2013 IOWA GOVERNOR'S DESIGNATION FOR RURAL HEALTH CLINICS

Iowa is one of 13 states that utilize a Governor's shortage designation process to identify counties for eligibility for certification as Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). The Iowa Governor's designation process was first approved in 1998 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Shortage Designation Branch. The latest designation occurred in 2009. It is important to note there is also a process for RHC eligibility based on federal Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) guidelines.

The methodology Iowa uses to designate areas as eligible for RHC certification was first approved August 31, 1998. Iowa uses a whole county approach for designation. The criteria for designation are:

I. County population to provider ratio of 2,500:1
   Or…
II. County population to provider ratio of 2,000:1 and the county has:
   - 100% poverty level equal to or greater than the state average, *or*
   - Percent of population age 65 years of age and older equal to or greater than the state average

III. In 2003 it was also determined--
   A previously designated county that no longer meets the review criteria remains designated through "grandfathering". However, this grandfathering only allows currently certified Rural Health Clinics in those counties to remain certified and does not allow for certification of any new Rural Health Clinics in those counties.

During the most recent Governor's Designation process in 2009, the data used included:

- Physician provider data supplied by: University of Iowa (UI), Office of Statewide Clinical Education Programs (OSCEP).
- Population data – US Census Bureau 2010
- Poverty data – 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5 year estimates
- Age data – US Census Bureau 2010

The Governor's Office submits a request with results of the analysis for the Governor's designation to the Deputy Director at Bureau of Clinician Recruitment & Service- Health Resources & Services Administration.

The Governor's designation process is valuable because: 1.) It allows Rural Health Clinic establishment in underserved counties that may not meet Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) criteria for certification, and 2.) it allows continued certification ("grandfather" status) for RHCs located in counties which no longer meet the eligibility criteria. The intent of the Governor's designation process is to ensure sustainment of health care access in rural counties which are deemed underserved by retaining established health care providers and practices in rural and underserved areas.

Iowa State Office of Rural Health for additional information – 515.281.7224

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