Rural Health Transformation

Kentucky Primary Care Association

September 30, 2026

Agenda

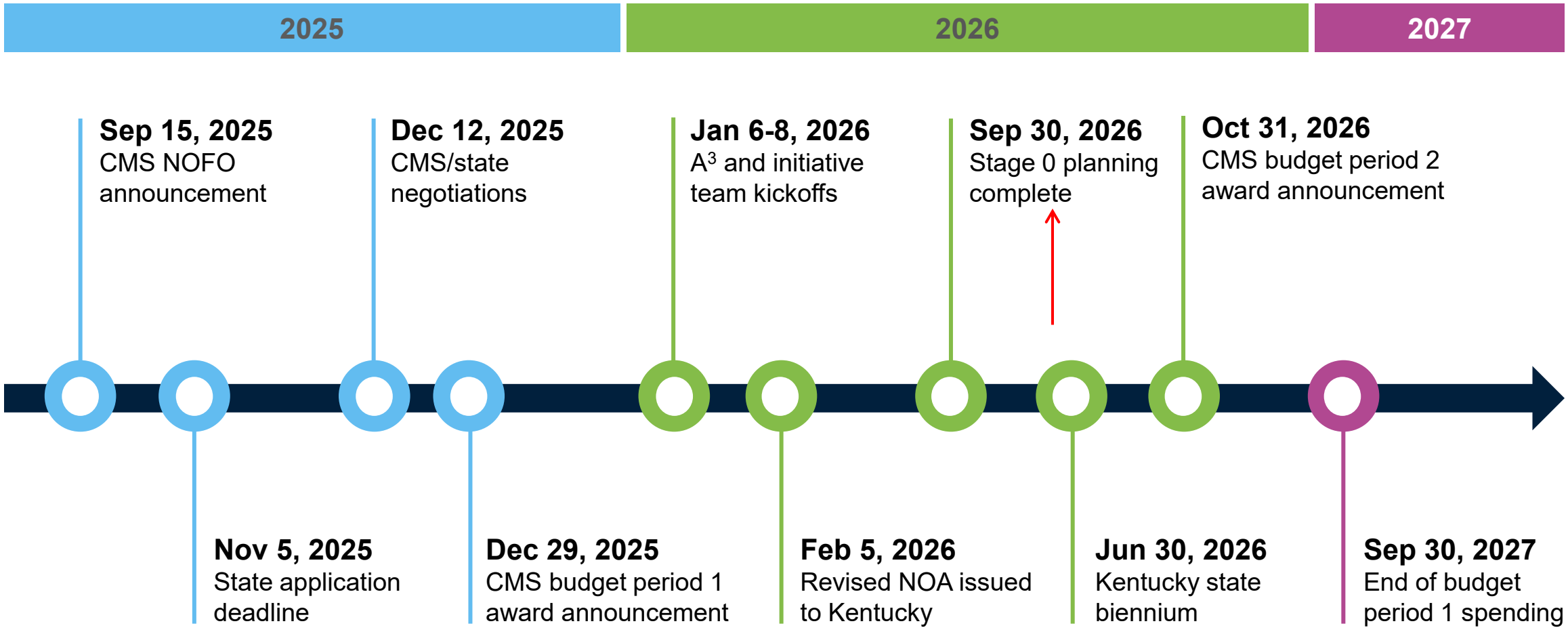
Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHT)) Overview

RHT Program Overview

Activating RHT

Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Overview

RHT Timeline



RHT: Opportunity to Think Differently

Focused Priorities

- ✓ Emphasizes **system transformation**
- ✓ CMS wants **big, innovative ideas** that are **evidence-based**
- ✓ A **5-year transformation**
- ✓ **Early wins** are critical
- ✓ State is **at risk to pay back funding**

What RHT is NOT

- X **Not** meant for ideas that are **unsustainable**
- X **Not** meant for ideas that are **"more of the same"**
- X **Cannot** be used to **replace or duplicate funding** or to **change fee schedules**

RHT Goals and Use

CMS Strategic Goals

- Make Rural America Healthy Again
- Workforce Development
- Innovative Care
- Tech Innovation
- Sustainable Access

Allowable Uses of Funds*

- Prevention and Chronic Disease
- Provider Payments
- Consumer Tech Solutions
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Workforce
- IT Advances
- Appropriate Care Availability
- Behavioral Health
- Innovative Care

Note: states **must invest in at least three uses of funds*

Funding Constraints

FUNDING LIMITS & EXCLUSIONS

- New construction
- Clinician's salaries
- Independent R&D
- EMR replacement
- Duplicate billable services

Thank You For Your Support

79	Providers
19	Community Partners
17	Academic Institutions
7	Local Governmental Entities
7	Families, Caregivers, and Consumer Advocacy
5	Payers and Employers

Kentucky's RHT Programs

PoWERing Rural Maternal & Infant Health

Increase perinatal and infant care in maternity care deserts through coordinated, telehealth-enabled teams

From Crisis to Care: Integrated EMS & Trauma Response

Enhance skills and resources for pre-hospital care and on-site interventions

Rapid Response to Recovery: EmPATH Model & Mobile Crisis

Expand integrated, technology-enabled crisis care from community response to long-term support

Rooted in Health: Rural Dental Access Program

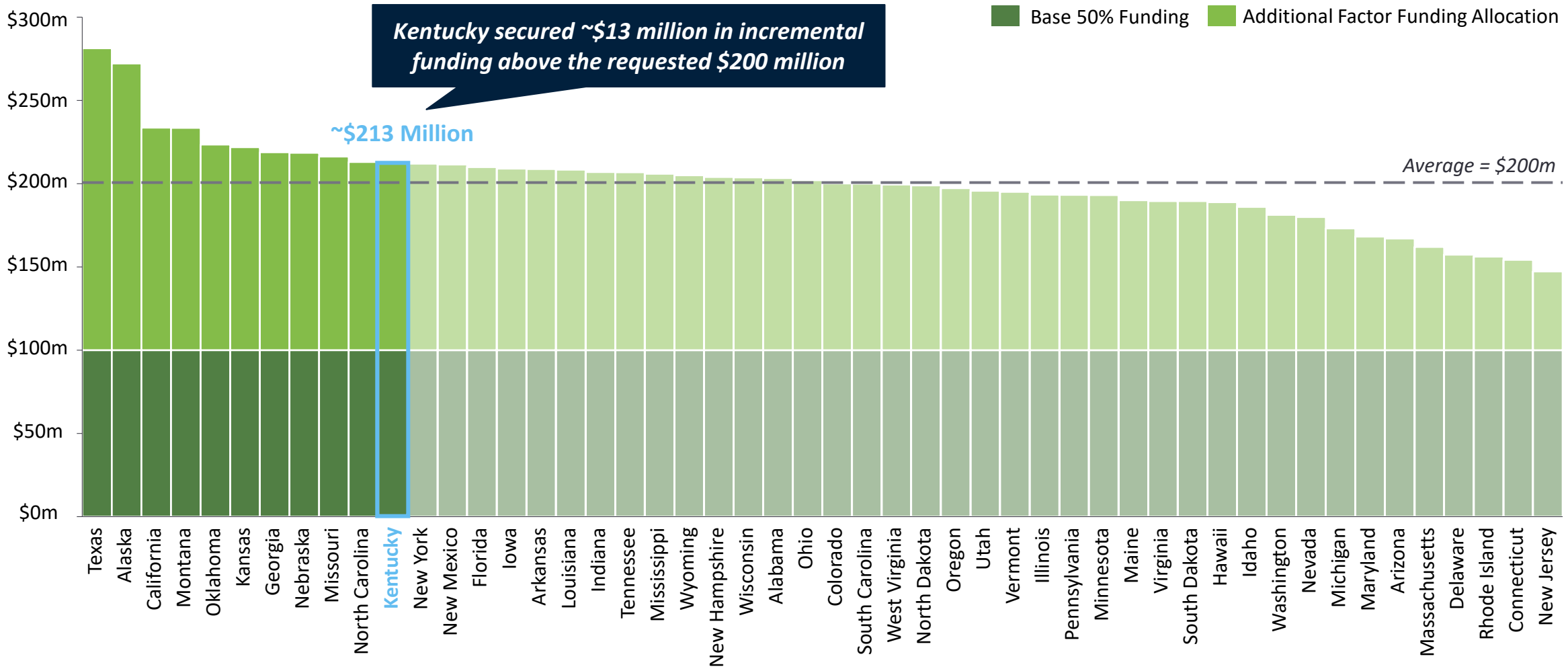
Improve rural access to preventive dental care and treatment through expanded training and mobile, portable services

Rural Community Hubs for Chronic Care Innovation

Reduce obesity and diabetes rate through evidence-based, community-led strategies

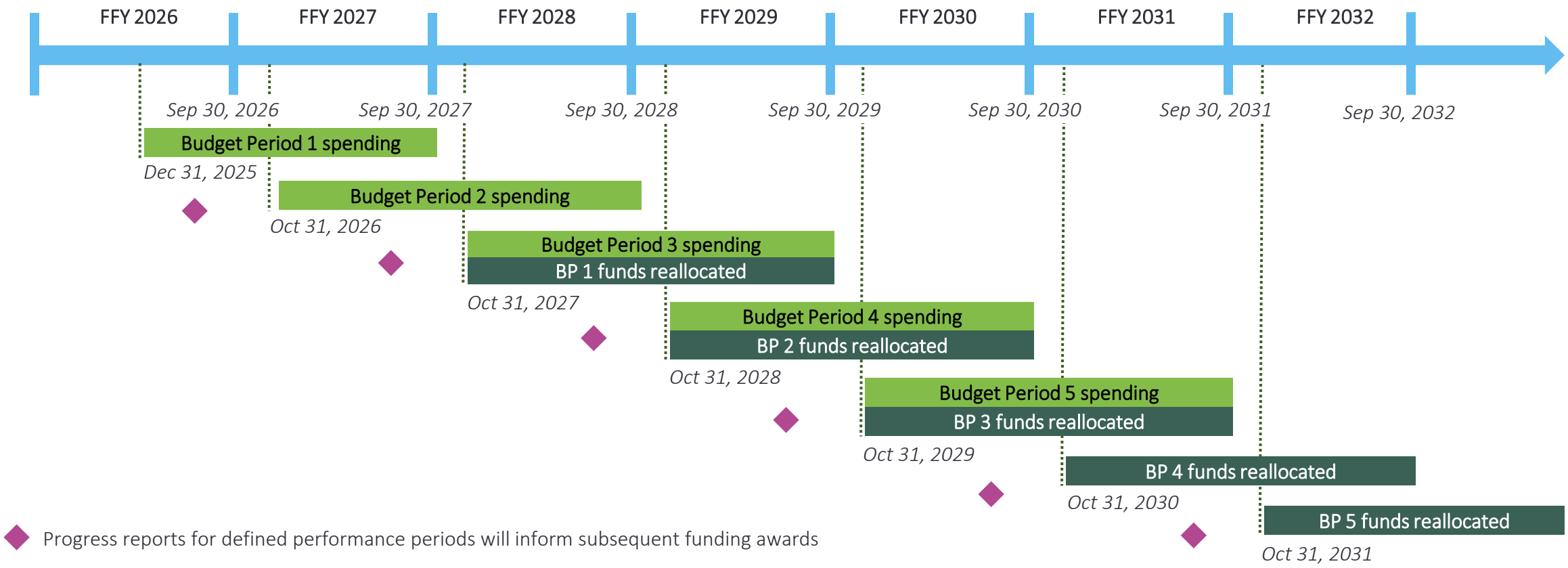
Impact: Reimagine Rural Health Care to Achieve Effective, Sustainable Health and Vitality for All

First Year Funding Awards

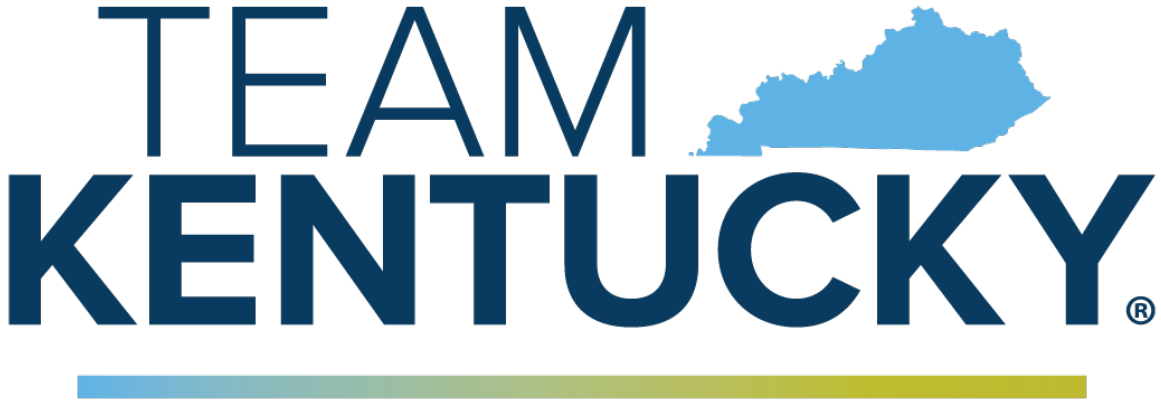


Source: US Department of Health and Human Services

Overview of CMS Budget Timeline



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services



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Rural Community Hubs
for Chronic Care Innovation (RCH)

Program Overview

The **Rural Community Hubs (RCH) initiative** seeks to unite fragmented interventions, programs, resources, and technology tools for local community organizations to **enable coordinated interventions across the chronic disease continuum**, from early education and engagement to prevention, access, and delivery of ongoing chronic care management solutions.

Focus Areas

- **Hub-and-spoke model focused on cross-ecosystem action**
- **Locally-led, state-coordinated innovations**
- **CHW expansion and certification**
- **Digital tools for care coordination and community collaboration**

PoWERing Rural Maternal and Infant Health (PoWER)

Program Overview

The **PoWER initiative** (**P**eople wh**o** **W**ork for **E**ngagement and **R**esilience) enhances access to perinatal and infant care in Kentucky's maternity care deserts by deploying **local teams of community health workers, doulas, and peer support specialists** to support women from pregnancy confirmation through one year postpartum.

Focus Areas

- **Pre-pregnancy education and awareness**
- **SDoH screening and referrals at confirmation of pregnancy**
- **Coordinated care teams leveraging paraprofessional providers**
- **Hybrid care model blending telehealth and community-based visits**
- **Perinatal wraparound supports for mothers and infants**

Rapid Response to Recovery (RRR): EmPATH Model & Mobile Crisis

Program Overview

The **Rapid Response to Recovery (RRR) initiative** builds on Kentucky's EmPATH model and mobile crisis intervention services to create an **integrated behavioral health crisis system** that supports individuals throughout their care journey. RRR aims to address high rates of untreated mental illness and substance use disorder by reducing avoidable costs, minimizing reliance on first responders, and improving patient outcomes.

Focus Areas

EmPATH expansion for rapid stabilization and psychiatric treatment

Community-based behavioral health crisis support expansion

Telebehavioral health coordination hub

Real-time technology to enable connections across the entire crisis continuum

Rooted in Health (RIH):
Rural Dental Access

Program Overview

The **Rooted in Health (RIH) initiative** seeks to improve dental care within rural communities in Kentucky by increasing **dental externship opportunities and training programs** with rural providers in the state, providing **teledentistry** support, expanding **community access points** for oral hygiene care, and reducing emergency department (ED) visits for non-emergent dental pain.

Focus Area

- Accredited dental hygiene programs expansion
- Teledental hubs
- Portable and mobile dental care expansion
- Extraction Training for General Dentists

From Crisis to Care (CTC):
Integrated EMS & Trauma Response

Program Overview

The Crisis to Care (CTC) initiative seeks to enhance **prehospital care capacity, responsiveness**, and coordination by improving workforce training, technology enablement, and establishing new protocols to **treat patients in place (TIP) and transport to alternative destinations (TAD)**. The initiative seeks to also improve care coordination through integrating CHWs into EMS agencies and increasing the number of EMTs that become CHWs.

Focus Areas

- EMS learning management modernization
- Post-response care coordination
- Treat-Not-Transport (TNT) and Transport to Alternative Destinations (TAD)
- Regional medical operations coordination centers (RMOCC)
- Special needs tracking and awareness response system (STARS)

Technology Enablement

Enabling Infrastructure

Enabling Infrastructure

Kentucky's Approach to RHT Technology Enablement

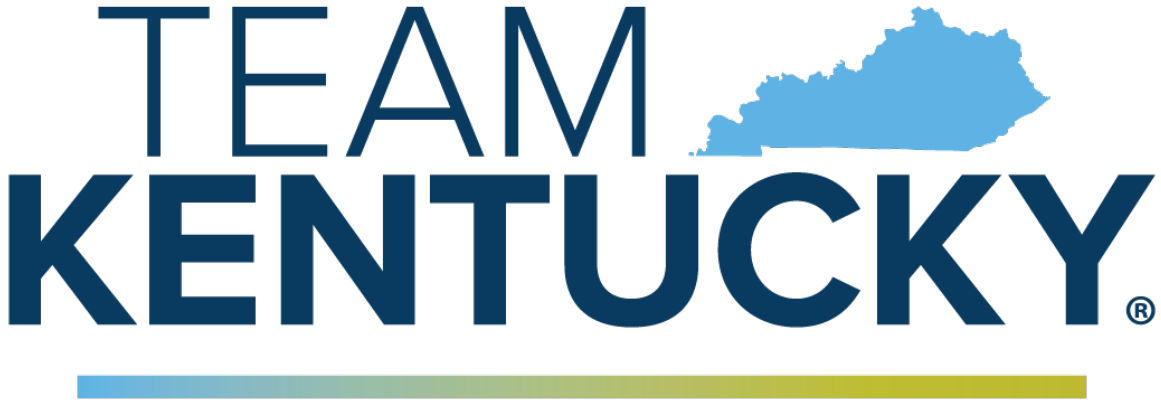
Vitality Signs

Community Collaboration Hub

Community Care Coordination Tools

Data Interoperability

Consumer-facing Technology



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Activating Kentucky's RHT

Staffing our team

- Hire and onboard dedicated **Aspire → Activate → Attain (A^3) and RHT initiative teams**
- Establish **robust processes and ways of working** to support RHT implementation and communication

Launching early pilots

- Determine **approach for pilot selection**
- Work with community stakeholders to **design initial pilot locations**
- Move forward on **initiative implementation milestones**
- Document early learnings with a focus on **rapid cycle feedback**

Measuring progress

- Align on data sources and tools for **performance reporting**
- **Baseline key initiative metrics** underpinning Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)
- Identify evidence-based **Leading Indicators**
- Submit first **CMS annual progress report** in late August 2026

Measures of Success: Objectives & Key Results

Rural Community Hubs	PoWERing Maternal and Infant Health	Rapid Response to Recovery	Rooted in Health	From Crisis to Care
Initiative Objectives (O)				
Reduce obesity and diabetes, focused on upstream prevention	Increase timely perinatal care in maternity care deserts	Expand integrated, technology-enabled behavioral health crisis care	Improve access to preventive dental care and treatment	Build capacity and capability for pre-hospital care and treatment-in-place
Key Results (KRs)				
• Development of rural community hubs • Launch of locally-led chronic care initiatives through pilot hubs • Bidirectional data sharing and referral closure • CHW training and certification for chronic disease	• Early prenatal engagement • Completion of key prenatal /postpartum visits • Increased maternal behavioral health screening and referral • Access to nutrition, coordinated care, and wraparound supports • Access to well-child visits	• Increased use of community paramedicine and co-responder teams • Fewer ED visits for behavioral health • Active treatment follow-through • Access to telebehavioral health support for urgent response	• Increased preventative oral care for adults • Increased preventative oral care for children • Expanded dental hygienist workforce • Fewer ED visits from preventable dental needs • Teledental care delivery	• Increased capacity for EMS providers and CHWs • TIP or TAD utilization • Reduction in preventable ED visits • Coordination between EMS and trauma systems

Alignment With Approved Application

The RHT application serves as a guardrail for our evolving efforts over the 5-year federal funding period

What we CAN do:

- ✓ Develop new **strategies and tactics** to achieve the goals of the five RHT initiatives
- ✓ Expand **stakeholder partnerships** to extend reach across the health and wellbeing ecosystem
- ✓ Identify additional **Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)** to enhance tracking and reporting of existing initiatives
- ✓ Propose ideas for **sustainability beyond the federal grant cycle** that build on the application's foundation

What we can NOT do:

- × Design **entirely new initiatives** that do not align with the five initiatives in the approved application
- × Undertake activities that would result in **spending above the proposed budget** submitted to CMS
- × Commit to **work that derails timelines** or risks our ability to meet existing milestones and OKRs
- × Use RHT funds to address priorities that **do not align with CMS strategic goals**

Rural Health Transformation is a cooperative agreement between CMS and the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Rural Health Transformation

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has been awarded funding through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Fund (RHTF). This investment will empower Kentucky to launch and implement its Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) — a community-driven strategy to expand access and improve health outcomes for rural residents across the Commonwealth. Read Governor Beshear's press release.

About RHT

This project is 100% funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for a total of $212.9 million in budget year 1 with 100% by CMS/HHS. The RHTF grant spans five budget periods aligned with federal fiscal years (FY2026–FY2030). Funding is disbursed annually by CMS based on achievement of performance metrics. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government. View the Notice of Funding Opportunity from CMS.