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**Georgia Receives Federal Approval for \$218.8M GREAT Health Program**  
*First-year funding to advance rural healthcare transformation throughout the state*

**ATLANTA (February 26, 2026)** — The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), recently announced that the state has received final approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for its amended first-year budget period to utilize \$218,862,169.63 million in awarded funds through the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). The Georgia Rural Enhancement and Transformation of Health Program, also known as the GREAT Health Program, aims to strengthen rural healthcare systems and improve outcomes statewide while introducing innovation and greater flexibility into the health system.

As an initial step, DCH is working with subgrantees named in the original application – including the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce – to coordinate next steps and maximize the impact of awarded funds. At various points over the next few months, subgrantees related to GREAT Health Program initiatives will receive funds to begin their projects. To further support implementation, DCH has engaged project management vendors, launched strategic planning efforts, and is hiring 20 staff dedicated to advancing GREAT Health. The department is also developing Requests for Grant Applications (RFGAs) in alignment with CMS requirements, with the RFGAs expected to open in spring 2026 to expand rural health collaboration and innovation.

“GREAT Health is about more than funding – it’s about transformation,” said Stuart Portman, executive director, Medical Assistance Plans Division at DCH. “We envision rural populations that are healthier, live longer, work in the communities they love and enjoy an improved quality of life. This program will serve as a catalyst that creates systems-level change that stabilizes rural hospitals, leverages technology, drives innovation, improves quality, and maintains a strong patient focus.”

A key strategic priority of GREAT Health is adopting a multi-payer value-based care model to improve care delivery across the state. This is currently expected to be a Georgia-specific version of CMS’s Achieving Healthcare Efficiency through Accountable Design (AHEAD) model. Of the 93 hospitals invited to participate in the AHEAD model for prioritization within the GREAT Health Program, 57 have signed Letters of Intent (LOIs). The deadline for hospitals to submit LOIs is March 15.

A more robust online hub for GREAT Health is currently in development. This site will be the home for all future RFGAs, news updates, and materials related to GREAT Health. In the meantime, stakeholders and community members can stay up to date on program news and updates by visiting:

<https://dch.georgia.gov/great-health-program-georgias-rural-health-transformation-program>

**About the Georgia Department of Community Health**

DCH serves as the lead agency for [Medicaid](#) and [PeachCare for Kids®](#), which, combined, cover more than two million Georgians annually. The agency also oversees the [State Health Benefit Plan](#), [Healthcare Facility Regulation Division](#), and the [State Office of Rural Health](#), among other divisions, accounting for an annual budget of more than \$20 billion. Through effective planning, purchasing and oversight, DCH provides access to affordable, quality health care to some of the state’s most vulnerable and underserved populations. To learn more about DCH and its commitment to *Shaping the Future of a Healthy Georgia*, visit <https://dch.georgia.gov/>.

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