



News Release

Contact:
press@oc.usda.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture Invests \$1.63 Million in Vermont Through Emergency Rural Health Care Grants

Agency State Director Visits Springfield Hospital to Highlight 2022 ERHC Investments, Announce Recent Awardees

SPRINGFIELD, Vt., September 15, 2022 – Sarah Waring, State Director of [U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development in Vermont and New Hampshire \(RD\)](#), today announced the funding of two more Vermont healthcare institutions—Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and Little Rivers Healthcare—through [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants \(ERHC\)](#) totaling \$1,637,600. More than 58,000 people who live and work in rural Vermont will benefit from the funding. These investments are in addition to [last month's \\$1 million grant awarded to Springfield Hospital](#), and part of the Biden-Harris Administration's national focus on supporting rural healthcare providers during the Covid-19 pandemic through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Waring announced the recent awards at Springfield Hospital, where she joined congressional representatives, healthcare experts and funding recipients to take part in a panel discussion on the state of healthcare in Vermont.

“I am happy to announce this funding today and highlight the previous investment in Springfield Hospital as part of USDA's Emergency Rural Health Care Grant program, a source of crucial support and recovery for healthcare providers in Vermont and across the country,” said Waring. “These are investments that change lives during times of crisis and well into the future, addressing a variety of immediate needs and services for residents in rural communities. We are also extremely proud of any relief and reassurance our support can offer to the heroes on the ground who fought and continue to fight so bravely on the front lines against Covid. With these investments we honor them and thank them for their tireless service and dedication to their jobs and communities.”

The Biden-Harris Administration made ERHC funds available through its historic legislative package, the American Rescue Plan Act. Within months after the Act's passage, USDA responded quickly by making this funding available to ensure the long-term availability of rural health care services. In total, the program will use up to \$475 million in grants provided by President Biden's American Rescue Plan to expand rural hospitals and providers. Additional awards will be announced in the coming weeks.

"Springfield Hospital is pleased to receive Emergency Rural Healthcare Grant funding, which will help us make capital investment upgrades to our air-handler system," said Bob Adcock, Springfield Hospital CEO. "COVID-19 has strained resources for all hospitals, including ours. We appreciate the collaborative efforts of the USDA team whose guidance and consultation helped make this funding possible, which greatly benefits the residents and communities we serve."

ERHC grants help rural hospitals and health care providers implement telehealth and nutrition assistance programs, increase staffing to administer COVID-19 vaccines and testing, build or renovate facilities, and purchase medical supplies:

- Brattleboro Memorial Hospital will use \$637,600 to modernize equipment and make improvements that meet the increasing demands of telemedicine, including an upgraded phone system, smart beds, lifts, portable beds and stretchers, and cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment equipment.
- Little Rivers Healthcare in Wells River will increase patient access to needed services with help from a \$1,000,000 ERHC grant. Funding outcomes include additional exam rooms, health offices, care team support spaces, bathrooms, and a waiting room, work reception area and fire safety compliance work.

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.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.