



Center for
Rural Health

University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

<http://medicine.nodak.edu/crh>

Flex Program Workshop
Hints for New Flex Coordinators
Rural Health Resource Center
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*Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen
the health of people in rural communities.*



WHERE TO START?

Focus
Strategize
Prioritize
Plan
Implement
Evaluate





WHERE TO START?

❖ New coordinator has the opportunity to strengthen the program

- Recognize your strengths
- What do you bring to ...
 - *The position
 - *Working with hospitals
 - *Your organization
 - *Your state
 - *Colleagues
 - *Acknowledge your limitations

*It's okay to say "I don't know" or "I need help"



Understand the Flex Program ~Not *just* a "CAH Program"~

- Read guidance/your state's grant
- Understand the key focus areas
- What is the history of your program
- Talk with others
 - Get different perspectives
 - From hospitals
 - Counterparts in other states
 - TASC
 - ORHP
 - NOSORH



National

- TASC/RHRC – key connection to everyone else
- Federal delegates (proponents of rural, others to build relationships with)
- NRHA – opportunities to be involved
- AHA – small hospital section
- NOSORH – Flex subcommittee, others



National

- Flex Monitoring Team
- Rural Assistance Center
- Pay attention to changes in Flex
- Follow the directions in the Flex grant application
- Get to know your regional program rep



State

- Who are the key stakeholders in your state related to healthcare?
- Surveyors
- QIO – 8th scope of work
- Network affiliations
- Associations (hospital, nursing, EMS, rural health, medical)
- Legislators
- Universities (schools of medicine, pharmacy, nursing)
- Others ... rural development councils, economic development, commerce, labor, farm bureau



Local – Your Program

- Know your hospitals
 - Connect with each of them in some way
 - (visit, e-mail, newsletter, conferences)
 - Introduce yourself ... do they have questions/needs ... ask for a tour
 - Understand their world
 - Use their time wisely
 - They receive so much information --- establishing your credibility lends to helping them decipher multiple messages
 - Look for opportunities to interact with boards, CEOs, DONs, others ... establish a key connection with someone in each hospital
 - Other local partners: schools, economic development, other healthcare, EMS
 - Advisory/Steering Committee



Local - Your Program

- **Think team! Think networking! Think partnerships!**
- **Communicate!**
 - E-mail
 - Newsletters
 - Websites
 - Surveys
 - Conferences/Calls
- **You don't have to re-invent the wheel!**
- **EVALUATE!**
 - Build it in to everything
 - Constantly



Best Advice

- *Ask a lot of questions about how and why things are done they way they are.*
- *Don't try to do everything at once – take some time to understand the existing culture and build on successes and change over time*
- *Review the orientation training materials in about 3 months . . . Review them again in 6 & 9 months!*
- *Be mindful of intergovernmental relations – understand that everyone has agendas that might not match.*
- *Know your hospitals' stories!*



Things to remember ...

There are different cultures and politics

Flex is about being responsive to rural hospitals
and the communities they serve

The broader your network the stronger your Flex
Program will be

Rural people!





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