

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

RIM Monthly Newsletter

Updates and resources for SCALING UP COVID-19 PREVENTION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES WITH REFUGEE, IMMIGRANT, AND MIGRANT (RIM) COMMUNITIES

January 2024

Highlights of the Month

Site Spotlight: Rappahannock Area Health District

This month, NACCHO had the opportunity to sit down with Allison Balmes-John from Rappahannock Area Health District to hear more about the wonderful work they are doing through NACCHO's Afghan grant.

Rappahannock Area Health District is an organization based in Virginia that strives to “protect the community and the environment through the prevention of disease, lasting community partnerships, access to quality services, and the promotion of healthy behaviors.”

Balmes-John oversees the community health workers, a key part of the Afghan grant. “A few things that we’re doing under that [grant] is a health literacy curriculum with newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan,” explained Balmes-John. “It’s offered in Dari because we fund a community health worker who is himself a refugee and speaks Dari.” This curriculum is made up of 8 lessons and given over a two-day in-person gathering. They work with their local resettlement agency to provide transportation to and from these services and leverage this relationship to gain referrals to the community members that might need their services most.

This curriculum dives into tricky subjects that might be difficult to understand, especially to those that are not from the United States. These topics include emergency room vs urgent care visits, reading nutrition labels, and understanding prescriptions.

Balmes-John explained that they do “a lot of resource navigation and case management for people coming to those newcomer clinics.

“We’ve really been able to expand that and get people connected to the food bank, or other doctors’ offices or whoever it may be,” said Balmes-John. “Having the funds to do this and the additional staffing has really allowed us to better serve the community.”

When asked about overall successes of this project, she explained “having a community health worker on staff who has a lived experience, speaks the language, and can build a lot of trust has been critical for developing relationships in this community.”

To learn more about the amazing work Rappahannock Area Health District is doing, check out their website [here](#).

News and Announcements

NRC-RIM hosts curated health resources and health education collections supporting Afghan newcomer health

The National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants (NRC-RIM) teamed up with Switchboard for a blog aimed at equipping service providers to [support newcomer health during flu season](#). More resources on respiratory illnesses are available on [NRC-RIM's website](#).

The National Nurse-Led Care Consortium (NNCC) is holding a webinar on Feb. 8 on how health centers can [prepare for extreme heat and wildfires](#). If this topic is of interest, consider exploring NRC-RIM's health education collections on [summer safety](#) and [wildfire smoke](#).

Additional resources that support Afghan newcomers and the providers who serve them are also available within NRC-RIM's [Curated Health Resources](#). Explore a curated collection of fact sheets, posters, videos, audio recordings, and more, available in English, Dari and Pashto.

A recording of last week's webinar with NRC-RIM and Partnering for Vaccine Equity (P4VE) is now available. Discover valuable tips on creating community-focused health campaigns with a special focus on NRC-RIM's Afghan Health portfolio and resources on COVID-19 and respiratory illnesses. View the recording in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

The North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) is accepting abstracts for workshops, poster presentations, and panel discussions that support newcomer health through April 1. For more information and writing tips, visit the [NARHC website](#).

For more information, visit [their website](#), sign up for [their newsletter](#), and follow them on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#). For more resources that support Afghan newcomers, discover NRC-RIM's [Curated Health Resources](#).

Learn about upcoming webinars and other learning opportunities from NRC-RIM

The National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants (NRC-RIM) updated its [Mental Health Toolkit](#) for Afghan newcomers to include new resources from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), including a mental health glossary of terms in [English](#), [Dari](#) and [Pashto](#) and a translated summary of USCRI's [behavioral health offerings](#).

NRC-RIM friends at the Center of Excellence in Newcomer Health will be hosting a webinar called [EPIC, CareRef, and More: Optimizing Clinical Decision Support Tools](#) on Thursday, Feb. 8 at 1 p.m. ET. Participants will learn how to identify and use clinical decision tools in the care of newcomer patients, including newcomer screenings. Email refugeehealth@state.mn.us for more information.

Join NRC-RIM and Partnering for Vaccine Equity (P4VE) for a webinar called [Creating Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Health Education Materials](#) on Monday, Jan. 22 at 1 p.m. ET. The webinar will highlight NRC-RIM's resources for [COVID-19](#) and [Respiratory Illnesses](#), and offer tips on how other organizations can create their own community-focused health campaign using NRC-RIM's [Afghan Health portfolio](#) as an example.

For more ideas on serving newcomer communities, learn from NRC-RIM Physician Collaborator Dr. Nasreen Quadri in a Minnesota Medicine magazine [article about newcomer health](#). The article covers cultural humility, overcoming access challenges for newcomer patients, and the importance of community partnerships.

The Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers is offering scholarships for a one-year Society membership to refugee and migrant women in the health field. Members receive access to their influential network, education and training opportunities, resources, mentorship program and more. [Learn more and apply today](#).

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Minnesota Department of Health Funding Opportunity

Harm Reduction, Health, and Housing Hubs

This RFP is specifically for applications for funding harm reduction, health, and housing hubs. The purpose of these grants is to reduce fatal overdoses through coordinated housing, harm reduction, social and medical services. Grantees will engage with people experiencing homelessness at high risk of overdose and offer services to assist with housing stability, harm reduction, and health care. All hubs will need to include a combination of housing and harm reduction services, but grantees have flexibility in determining where and how to offer services. Our goal is to support organizations with the necessary experiences and expertise to effectively serve people most affected by homelessness and drug-related deaths, specifically African American and American Indian communities.

Eligible applicants include community-based organizations, community health centers, federally qualified health centers, tribal governments, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, county governments/community health boards, and any other public or private nonprofit, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations. Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding individually or in collaboration with other qualified and eligible entities to develop a comprehensive proposal. Collaborative proposals must designate a lead applicant.

These grants are dedicated to organizations who have the experience to provide coordinated housing and harm reduction services to people experiencing homelessness in one or more of the following populations:

- People living outside of Hennepin and Ramsey counties.
- American Indian or African American populations at greatest risk of overdose.
- People who are pregnant.

MDH is committed to having at least one American Indian-focused organization awarded through this opportunity.

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to health.homelessness@state.mn.us and include "Harm Reduction, Health, and Housing Hubs RFP Question" in the subject line. Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. CST on Jan. 12, 2024.

Applications are due by 5:30 p.m. CST Jan. 31.

Learn more about the [Harm Reduction, Health and Housing Hubs RFP](#).

Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant

The community solutions grant program was created to fund community-based solutions for challenges related to healthy child development that are identified by communities of color and American Indian communities.

Eligible Applicants:

- Community-based organizations or entities that work with communities of color and or American Indian communities.
- Tribal nations and tribal organizations as defined in section 658P of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.
- Community-based organizations or entities focused on supporting healthy child development.

If you have questions regarding this RFP, email Health.Solutions.for.Child.Development@state.mn.us or call 651-201-5813. No questions will be answered related to the RFP after 4:30 p.m. CST Feb. 5, 2024.

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. CST Feb. 14.

Learn more at [Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant](#)

Respiratory Illness Fact Sheet Now Available in 18 Languages

NRC-RIM is pleased to announce the release of our updated fact sheet on respiratory illnesses, which is now available in 18 languages. Share essential information on the flu, common cold, RSV, and COVID-19 with your communities in a translated and customizable format. This resource was previously made available in Dari and Pashto as part of the [Respiratory Illnesses Collection](#) in our Afghan health portfolio.

[Learn More.](#)

CDC Update: TB Technical Instructions for Panel Physicians

The 2024 Technical Instructions for Tuberculosis (TB TIs) for Panel Physicians have been posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website and are effective as of January 24, 2024, with major changes to testing to be implemented no later than October 1, 2024.

The 2024 TB TIs define the requirements for panel physicians examining applicants overseas for infectious tuberculosis disease. These instructions are specific to the immigration medical evaluation overseas. They should not be used as guidance to test for or treat tuberculosis disease in other settings or as a clinical manual that defines detailed laboratory procedures or specific treatment regimens. CDC's Division of Global Migration Health (DGMH) developed these instructions in consultation with US tuberculosis subject matter experts and US panel physicians.

You can access the 2024 TB TIs for panel physicians at <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/ti/panel/technical-instructionspanel-physicians.html>

Major revisions in the 2024 TB TIs that go into effect on October 1, 2024, include:

- Panel physicians must perform an interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) on all applicants 2 years of age and older in countries with a World Health Organization (WHO)-estimated tuberculosis incidence rate of ≥ 20 cases per 100,000 population, to begin no later than October 1, 2024. Children in these countries have been required to receive IGRA testing since 2018. Note that applicants 15 years and older in these countries will continue to receive a chest x-ray regardless of IGRA results. Panel Physicians will now be allowed to use WHO-approved IGRA tests in addition to US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved tests to improve availability and potentially lower costs.
- Panel physicians must perform a molecular test in addition to sputum smears and culture. The molecular test must be a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) and must be performed on the first respiratory specimen from all applicants requiring sputum collection for initial diagnosis. Panel physicians must begin using a molecular test no later than October 1, 2024.
- Please see TB TIs for other minor revisions.

Updates to the Civil Surgeon TB TIs for examination of applicants within the United States will be posted in the coming weeks, and additional information will be provided at that time.

If you have any questions regarding the 2024 TB TIs for Panel Physicians, you may contact CDCQA P at cdcqap@cdc.gov.

CDC Update: Polio Vaccine

We have received a number of inquiries regarding the recently published Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), [Use of Inactivated Polio Vaccine Among U.S. Adults: Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023.](#) This publication summarizes evidence considered by the advisory committee on immunization practices (ACIP) to recommend that all U.S. adults aged ≥ 18 years who are known or suspected to be unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated against polio complete a primary polio vaccination series with inactivated polio vaccine (IPV); and adults who have received a primary series of trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) or IPV in any combination and who are at increased risk for exposure to poliovirus may receive another dose of IPV.

To that end, we would like to clarify that the [CDC's Guidance for Evaluating and Updating Immunizations during the Domestic Medical Examination for Newly Arrived Refugees | Immigrant and Refugee Health | CDC](#) has not changed. Per the guidance, vaccinations, including polio vaccinations, should be given in accordance with ACIP recommendations.

Additionally, [CDC's Overseas Refugee Health Guidance](#) remains unchanged. Per that guidance, polio vaccines are routinely given to U.S.-bound refugees and Visa 93 (V93) applicants 6 wks to < 18 yrs; while those over 18 years are vaccinated only in countries the WHO has determined the risk of international spread of poliovirus to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). Additional information can be found in the [Addendum to Technical Instructions for Vaccinations: Polio | CDC.](#)

Virtual Communities Info

Join our Virtual Communities!

How to Sign Up for Virtual Communities (VC)

- Email membership@naccho.org requesting an account
- Once membership has created you an account, email RIM@naccho.org to be added to the group
- You will then be added to the VC page and sent instructions on using the page
- It takes 24-72 hours to enroll in the VC after membership creates an account for you



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.