

News Article

[A HEALTHY VIRGINIA, Virginia State Rural Health Plan]

In our nation today, there is a lot of talk about health care. Rather, there is a lot of disagreement about health care. But there is one thing everyone can agree on--health care is a vital aspect of all our lives. This is especially true in the Commonwealth of Virginia where we rank as only the 20th healthiest state in the country. While this is a good place to start, there is still much work to do before we reach our goal of making our state one of the top ten healthiest in the nation. And this work begins in rural Virginia.

Here in Virginia we've long taken pride in our rural areas. We're known for natural beauty, from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay and the lush greenery between. Rural Virginia is a fundamental part of our identity. Yet this same terrain makes healthcare difficult to access. This is a huge concern, given that over 1 million Virginians live in rural areas. The lack of primary care facilities in our rural communities are leading to the overuse of emergency rooms. This, in turn, makes the delivery of emergency medical services less efficient.

It is imperative that we find ways to improve healthcare in these regions. Virginia's rural residents deserve a specialized healthcare plan: a plan that stretches beyond emergency medical services, a plan where access to quality care is priority, a plan that insures all essential services are available to all Virginians.

This plan does exist and is already being implemented. It is Virginia's State Rural Health Plan (VA-SRHP). Three years in the making, this roadmap to a healthy Virginia encompasses the recommendations and research of many healthcare experts, government officials, and rural Virginia residents. The VA-SRHP brings safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable, and patient-centered healthcare to rural Virginia. It is designed to improve overall wellness, increase access to care and ensure a healthy future for all Virginians. By embracing new and innovative technology such as tele-health and electronic record keeping, Virginia will move into an era of accessible health care for all. As a result of this plan, residents in the heart of Appalachia will enjoy a level of care comparable to a resident in Richmond.

The creation of this plan is a big step towards creating a healthy Virginia. But its success is dependent on you. The VA-SRHP is heavily reliant on the support of all Virginians. Everyone from local residents to small business owners to large corporations play a critical role in making Virginia one of the healthiest places in America. Learn more about the plan and how you can help by visiting <http://www.va-srhp.org>. Join us in building a healthy Virginia.