$2.5 million grant will support Michigan's rural healthcare workers and employers

USDOL H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program funds will help address healthcare workforce shortages

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Contact: Mike Murray, 517-275-1820

LANSING, Mich.—The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) today announced it has been awarded a $2.5 million federal grant to address healthcare staffing shortages in rural communities throughout the state.

The funding is through the U.S. Department of Labor's H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program which supports employment and training programs in healthcare occupations serving rural populations. Over the next four years, the grant will support the addition of more than 430 new healthcare workers for rural communities throughout Michigan.

"These funds will support the efforts of Michigan Rural Enhanced Access to Careers in Healthcare (MiREACH), which reaches into rural communities to address critical healthcare workforce shortages," LEO Acting Director Susan Corbin said. "Ensuring our state's rural healthcare providers are able to find high-quality talent will improve their ability to provide lifesaving and community-supporting services."

LEO will lead MiREACH, a collective and supportive network of employer-led collaboratives, to identify targeted healthcare occupations based on employer demand and feedback, design training responses, and implement workforce solutions for rural communities. To address critical healthcare workforce shortages in Michigan's 57 rural counties, LEO will engage Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium (NWNEC), Upper Peninsula Michigan Works!, West Michigan Works! (WMW) and Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN), which represents six Michigan Works! Agencies in southeast Michigan.

"Michigan's rural communities need more workers with in-demand skills to significantly improve access to healthcare as well as strengthen their local economies," said Stephanie Beckhorn, LEO's Director of the Office of Employment and Training. "This funding will help create pathways

to in-demand, high-wage jobs for Michigan workers while providing the skilled talent our healthcare employers need to support the communities they serve."

The Coronavirus pandemic has increased the need for healthcare workers, particularly in rural areas where that need was already acute. The grant program aims to help individuals gain the skills necessary to provide needed services, fill vacancies and allow employers to find skilled workers more readily.

"We recognize rural healthcare employers face significant challenges related to worker shortages and the efforts of this grant will create sustainable employment and training programs in healthcare occupations serving our rural populations," said John Barnas, Executive Director of the Michigan Center for Rural Health (MCRH). "As a sustaining partner, MCRH is committed to serve as a resource to LEO as they continue forward with this effort."

Questions regarding the grant can be directed to LEO's Sector Strategies team at **LEO-TDL@michigan.gov**.

Information on the U.S. Department of Labor grant program can be found on the agency's website, **https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities**.

To learn more about LEO's efforts to promote a flexible, innovative and effective workforce system within Michigan, visit **Michigan.gov/Workforce**.

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