



News Release

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USDA Invests \$28.4 Million to Improve Health Care for More than 9,500 Rural Vermonters

Rural Development Under Secretary Torres Small, Senator Welch Celebrate Emergency Rural Health Care Funding at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital with RD State Director Waring

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt., March 24, 2023 – Today, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development (RD) Xochitl Torres Small announced \$28.4 million in funding to improve health care facilities in St. Johnsbury and Waterbury through USDA’s [Community Facilities Direct Loans](#) and the [Emergency Rural Health Care](#) (ERHC) grant program.

Vermont Senator Peter Welch and RD State Director Sarah Waring joined Torres Small at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) in St. Johnsbury to announce the projects. The investments will create new health care positions, save more than 400 jobs and benefit more than 9,500 rural residents.

“The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to making sure rural people have access to critical care close to home, no matter where they live,” said Torres Small. “Thanks to the leadership of Senator Peter Welch, these projects will help thousands of people in rural Vermont access the modern, cutting-edge hospital and health care they deserve.”

“These resilient, resourceful health care institutions are more than deserving of this crucial funding,” said Waring. “With the many challenges that doctors, nurses and staff have navigated over the last few years, it’s an honor for us to help make their lives and work just a little easier with these investments. This modernization of space and services embodies the Biden-Harris Administration’s mission to improve quality of life in rural America, resulting in better health care access, more options and improved health maintenance for rural Vermonters.”

In St. Johnsbury, NVRH will expand multiple departments with a \$1 million ERHC and a \$16.5 million Community Facilities Direct Loan. The hospital will increase available beds and upgrade the laboratory, pharmacy and behavioral health and emergency departments to be more efficient, safe and functionally modern. This will result in shorter wait times for emergency treatment, more pharmacy offerings, improved storage and privacy for patients.

With a \$1 million ERHC and a \$9.9 million Community Facilities Loan, Morrisville-based Copley Hospital will build an orthopedic medical office in Waterbury. The investment will help the hospital purchase property, build the facility and purchase modern medical imaging equipment and related items to meet the growing need for orthopedic, rehabilitation, and podiatry services in the community.

Background: Emergency Rural Health Care Grants

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021 to deliver immediate economic relief to people impacted by the pandemic. In August 2021, USDA made the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants](#) available through the American Rescue Plan to help rural health care facilities, tribes and communities expand access to health care services and nutrition assistance. The assistance is helping provide immediate relief to support rural hospitals, health care clinics and local communities. USDA is administering the funds through Rural Development's Community Facilities Program.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, Tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov. To subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

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