

USDA Rural Health Liaison

The USDA Rural Health Liaison (RHL) position was created by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill to enhance USDA's efforts to support rural health. USDA RHL Kellie Kubena cultivates relationships across USDA, with other federal agencies, and with external partners to gather information and resources to promote department-wide efforts to address rural America's health care needs.

FOUR WAYS THE RHL SUPPORTED RURAL HEALTH IN 2023



Facilitated the development and coordination of tools and shared resources to support rural communities.

We created or shared information regarding:

- Nearly 160 USDA rural health programs
- Data and mapping tools like the Rural Emergency Health Care Grants Story Map (Information at this link: tinyurl.com/bd2yv6db)
- The Rural Health Care Fact Sheet (Information at this link: tinyurl.com/2a9s3c4a -PDF)
- National Rural Health Day events (Information at this link: tinyurl.com/57vmfk5k)
- Mental health awareness events (Information at this link: tinyurl.com/yfsn3he9)
- Various other resource guides and toolkits (Information at this link: tinyurl.com/3d2mdxav)



Assisted with rural health outreach, including supporting presentations and finding the right subject matter experts.

The RHL participated in nearly 50 speaking engagements at federal, national, regional, and state levels, covering health topics such as:

- Rural mental health and farm stress
- Rural community economic development
- Food and nutrition security
- Rural health care, telemedicine, and public health
- National Rural Health Day commemoration webinars



Collaborated with 45 federal and private partners, and made 35 new connections to promote health advocacy and equity in rural America.

Collaborations:

Federal partners focused on:

- Health care availability
- Economic development
- Justice
- Social determinants of health

Non-federal partners included:

- Nonprofit and philanthropic organizations
- Academic institutions and technical assistance providers
- Health-focused associations

New connections:

Federal partners focused on:

- Research
- Nutrition security
- Health and recreation

Non-federal partners included:

- Healthcare facilities
- Farm and rancher health
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Academic and research institutions
- Private companies
- State departments of agriculture, other state offices, and rural health offices
- Hospital associations
- Health education organizations



Participated in interagency working groups to develop health-related strategies and policies. Results include:

- Social Determinants of Health Playbook
(Information at this link: tinyurl.com/msw5b6t7 - PDF)
- Fentanyl Adulterated with Xylazine Response Strategy
(Information at this link: tinyurl.com/57v7huys - PDF)
- 2024 National Drug Control Strategy
(Information at this link: tinyurl.com/3w3c965k)