



Rural Development • Rural Business Program • Distance Learning and Telemedicine
High Quality Health Care Available in Platte, SD

When a patient’s fever raises suspicion of an infection, when an infection is potentially serious or when problems occur with treatment, an infectious disease specialist is usually called in to help. Working concurrently with the patient’s primary care physician, this specialist can help determine what treatment is needed or what diagnostic tests need to be ordered – with the goal of preventing an unnecessary, costly hospitalization.

But what happens when an infectious disease specialist isn’t nearby?

That’s a question that could have been asked in Platte, S.D., not that long ago.

While many people grapple with access to quality, affordable health care, rural Americans face a unique set of challenges in obtaining the care they need due to geographic isolation, a lack of financial resources and a severe shortage of qualified specialty health care providers in their communities.



Platte, SD Health Center. Photo Courtesy of Platte Health Center.

Located more than two hours away from the nearest tertiary hospital in Sioux Falls, the approximately 1,200 people who live in Platte used to be at a disadvantage when it came to accessing specialty health care providers.

Not anymore.

Thanks to funding from the USDA Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant program, health care delivery in Platte has been transformed, allowing people to receive high-quality health care close to home.

Since 2005, Platte Health Center Avera and its clinics have received approximately \$288,038 in USDA grant funding. This funding has provided the necessary equipment needed to establish vital telehealth services in the Platte area including eConsult, ePharmacy, teleradiology, eEmergency and eICU.

These telehealth services help deliver the right care at the right time, saving lives and improving the overall quality of care in their community. Now, the people of Platte have the same access to board-certified physicians, pharmacists and other specialists that people in urban areas do.

“We take pride in providing access to health care in a modern facility equipped with the highest level of technology for today’s needs right here in Platte, right here at home,” says Mark Burket, CEO of Platte Health Center Avera. “Without USDA funding, that would not be possible.”

Obligation Amount: \$74,747 2015 DLT and applicant provided match funds of \$49,831.

Date of Obligation: 11/18/2015

Congressional District: At Large, Senator Thune, Senator Rounds, and Congresswoman Noem

Partners: Avera Health and USDA Rural Development

Demographics: Platte, SD—population of 1,200 and two hours away from the nearest tertiary hospital in Sioux Falls, SD.

Impact: These telehealth services help deliver the right care at the right time, saving lives and improving the overall quality of care in their community. Now, the people of Platte have the same access to board-certified physicians, pharmacists and other specialists that people in urban areas do.