

## **Families Flourish, Emergency Rural Healthcare Grants - 10/5/22**

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| <b>\$1M ERHC</b>     | <b>Families Flourish Northeast</b>                |
| <b>\$88K ERHC</b>    | <b>Upper Valley Haven</b>                         |
| <b>\$142K ERHC</b>   | <b>West Central Behavioral Health</b>             |
| <b>\$176.9K ERHC</b> | <b>Mid-State Health Center</b>                    |
| <b>\$750K ERHC</b>   | <b>Health First Family Care Center - Franklin</b> |
| <b>\$250K ERHC</b>   | <b>Health First Family Care Center - Laconia</b>  |

[Salutation]

Thank you Chairwoman Tanner, and the entire team of staff and practitioners here at Families Flourish Northeast, and Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital. We are excited to be here today to celebrate the Emergency Rural Healthcare Grants, and to honor and thank the people who have made our health care system work, particularly during these two years of unprecedented disruptions and challenges.

My name is Sarah Waring, and I am the state director for USDA Rural Development for Vermont and New Hampshire. Our mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural communities, and we do that through supporting housing, business development and community facilities and infrastructure.

Whether small or large, the community infrastructure most vital to its residents is a health care institution. We at the USDA strongly believe that no person in rural America should be without access to health care services because of their zip code, and I'm sure those gathered here today would agree with us.

There is no denying that our healthcare system—in New Hampshire and throughout the country—has been under incredible stress. We moved from an urgent emergency in the pandemic to an enduring emergency with our healthcare workforce and business model. As society reels from the trauma of the pandemic, your staff has taken the body blows, day in and day out, to keep us safe.

To truly understand the state of healthcare, here in New Hampshire and throughout our country, one has to be a *provider* of healthcare. We all receive medical help at some point in our lives, and this does not make us experts in the field. One has to *live* healthcare, day in and day out, to claim intimate understanding of its challenges, tragedies and triumphs.

Officially we are here today to announce USDA Emergency Rural Health Care grant awards for these deserving and dedicated community healthcare institutions. But as a beneficiary of your work, and certainly NOT an expert in the field, my staff and I are here more to celebrate your passion and perseverance, to convey our deep and ongoing respect for what you do, and to simply say, 'Thank You.'

These grants were designed to support 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. They also will help regional partnerships, to solve regional rural health care problems and build a stronger, more sustainable rural health care system in response to the pandemic.

Right across the river at Upper Valley Haven, \$88,000 is going to upgrade its kitchen from residential-grade to commercial-grade, with increased food preparation and storage capacity. Funding will also help purchase a van with a reefer unit to pick up and deliver food, and service the Children's program.

\$142,000 was awarded to West Central Behavioral Health, a community mental healthcare provider for lower Grafton and Sullivan Counties with 5 clinics located among Lebanon, Newport and Claremont. Funds will upgrade telehealth service elements, air purifiers, carbon dioxide monitors, equipment and fixtures for an Integrated Care program clinic room and vehicles for the Mobile Crisis Response initiative.

In Plymouth, Mid-State Health Center will use \$176,900 to purchase medical equipment, furniture and fixtures for an acute care center. The facility provides COVID-19 services as well as primary care, and the new equipment grant for the new facility will increase the ability of the community to address the pandemic, as well as provide additional health resources to those in need of current and deferred medical treatment in Plymouth.

At Health First Family Care Center in Franklin, a \$750,000 grant will fund modern improvements for safer, more efficient patient intake and treatment. Updates also include new lighting, security cameras and wheelchair access. Additional space will also be dedicated for three new clinical treatment rooms and four counseling offices as part of a new behavioral health and substance use pod. At the Health First's Laconia location, a \$250,000 ERHC grant will fund a project to reconfigure the entryway, check-in area, and waiting room, and expand corridors for easier, safer patient movement.

And finally, here at Families Flourish, \$1,000,000 will help build a state-of-the-art residential treatment center. Staff and services will address substance-use disorder among mothers, and will provide a safe, supportive community in which up to 14 women can have their children with them as they go through the transformative healing program. Patients will have easy access to public transportation, educational and employment opportunities, public school for their children, outpatient treatment and social activities.

We want to say thank you to the incredible leaders who are here today, and let you know that we're happy to support your work now and in the future. We know that healthcare is a pillar of community for rural America, as well as a strong leg in our local economies. We are proud to be a part of the solution with you.

[Handoff]