Rural Hospital Innovations Tour: Request for Applications

ASTHO, with support from HRSA, invites state and territorial health officials (S/THOs) to apply for a rural hospital tour learning experience. ASTHO will select up to seven S/THOs, senior deputies, or executive level staff to attend three site visits that highlight promising practices and approaches to rural hospital sustainability:

1. **May 6, 2020 – Maryland Department of Health, Baltimore, MD.** This site visit will focus on Maryland’s Total Cost of Care model and include visits with the Maryland Health Care Commission, Health Services Cost Review Commission, and the Maryland Hospital Association.

2. **May 7, 2020 – Pennsylvania Department of Health, Harrisburg, PA.** This site visit will feature discussion on Pennsylvania’s Rural Health Model.

3. **May 12, 2020 – Lincoln Community Hospital, Hugo, CO.** The meeting will be held with Benjamin Anderson, Colorado Hospital Association and former CEO of Kearny County Hospital in Kansas.

Commitments: S/THOs will be required to commit to attending all three site visits. (ASTHO will pay for full travel.) In addition, participating S/THOs must attend a debrief call that ASTHO will hold after the tour to gather in-depth feedback and data on the site visits.

Requirements: Must be currently serving as an S/THO, senior deputy, or executive-level staff person overseeing a hospital portfolio.

Request for application released: February 6, 2020

Applications due: February 28, 2020

Selection announcement: March 9, 2020

Project period: May-July 2020

Rural hospital sustainability is critical. Since 2010, 121 rural hospitals have closed. An additional 21 percent of rural hospitals—a total of 430 facilities—are at high risk of closure. Further complicating matters, 64 percent of those hospitals are considered essential to their communities, a designation made based on a hospital’s trauma center status, its service to vulnerable populations, its distance from other hospitals, and the economic impact it has on a region. Research indicates that access to healthcare and economic vitality are severely reduced following a rural hospital closure. Outcomes may include:

- Increased time and cost of transportation to healthcare services (particularly among seniors, who experience an average of 14 additional minutes in an ambulance).
- Initial increases in the number of births in hospitals without obstetric care units (3%) and an increase in preterm births (0.67%), though those rates decrease over time, possibly as communities adjust.
- Reduced per capita income (-4%) and increased unemployment (1.6%) due to the loss of jobs for hospital staff and outward migration of community members.
**ASTHO point of contact**: Please email the completed application to Janet Oputa, ASTHO’s senior analyst, clinical to community connections, at joputa@astho.org.

### Application Form

**State or Territorial Health Official Contact Information**

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Please describe your interest in this project:

Has your state experienced rural hospital closures, or do you anticipate any? Please explain:

How do your responsibilities as S/THO interact with rural hospitals?

- [ ] Overseeing hospital licensing or inspections
- [ ] Managing a certificate or determination of need process
- [ ] Other (please explain):