

135.107 Center for rural health and primary care established — duties.

1. The center for rural health and primary care is established within the department.

2. The center for rural health and primary care shall do all of the following:

a. Provide technical planning assistance to rural communities and counties exploring innovative means of delivering rural health services through community health services assessment, planning, and implementation, including but not limited to hospital conversions, cooperative agreements among hospitals, physician and health practitioner support, recruitment and retention of primary health care providers, public health services, emergency medical services, medical assistance facilities, rural health care clinics, and alternative means which may be included in the long-term community health services assessment and developmental plan. The center for rural health and primary care shall encourage collaborative efforts of the local boards of health, hospital governing boards, and other public and private entities located in rural communities to adopt a long-term community health services assessment and developmental plan pursuant to rules adopted by the department and perform the duties required of the Iowa department of public health in [section 135B.33](#).

b. Provide technical assistance to assist rural communities in improving Medicare reimbursements through the establishment of rural health clinics, defined pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1395x, and distinct part skilled nursing facility beds.

c. Coordinate services to provide research for the following items:

(1) Examination of the prevalence of rural occupational health injuries in the state.

(2) Assessment of training and continuing education available through local hospitals and others relating to diagnosis and treatment of diseases associated with rural occupational health hazards.

(3) Determination of continuing education support necessary for rural health practitioners to diagnose and treat illnesses caused by exposure to rural occupational health hazards.

(4) Determination of the types of actions that can help prevent agricultural accidents.

(5) Surveillance and reporting of disabilities suffered by persons engaged in agriculture resulting from diseases or injuries, including identifying the amount and severity of agricultural-related injuries and diseases in the state, identifying causal factors associated with agricultural-related injuries and diseases, and indicating the effectiveness of intervention programs designed to reduce injuries and diseases.

d. Cooperate with the center for agricultural health and safety established under [section 262.78](#), the center for health effects of environmental contamination established under [section 263.17](#), and the department of agriculture and land stewardship. The agencies shall coordinate programs to the extent practicable.

e. Administer grants for farm safety education efforts directed to rural families for the purpose of preventing farm-related injuries to children.

3. The center for rural health and primary care shall establish a primary care provider recruitment and retention endeavor, to be known as PRIMECARRE. The endeavor shall include a community grant program, a primary care provider loan repayment program, and a primary care provider community scholarship program. The endeavor shall be developed and implemented in a manner to promote and accommodate local creativity in efforts to recruit and retain health care professionals to provide services in the locality. The focus of the endeavor shall be to promote and assist local efforts in developing health care provider recruitment and retention programs.

a. *Community grant program.*

(1) The center for rural health and primary care shall adopt rules establishing an application process to be used by the center to establish a grant assistance program as provided in this paragraph, and establishing the criteria to be used in evaluating the applications. Selection criteria shall include a method for prioritizing grant applications based on illustrated efforts to meet the health care provider needs of the locality and surrounding area. Such assistance may be in the form of a forgivable loan, grant, or other nonfinancial assistance as deemed appropriate by the center. An application submitted

shall contain a commitment of at least a dollar-for-dollar match of the grant assistance. Application may be made for assistance by a single community or group of communities.

(2) Grants awarded under the program shall be subject to the following limitations:

(a) Ten thousand dollars for a single community or region with a population of ten thousand or less. An award shall not be made under this program to a community with a population of more than ten thousand.

(b) An amount not to exceed one dollar per capita for a region in which the population exceeds ten thousand. For purposes of determining the amount of a grant for a region, the population of the region shall not include the population of any community with a population of more than ten thousand located in the region.

b. Primary care provider loan repayment program.

(1) A primary care provider loan repayment program is established to increase the number of health professionals practicing primary care in federally designated health professional shortage areas of the state. Under the program, loan repayment may be made to a recipient for educational expenses incurred while completing an accredited health education program directly related to obtaining credentials necessary to practice the recipient's health profession.

(2) The center for rural health and primary care shall adopt rules relating to the establishment and administration of the primary care provider loan repayment program. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph shall provide, at a minimum, for all of the following:

(a) Determination of eligibility requirements and qualifications of an applicant to receive loan repayment under the program, including but not limited to years of obligated service, clinical practice requirements, and residency requirements. One year of obligated service shall be provided by the applicant in exchange for each year of loan repayment, unless federal requirements otherwise require. Loan repayment under the program shall not be approved for a health provider whose license or certification is restricted by a medical regulatory authority of any jurisdiction of the United States, other nations, or territories.

(b) Identification of federally designated health professional shortage areas of the state and prioritization of such areas according to need.

(c) Determination of the amount and duration of the loan repayment an applicant may receive, giving consideration to the availability of funds under the program, and the applicant's outstanding educational loans and professional credentials.

(d) Determination of the conditions of loan repayment applicable to an applicant.

(e) Enforcement of the state's rights under a loan repayment program contract, including the commencement of any court action.

(f) Cancellation of a loan repayment program contract for reasonable cause.

(g) Participation in federal programs supporting repayment of loans of health care providers and acceptance of gifts, grants, and other aid or amounts from any person, association, foundation, trust, corporation, governmental agency, or other entity for the purposes of the program.

(h) Upon availability of state funds, determination of eligibility criteria and qualifications for participating communities and applicants not located in federally designated shortage areas.

(i) Other rules as necessary.

(3) The center for rural health and primary care may enter into an agreement under [chapter 28E](#) with the college student aid commission for the administration of this program.

c. Primary care provider community scholarship program.

(1) A primary care provider community scholarship program is established to recruit and to provide scholarships to train primary health care practitioners in federally designated health professional shortage areas of the state. Under the program, scholarships may be awarded to a recipient for educational expenses incurred while completing an accredited health education program directly related to obtaining the credentials necessary to practice the recipient's health profession.

(2) The department shall adopt rules relating to the establishment and administration of

the primary care provider community scholarship program. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph shall provide, at a minimum, for all of the following:

(a) Determination of eligibility requirements and qualifications of an applicant to receive scholarships under the program, including but not limited to years of obligated service, clinical practice requirements, and residency requirements. One year of obligated service shall be provided by the applicant in exchange for each year of scholarship receipt, unless federal requirements otherwise require.

(b) Identification of federally designated health professional shortage areas of the state and prioritization of such areas according to need.

(c) Determination of the amount of the scholarship an applicant may receive.

(d) Determination of the conditions of scholarship to be awarded to an applicant.

(e) Enforcement of the state's rights under a scholarship contract, including the commencement of any court action.

(f) Cancellation of a scholarship contract for reasonable cause.

(g) Participation in federal programs supporting scholarships for health care providers and acceptance of gifts, grants, and other aid or amounts from any person, association, foundation, trust, corporation, governmental agency, or other entity for the purposes of the program.

(h) Upon availability of state funds, determination of eligibility criteria and qualifications for participating communities and applicants not located in federally designated shortage areas.

(i) Other rules as necessary.

(3) The center for rural health and primary care may enter into an agreement under [chapter 28E](#) with the college student aid commission for the administration of this program.

4. a. Eligibility under any of the programs established under the primary care provider recruitment and retention endeavor shall be based upon a community health services assessment completed under [subsection 2](#), paragraph "a". A community or region, as applicable, shall submit a letter of intent to conduct a community health services assessment and to apply for assistance under [this subsection](#). The letter shall be in a form and contain information as determined by the center. A letter of intent shall be submitted to the center by January 1 preceding the fiscal year for which an application for assistance is to be made.

b. Assistance under [this subsection](#) shall not be granted until such time as the community or region making application has completed the community health services assessment and adopted a long-term community health services assessment and developmental plan. In addition to any other requirements, a developmental plan shall include a clear commitment to informing high school students of the health care opportunities which may be available to such students.

c. The center for rural health and primary care shall seek additional assistance and resources from other state departments and agencies, federal agencies and grant programs, private organizations, and any other person, as appropriate. The center is authorized and directed to accept on behalf of the state any grant or contribution, federal or otherwise, made to assist in meeting the cost of carrying out the purpose of [this subsection](#). All federal grants to and the federal receipts of the center are appropriated for the purpose set forth in such federal grants or receipts. Funds appropriated by the general assembly to the center for implementation of [this subsection](#) shall first be used for securing any available federal funds requiring a state match, with remaining funds being used for the community grant program.

d. The center for rural health and primary care may, to further the purposes of [this subsection](#), provide financial assistance in the form of grants to support the effort of a community which is clearly part of the community's long-term community health services assessment and developmental plan. Efforts for which such grants may be awarded include but are not limited to the procurement of clinical equipment, clinical facilities, and telecommunications facilities, and the support of locum tenens arrangements and primary care provider mentor programs.

5. a. There is established an advisory committee to the center for rural health and primary care consisting of one representative, approved by the respective agency, of each of the following agencies: the department of agriculture and land stewardship, the Iowa

department of public health, the department of inspections and appeals, the national institute for rural health policy, the rural health resource center, the institute of agricultural medicine and occupational health, and the Iowa state association of counties. The governor shall appoint two representatives of consumer groups active in rural health issues and a representative of each of two farm organizations active within the state, a representative of an agricultural business in the state, a representative of a critical needs hospital, a practicing rural family physician, a practicing rural physician assistant, a practicing rural advanced registered nurse practitioner, and a rural health practitioner who is not a physician, physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner, as members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee shall also include as members two state representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one by the minority leader of the house, and two state senators, one appointed by the majority leader of the senate and one by the minority leader of the senate.

b. The advisory committee shall regularly meet with the administrative head of the center as well as the director of the center for agricultural health and safety established under [section 262.78](#). The head of the center and the director of the center for agricultural health and safety shall consult with the advisory committee and provide the committee with relevant information regarding their agencies.

c. A simple majority of the membership of the advisory committee shall constitute a quorum. Action may be taken by the affirmative vote of a majority of the advisory committee membership.

[89 Acts, ch 304, §702](#); [90 Acts, ch 1207, §1, 2](#); [90 Acts, ch 1223, §18](#)

[C93, §135.13](#)

[94 Acts, ch 1168, §2](#)

[C95, §135.107](#)

[95 Acts, ch 67, §10](#); [96 Acts, ch 1128, §2, 3](#); [97 Acts, ch 23, §14](#); [97 Acts, ch 203, §14](#); [98 Acts, ch 1100, §15](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1058, §16, 17](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1140, §23 – 25](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1223, §20, 21](#); [2005 Acts, ch 89, §5](#); [2009 Acts, ch 41, §41](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1031, §396](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1061, §26](#)

Referred to in [§262.78, §263.17](#)

Legislative findings; [94 Acts, ch 1168, §1](#)