

Learning Collaborative Call for Applications
Sustaining and Increasing Access to Care in Rural Communities

Co-Sponsored by Capital Link and NACHC, with Support from HRSA

Application Process

Overview

Through a series of four interactive webinars, this Learning Collaborative will explore community needs, growth planning, and financing options for health centers serving rural communities. It will address challenges and opportunities FQHCs face in communities experiencing hospital distress and closure; examine the impact of telehealth on care delivery; and address financial capacity, sustainability, and financing options for FQHCs seeking to expand their impact in rural America.

A learning collaborative is a dynamic, virtual peer exchange aiming to foster dialogue among stakeholders facing similar challenges to explore promising best practices, develop a common understanding of critical issues, and improve participants' abilities to respond to rapid changes in their health care environments. Targeting health centers serving rural communities, the content of this learning collaborative will be delivered through a series of four 90-minute webinars from February-April 2022.

Scheduled webinar topics include:

- **Session 1:** Feb. 9, 2022; 1-2:30 pm EST

Lay of the Land for Rural FQHCs

This session will review basic data on health centers in rural America, including the shifting market, the rural/urban split, patient characteristics (via UDS mapper), and definitions of rural vs. highly rural/frontier. The session will highlight current and emerging federal initiatives and funding opportunities at HRSA, USDA, FCC, and SBA; notable findings of Capital Link's recent report on Financial and Operational Trends of FQHCs serving rural America; and the landscape of available resources, including those housed on the Rural Health Hub (a FORHP-funded clearinghouse managed by University of North Dakota). We will also facilitate a group discussion on the challenges participants are facing in their rural communities.

- **Session 2:** March 9, 2022; 1-2:30 pm EST

Enhancing Rural Health Access through Telehealth

This session will review challenges and opportunities related to telehealth in rural areas. It will provide fresh status update on broadband (USDA or FCC) access, as well as CMS and state reimbursement and flexibilities. We will consider NACHC's State Affairs Telehealth State Guide as a resource and review other available telehealth resources. During the session, we will also provide examples of innovative ways health centers are utilizing telehealth and virtual engagement with patients and conduct a group discussion on participants' experiences with telehealth thus far.

- **Session 3:** Wednesday, April 6th 2022, 1-2:30 pm EST

FQHC Roles and Opportunities in Connection with Rural Hospital Financial Challenges

This session will provide a context for considering how FQHCs can play a critical role in evolving health systems in rural communities. We will focus on best practices, strategies, and lessons learned and discuss

a recent Capital Link case study of a rurally-located health center's experience related to responding to a hospital closure.

Session 4 Wednesday, May 4th 2022, 1-2:30 pm EST

Growth Planning & Capital Resources for Health Centers Serving Rural Communities

This session will pull together aspects of the three prior sessions to provide perspectives on planning and financing health center growth in rural communities. Aggregated financial and operational data of LC participants will be presented and discussed. We will offer key capital funding information relevant for rural FQHCs, including USDA Community Facilities Program, NMTC and the HRSA Loan Guarantee Program—highlighting examples of health centers that have obtained these types of capital funding.

Presenters of the four webinars will include content experts from both the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) and Capital Link as well as other industry professionals.

Learning objectives for participants in this Collaborative include:

- Gain perspective on the opportunities and challenges related to sustaining access to primary care in rural communities;
- Gain knowledge regarding assessing market needs and planning for growth in rural communities;
- Explore needs, challenges, and opportunities for FQHCs in the context of rural hospital closure and/or financial distress;
- Examine the impact of telehealth on access to patient care and explore facility design considerations in planning for greater telehealth use; and
- Gain knowledge of the capital financing process and resources available for health centers serving rural communities.

Participation

Capital Link will be accepting applications from interested health centers, which will need to be completed and returned by Friday, **January 21, 2022**. There is **no fee for participants** as this Learning Collaborative is funded by HRSA through its cooperative agreements with Capital Link and NACHC. We recommend that each organization enroll at least two appropriate team members. All organizations interested in participating must:

- ✓ Complete and submit an Application of Interest on/by **January 21, 2022** to Tony Skapinsky at tskapinsky@caplink.org.
- ✓ Commit to engage in all Learning Collaborative sessions and exercises with the goal of incorporating new knowledge in connection with expanding access to care in rural communities and provide feedback on the overall structure and effectiveness of the Collaborative after the last session.
- ✓ Obtain written consent from your health center's leadership for your health center's participation in the Collaborative (see the last page of this application).



Sustaining and Increasing Access to Care in Rural Communities Learning Collaborative

Application of Interest

Eligibility

- The health center applicant has sites in rural communities and/or a significant percentage of its patients reside in rural communities.
- The health center applicant has obtained written consent from leadership for its organization’s participation in the Collaborative (see the last page of this application).
- The health center has provided its most recent **two years** of financial audits

Contact Information

Date Submitted	
Health Center Name	
Corporate Address:	<i>Street, City, State, Zip Code:</i>
Person Submitting Application	<i>Name, Title, Telephone Number, Email Address:</i>
Primary Contact	<i>Name, Title, Telephone Number, Email Address:</i>
Name of Intended Team Participants (2-3 individuals)	<i>We recommend at least two team members.</i>
1.	<i>Title, Organization, Telephone Number, Email address:</i>
2.	<i>Title, Organization, Telephone Number, Email address:</i>
3.	<i>Title, Organization, Telephone Number, Email address:</i>

General Information

FQHC Designation(s)	Yes	No	If No, Target Application Date	Approval Date
Section 330 FQHC				
FQHC Look-Alike				
Other, please specify:				
Total # of Sites				
# of Sites in Rural Communities				
Total # of Patients				
Est % of Patients from Rural Communities				
Financial Audits	<i>Submit copies of latest two years of financial audits</i>			

Rural Considerations

Hospital Closure	<i>Has your health center been affected (or may be affected) by the financial distress or closure of a rural community hospital?</i>
USDA	<i>Has your health center ever received funding or financing from the USDA?</i>
COVID-19	<i>How has your health center been affected by COVID-19? (Increase/decrease in utilization; workforce challenges, etc.)</i>
Telehealth	<i>What has been your experience/limitations with implementing telehealth visits over the last 12 months?</i>

Capital Expansion

Capital Project Objectives	<i>Does the health center have short to medium term capital expansion plans in a rural community?</i>
Project Description	<i>Please briefly describe the capital project (new construction/renovation, equipment, square footage, replacement or expansion, services to offer, budget, if known, etc.)</i>
Anticipated Funding Sources	<i>Have you assembled any funding for this project? ____ Yes ____ No</i> <i>If yes, approximate percentage of funding secured ____%</i>
Project Location (if known)	<i>Street, City, State, Zip Code:</i>
Development Timeline	<i>Estimated timing for planning, development team assemblage, site acquisition, construction, and/or operations:</i>
Preparedness	<i>On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being extremely prepared), how prepared do you feel your organization is to undergo a capital project at this time?</i> <i>1 2 3 4 5</i>

Expectations

Other	<i>What other information do you hope to learn about/share during the Learning Collaborative?</i>
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Consent for Participation from Health Center Leadership (Direct Supervisor or Senior Management)

I understand and consent to the participation of members representing my health center in Capital Link and NACHC's **Sustaining and Increasing Access to Care in Rural Communities** Learning Collaborative. I understand that participation will include attendance at four group webinars and engaging in dialogue with other participants.

Printed Name

Title

Signature

Date

If a signature cannot be obtained, health center leadership may email written consent to Tony Skapinsky at tskapinsky@caplink.org.

Application Submission

Please submit your completed application of interest by **January 21, 2022** to:

Tony Skapinsky
Project Consultant
Capital Link
tskapinsky@caplink.org

About Capital Link

Capital Link is a national non-profit dedicated to strengthening and expanding high quality community-based health care by working with health centers to plan capital projects, finance growth and improve performance. Additional information is available at www.caplink.org. Capital Link is a National Training and Technical Assistance Partner (NTTAP), receiving funding through a National Cooperative Agreement with HRSA.

About NACHC

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all. NACHC also works closely with chartered State and Regional Primary Care Associations (PCAs) to fulfill their shared health care mission and support the growth and development of community-based health center programs. Additional Information can be found at www.nachc.org.