of community health workers (CHWs) to assess clinical and non-clinical needs. The program, called the Hardee DeSoto Community Health Worker Program, or HD CHW Program, serves as a link between community health leaders; including: DeSoto Memorial Hospital, AdventHealth Wauchula, Central Florida Health Care, Florida Department of Health Hardee, and Family Care Medical; connecting patients with appropriate primary care providers, needed health education, and assistance with eliminating barriers to care. Under this new program, we have hired new Program Director, Valeria Carrasquillo Rivera, CHW, April De La Rosa and have one position still available as a CHW. All staff are excited and looking forward to launching the program in November, 2021 to begin creating a change that improves the health of the community.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM, OR TO FIND OUT  
HOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE HD CHW PROGRAM,  
[CLICK HERE.](#)





# Get a COVID-19 Vaccine Today

## How to get vaccinated

Everyone age 12 and older in the United States can now get a free COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of your immigration or health insurance status.

You have three easy ways to find vaccines near you:

- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov)
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

**Get vaccinated to protect yourself and the people around you.**

## Why you should get a COVID-19 vaccine

- Getting vaccinated is the best way to defeat this virus and get back to normal — safely gathering with family and friends, indoor dining, weddings, concerts, sporting events, and travel.
- The vaccines are effective. They prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

**Encourage others to get vaccinated and learn more at**  
**[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)**







# Child Vaccinations: It's worth a shot.



August. The month you can see wheels on the school buses rolling again and smell the tip of a freshly sharpened pencil. This August, as more children return to school, we encourage you not to forget vaccinations.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, which highlights the importance of vaccination for people of all ages.

The pandemic caused a steep decline in child immunizations. Numbers plummeted in 2020 after COVID-19 was declared a national emergency. Data showed there were about 2.5 million fewer doses of vaccines ordered in a single month, including 250,000 fewer doses of measles-containing vaccines, compared to the year prior.

Central Florida Health Care Pediatrician Dr. Heather Wardy says as more children return to school after a year of distance learning, she hopes parents will protect their children from the diseases that vaccines have prevented for years.

Did you know there are 16 different diseases that we protect against with vaccines? Together, we must ensure that our current fight against COVID-19 will not come at the expense of these 16 others. Now, we need to stress the need for children and adolescents to





# Central Florida Health Care

Care With a Heart

get their routine vaccines and well-visits while emphasizing the extensive measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The last thing anyone wants to see is a new outbreak of Measles, Whooping Cough, or Mumps.

Dr. Wardy encourages all patients to get their annual flu vaccine to minimize the number of co-infections and reduce the burden of severe disease and respiratory illnesses in our communities. She says the pandemic taught us many lessons. One of the most valuable of these may be a renewed appreciation of the gift we have to prevent illness when we can – all thanks to vaccines and the healthcare workers who give them.

You have the power to protect against serious diseases. Be sure to talk with your provider about all the immunizations needed at different stages of life. As Ben Franklin once said, “A pound of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”







## Florida Rural Health Association

*One Voice for Florida. Louder.*

The Florida Rural Health Association is conducting a brief survey to identify training and workforce development needs among rural stakeholders. If you work or provide services to our rural communities we ask that you please take this survey. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The information will be kept confidential. We appreciate your support and your time to complete this survey.

If you have questions, please email  
[frha@srahec.org](mailto:frha@srahec.org).

**Complete the survey here.**





did you know?

# **HRHN can serve as your fiscal agent or fiscal sponsor for grants.**

Accountability, communication, and internal controls are critical in the management of federal, state, and private foundation grant and contract funds. Our organization has the necessary controls to ensure your funds are being managed properly. Our staff and Board has over 15 years of experience in grant and contract management and knowledge on the various OMB circulars that apply to federal and state grants. We are a 501(c) 3, not-for-profit organization that manages over \$500,000 annually, meeting and exceeding grantor fiscal and programmatic requirements. If your organization needs a reliable fiscal agent or sponsor to help manage your awarded grants or contracts, we can help you.

If you are a 501(c)3 looking for another 501(c)3 organization with a well-established, positive relationship with federal, state, and private funders, to provide financial and internal control oversight, you are probably looking for a Fiscal Agent.

**To get more information about HRHN serving as your Fiscal Agent or Sponsor, please e-mail [support@hrhn.org](mailto:support@hrhn.org).**





# iMAD Fi

Heartland Rural Health Network has been providing Sexual Health Education in Highlands County for over a decade now, most recently through our Competitive Personal Responsibility Education Program - iMAD Program. This program finished out the 2020-2021 School Year strong. We served a total of 2,429 Highlands County middle and high school students. See the table below for a breakdown of information on these students.

	APMS	HCAH	HCAM	HGMS	LPMS	SMS	TOTAL
# Participants	600	44	80	669	533	503	2429
# Completers	489	38	69	553	377	441	1967
% Female	50.2%	31.8%	43.8%	45.3%	47.1%	46.3%	46.8%
% Male	49.8%	68.2%	56.3%	54.7%	52.9%	53.7%	53.2%
% 10 - 14 yrs old	97.2%	13.6%	92.5%	85.5%	94.9%	97.4%	95.6%
% 15 - 19 yrs old	2.8%	86.4%	7.5%	14.5%	5.1%	2.6%	4.4%
% Black	28.2%	9.1%	11.3%	15.7%	17.1%	9.1%	17.5%
% Hispanic	37.8%	27.3%	28.8%	35.4%	39.2%	26.2%	34.6%
% Multi-Racial	7.7%	4.5%	2.5%	6.6%	4.1%	5.2%	5.8%
% Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	0.2%	0.0%	1.5%
% White	26.0%	56.8%	53.8%	36.6%	39.2%	57.5%	39.8%
% Other	0.0%	2.3%	3.8%	0.0%	0.2%	2.0%	0.8%



# nishes Strong

The C-PREP Grant that has been funding the iMAD Program since 2015 is ending in September of 2021. We have applied for another round of funding that, if awarded, will allow us to continue to provide quality health education in Highlands County and expand the program into Hardee County. We look forward to providing many more years of sexual health education to the youth in our area!



This program, headed up by Program Director, Larry Moore, has brought un-biased sexual health education to Highlands County Middle School Students since 2016. In the last 6 years, the program has served over 12,000 youth. With Health Educators, Michelle Cathey and Anthony Fontanes leading the way, the iMAD classes bring students information on various important topics like communication, puberty, relationships, boundaries, decision making, STIs, abstinence, risk reduction methods, and refusal skills. The program fosters an inclusive environment and provides fact-based education.





**Ingrid Atilles, PsyD**

Director of Behavioral Health

# Minority Health Aw

Mental Wellness is essential to everyone, but many minorities face more challenges these days when it comes to taking care of themselves and getting the treatment they need. Dr. Ingrid Atilles is sharing some vital information with us to spread awareness about this concern.

Dr. Atilles says many minorities tend to keep going on with their daily lives without dealing with mental illness. Sometimes financial barriers and lack of transportation lead to this. Paying bills first trumps medical attention, unfortunately, There are mental health discrepancies in co-pays, and some behavioral health providers don't even accept insurance.

Regardless, Dr. Atilles says when the mental illness starts affecting work, communication with others, and life in general, you should seek behavioral health treatment.





Central Florida  
Health Care  
With a Heart

# Mental Awareness



Lack of social justice, racism, and immigration challenges make minorities more prone to added stress and trauma. It's this reason Central Florida Health Care's goal is to create awareness. We're here to help everyone find hope and respite with our mental wellness services. We can all spread awareness simply by letting more people know about CFHC's program to treat those who struggle financially. No one should have to suffer alone.

It's normal to seek help. Mental Wellness is a discussion that needs to happen more often within our communities. We need to provide support for each other. Dr. Atilas reminds everyone of the importance of prioritizing self-care daily. Simple tasks like walking, and being in the present can lead to a happier life with less stress and health issues.







# QUIT YOUR WAY

Quitting tobacco isn't easy. Finding help should be. Tobacco Free Florida offers free tools and services to help you get started.

## Central Florida AHEC

presents

### FREE Virtual Tools to Quit Classes

Weekly VIRTUAL sessions are available at various dates & times to fit your schedule!

Connect with one of our trained tobacco treatment specialists, along with others, and receive support in developing your own successful quit plan

Participants of the Virtual Tools to Quit classes will also be eligible for Nicotine Replacement Therapy like patches & lozenges mailed to their home at NO COST!



**JOIN:** By calling **877-252-6094** to register. Pre-registration is required! You will be emailed a link to join by ZOOM conference via video or audio.

#### ABOUT THE CLASS:

Tools to Quit Class will provide you with information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, and will assist you with developing your **OWN QUIT PLAN**. Cessation groups cover all forms of tobacco.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, quitting is more important than ever! Let us help you get the support you need from the comfort of your own home.



#### BENEFITS:

**Nicotine replacement patches, gum or lozenges.**  
*(if medically appropriate for those 18 years of age or older)*

**Participant workbook and materials.**

More than **DOUBLES** your chances of success!

**Pre-registration is required!**

To register, call: **877-252-6094**

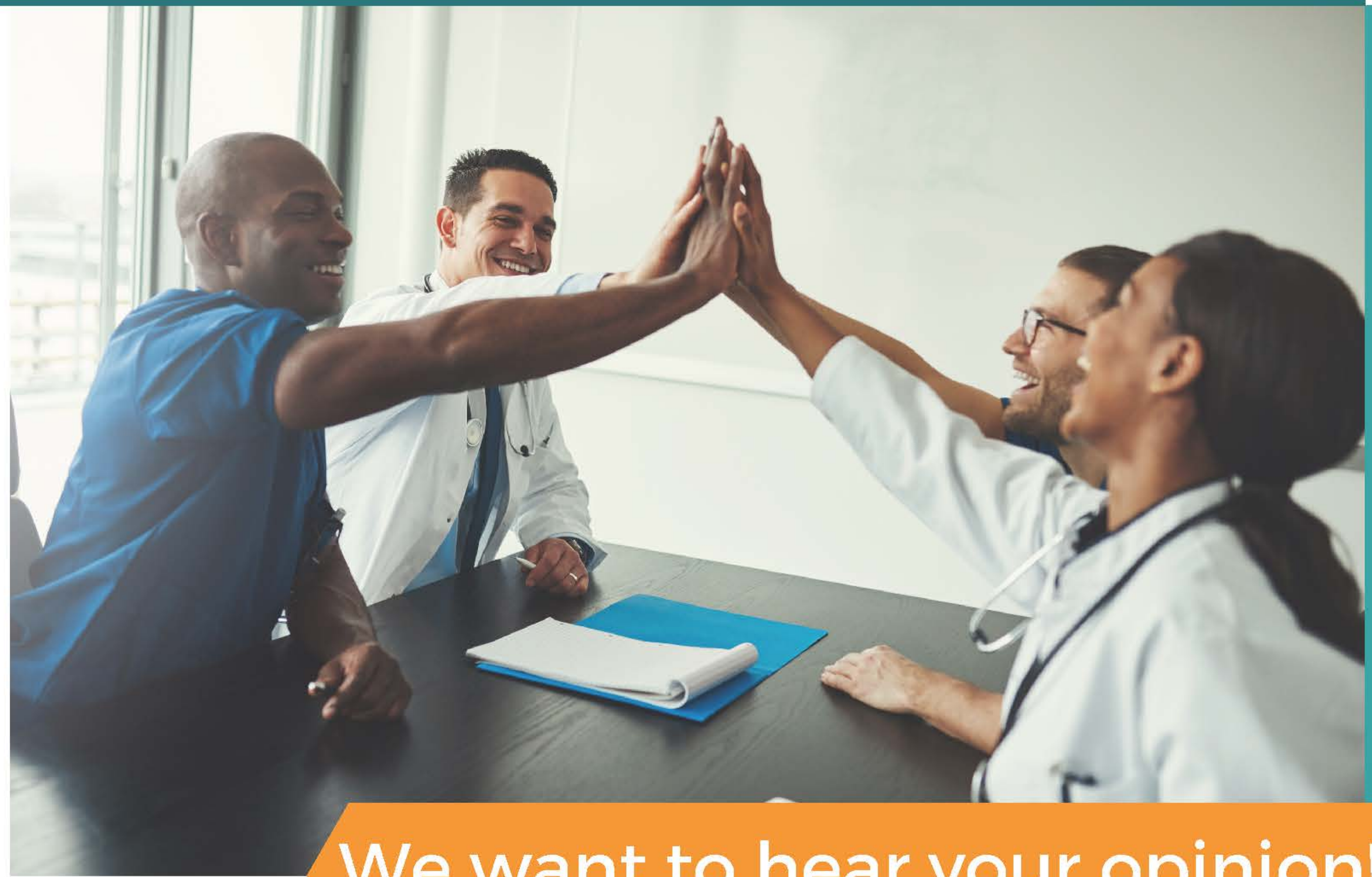
For more information, visit us at:  
**[www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway)**

Sponsored by:

**Central Florida AHEC**

**Florida  
HEALTH**





**We want to hear your opinion!**

## Participation Requirements

- Live in Puerto Rico or Florida.
- Be aged 21 years or older.
- Be able to read, write and understand either Spanish or English.
- Be a healthcare provider, staff member, or in a leadership role at an organization or private health clinic that provides health and/or social services to sexual minority men.
- Have access to a telephone or computer.
- Can attend a 30-60 minute interview to provide feedback on HPV material targeted to young Hispanic/Latino sexual minority men.

## For more information contact:

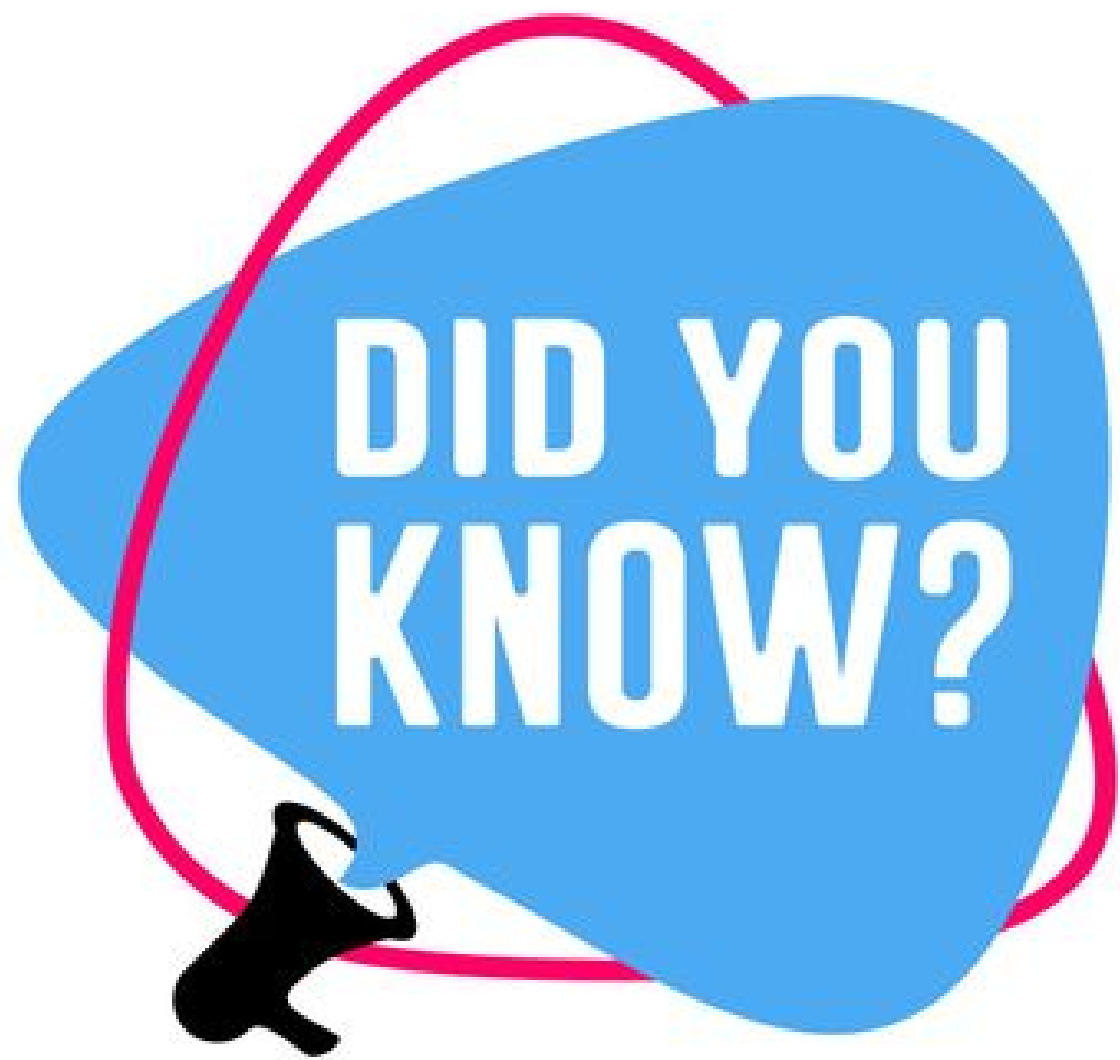
Dr. Shannon Christy  
Principal Investigator  
[Shannon.Christy@moffitt.org](mailto:Shannon.Christy@moffitt.org)

**Participants will receive compensation for their participation**

Advarra IRB Pro00046114







# **COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Available**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. At FEMA, our mission is to help people before, during and after disasters. We are dedicated to helping ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the virus.

Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA will provide financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020.

COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Line Number

Applications accepted as of April 12, 2021

844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time

Call this dedicated toll-free phone number to get a COVID-19 Funeral Assistance application completed with help from FEMA's representatives. Multilingual services will be available.

For more information about COVID-19 Funeral Assistance, [click here](#).





**Telemedicine**

# Telemedicine Talk

## Episode 6: Pilot Program Teaches Seniors to Use Telehealth.

A pilot program in South Carolina is tackling the digital literacy divide with a program that teaches seniors how to use telehealth technology, equipping rural seniors with a tablet and free cellular service for up to a year. As the telehealth cliff looms, more than 400 health care and technology organizations are calling on the Capitol Hill to eliminate arbitrary restrictions while helping FQHCs and critical access hospitals offer wider access to virtual care. To learn more about this pilot program, [click here](#).

This article was provided by the National Rural Health Association.





# 2021 FSHA and 2022–2026 FSHIP

The Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida, Inc. along with all of the local health councils in Florida, is working with a diverse array of partners to develop the 2021 Florida State Health Assessment (FSHA) and the 2022-2026 Florida State Health Improvement Plan (FSHIP).

The resident survey is now available through August 31, 2021. The survey is available in English, Spanish, and Creole. The survey results will help guide the FSHA/FSHIP process. We need you to assist us by: taking the survey; sharing the survey with your network; and getting family, friends, and clients to take the survey as well. Survey accessible [here](#).

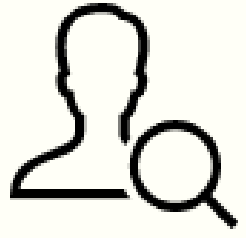
If you are a provider, you have the option to take the SHA Provider Survey. This survey will be available through August 31, 2021. Please feel free to share this link with other providers. Survey accessible [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Survey Coordinator by clicking [here](#).



# Job Announcements:

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## CHW Job Available!

Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. is currently hiring for the following positions in Hardee and DeSoto Counties:

**Part-Time Community Health Worker for HD CHW Program**

For more information, including full Job Descriptions and how to apply, visit [www.hrhcn.org/employment](http://www.hrhcn.org/employment).



\*Please note that Job Interviews will take place virtually but all positions require you to be in the Hardee or DeSoto County, FL area(s) within two weeks of hire through April 2025.



## Job Available

We Care of Central Florida is currently hiring for the following positions in Polk County:

**Part-Time Community Engagement Specialist**

For more information, including full Job Descriptions and how to apply, click [here](#).



A background image of several pumpkins in various shades of orange and yellow, some with green stems, arranged in a cluster.

# National Rural

**In the latest NRHA**

- Act soon: Present at NRHA's 2022 events in Albuquerque, NM.
- Lessons learned from Maine's nation-leading vaccine efforts.
- Scholarships now available for NRHA's clinic, CAH events.
- COVID not entirely to blame for increased hospital closures.
- Last day to apply for NRHA Health Equity Council positions.
- With mental health care shortages, youths get stuck in the ER.
- Minority patients underrepresented in 4 of 5 hospitals.
- Training OB-GYNs in rural communities, hoping they'll stay.
- Rural-urban divide breaks down with diseases of despair.
- Participate in NRHA's rural health advocacy campaigns.

**To view the Newsletter in its**





# Health Updates

## A today Newsletter:

- Legislation to boost veteran access to breast cancer screening.
- New NRHA member hospital CEO reflects on her first 90 days.
- Teaching health center medical education funds available.
- NRHA webinars on cybersecurity strategy, swing beds.
- New JRH articles: Adolescent smoking prevalence, tobacco use.
- Podcast: What gun violence does to health.
- Rural hospitals use charities to help cover patient costs.
- How community health workers can help rural providers.
- How pulmonary rehab benefits rural patients, population health.

**entirety, please click here.**





# Our Advocacy Priorities

HRHN IS THE LARGEST OF NINE RURAL HEALTH NETWORKS IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. WE WORK TO BRING SAFETY NET PROVIDERS (E.G. FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS, COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS, RURAL HEALTH CLINICS), REGIONAL COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS, PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES, HOSPITALS, THE REGIONAL HOSPICE AND AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER (AHEC), AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS TOGETHER TO BRING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITIES NEEDS.



## Current Priorities

1. Support for Rural Hospitals and Rural Clinics
2. Robust Rural Workforce
3. Strong Rural Safety Net
4. Teen Pregnancy Prevention Funding
5. Rural Access to Quality Care
6. Support of FQHCs
7. Promotion and Payers Approval of Telemedicine
8. Recognition of Community Health Workers as  
a Payable Component of Health Care
9. Affordable Health Care for All



Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. is happy to share with you some great updates from our members and community partners! Thank you for your continued commitment to improving rural health care through your association with Heartland Rural Health Network. A full description of current Network initiatives can be found online on our website.

If the Network can partner with your organization on a project, please contact us to discuss. We value community partnerships to accomplish the mission of the Network.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to a friend or colleague.



Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc.  
[www.hrhcn.org](http://www.hrhcn.org)

863.471.6007

**Mission:** Improving access to quality health care by implementing creative solutions in collaboration with network members and community partners.

**Vision:** To be a leader of innovative, collaborative, and quality driven rural health initiatives.

**2021 – 2022 Board of Directors:** Vince Sica, President; Blake Warren, Vice President; Heather Stephenson, Secretary/Treasurer; Robert Rihn, Past President; David Robbins, David Duke, Denise Collazo, and Denise Grimsley.



