

New Federal Rural Health Transformation Program Could Improve Outcomes for People with Disabilities

The Rural Health Transformation Program aims to expand access, strengthen workforces, and bring innovation to underserved communities.

CLEARWATER, FL, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The recently announced [Rural Health Transformation \(RHT\) Program](#), authorized by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Section 71401 of Public Law 119-21), will invest \$50 billion from fiscal year 2026 through 2030 to strengthen healthcare delivery in rural communities across the United States.



The initiative emphasizes health equity, access, innovation, and sustainability. These goals carry significant promise for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), who are often disproportionately affected by health inequities in rural areas.

The RHT Program aims to reduce longstanding disparities by expanding access to prevention and chronic disease management, improving population health strategies, and bolstering workforce recruitment and training. For people with IDD, who often face higher risks of undetected health concerns, limited provider expertise, and geographic isolation, this program could be a new lifeline.

“Far too often, rural communities lack the trained clinicians and resources needed to identify and address the unique health risks faced by people with disabilities,” says Dr. Craig Escudé, a physician specializing in IDD and President of IntellectAbility®. “This program represents an opportunity to help thousands of people with IDD by employing tools such as the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST®)—which enables early risk identification and data-driven planning—and eLearning for rural health providers, which strengthens provider skills through accessible,

scalable training.”

Among the RHT Program’s approved uses of funds are providing training and technical assistance for the development and adoption of technology-enabled solutions that improve care delivery in rural healthcare settings.

Experts highlight that evidence-based tools, such as the HRST, alongside scalable training initiatives, align directly with the program’s CMS-approved funding categories. These categories include prevention, population health improvement, technology integration, and workforce development. Such approaches could play a crucial role in supporting earlier detection of health risks, improving care delivery, and expanding professional expertise in underserved areas.

By prioritizing equity and innovation, the RHT Program underscores the importance of ensuring that all rural residents, including people with disabilities, benefit from healthier, more resilient care systems.

About the Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST)

The Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST) is the leading screening tool for intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) risk management and support. It is a HIPAA-compliant, web-based rating instrument developed to detect health destabilization in at-risk populations and ensure that proper care and support are provided at all times to avoid unnecessary suffering and death. It is a validated and proven predictor of mortality and is currently used in 26 states, actively monitoring more than 130,000 people.

About IntellectAbility

IntellectAbility is dedicated to improving health equity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through education, training, and tools that support risk identification, informed planning, and better care delivery. To learn more, visit www.replacingrisk.com.

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