A cost-effective, state-based program directed at meeting the needs of West Virginia’s communities

"West Virginia needs the Rural Health Initiative – to recruit, train and retain healthcare providers in our rural communities and improve the health and well-being of our citizens."

– Sarah Armstrong Tucker
West Virginia’s Chancellor for Higher Education
West Virginia Needs the Rural Health Initiative

Because the program allows us to live and work in underserved areas, we’re able to have a unique, immersive experience and become part of these rural communities. We build real relationships and get hands-on training that’s invaluable – and we want to stay and practice in these communities.

– West Virginia University Dental Student

The cultural insights that come from working within RHI programs have helped me better understand factors in rural areas that effect the health of residents. Those insights will make me a better doctor.

– Marshall University Medical Student

The opportunity to assess needs and lead service projects in rural communities brings us face to face with the people who need health care most, and allows us to work side by side with rural leaders to solve address community problems. These experiences will enhance my future practice as a physician in a rural community.

– WV School of Osteopathic Medicine Medical Student

RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE GOALS

1. Increase the recruitment of healthcare providers to rural/underserved areas.
2. Increase the retention rate of healthcare providers in rural/underserved areas.
3. Develop pipeline programs to enhance student interest in rural/underserved healthcare careers.
4. Support the involvement of rural/underserved areas of the state in the health education process.
Enabling special professional training emphasizing rural health

WHAT IS THE RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE?

The purpose of the Rural Health Initiative (RHI) is to provide funding to support the recruitment and retention of primary health care providers to the rural, underserved areas of the state. The RHI is a statewide program funded by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission through the Rural Health Initiative, administered by the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center. With the goal of training uniquely-qualified D.O.s to practice in West Virginia’s rural areas, the Rural Health Initiative takes rural health clinical exposure to a whole new level of engagement through a variety of initiatives: Health Career Rotation Programs & Grants – to facilitate clinical rotation and block rotations; Rural Residency Program & Summer Residential Academy; Rural Research Grants – for rural community health issues; Rural Health Fellowship Program; Rural Residency Program & Summer Residential Academy; and more. To date, the Rural Health Initiative has awarded more than $3 million in grants and fellowships to West Virginia’s three state-funded medical schools. In FY2019, each academic health center received $587,000.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Maxwell University’s Center for Rural Health is committed to the rural dream of healthy, educated and well-informed rural communities. Faculty and students are dedicated to fulfilling this vision in unique, creative and collaborative ways.

West Virginia University

With the year of meeting community needs to improve the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians, the statewide program directed at improving the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians is run by the Division of Health Sciences at the Higher Education Policy Commission.

The Division of Health Sciences at the Higher Education Policy Commission oversees the Rural Health Initiative, the statewide program directed at improving the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians. The initiative emphasizes rural health care needs of the state. The Division of Health Sciences at the Higher Education Policy Commission oversees the Rural Health Initiative, the statewide program directed at improving the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians. The initiative emphasizes rural health care needs of the state. With the goal of training uniquely-qualified D.O.s to practice in West Virginia’s rural areas, the Rural Health Initiative takes rural health clinical exposure to a whole new level of engagement through a variety of initiatives: Health Career Rotation Programs & Grants – to facilitate clinical rotation and block rotations; Rural Residency Program & Summer Residential Academy; Rural Research Grants – for rural community health issues; Rural Health Fellowship Program; Rural Residency Program & Summer Residential Academy; and more. To date, the Rural Health Initiative has awarded more than $3 million in grants and fellowships to West Virginia’s three state-funded medical schools. In FY2019, each academic health center received $587,000.

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RECRUITMENT/PIPELINE PROGRAMS

High School
The RHI’s award-winning high school pipeline programs offer students medical campus visits, real-time surgeries via teleconference, hands-on workshops and discussions with healthcare specialists to engage and recruit top students interested in healthcare practice in West Virginia.

Pre-Med/College
From accelerated BS/MD programs to mentoring, summer academies and funding support, RHI offers a variety of opportunities for high-performing students.

Post-Graduate
RHI and the medical schools maintain a variety of programs to support post-graduate interests for high-performing students interested in furthering their education in West Virginia.

Rural Practice
From the RHI Housing Support Program and financial support to immersive experience in unique rural communities across the state, there are a wide variety of programs and initiatives to ensure students receive specialized training in rural/underserved areas.

WHO QUALIFIES

Students in Health Professions Programs, including:
- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Allied Health Fields
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Third- or Fourth-Year Students in Good Standing

HOW TO APPLY

For more information on how to apply for programs, financial support, housing opportunities and more, start by visiting:

Marshall University – Rural Health Initiative
ruralhealth.marshall.edu

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine – Rural Health Initiative
wvsom.edu/programs/rhi/rhi-home

West Virginia University – Rural Health Initiative
hsc.wvu.edu/icrh