Flex Program Workshop
Hints for New Flex Coordinators
Rural Health Resource Center
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WHERE TO START?

EVALUATE  FOCUS

IMPLEMENT  STRATEGIZE

PLAN  PRIORITIZE
Remember the BIG picture …
Remember … same but different

WHERE TO START?

- New coordinator/staff have 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 legislators (proponents of rural, others to build relationships with)
• NRHA – opportunities to be involved
National

- Flex Monitoring Team
- Rural Assistance Center
- Get to know your regional program rep
  - Office of Rural Health Policy
- AHA – small hospital section
- NOSORH – Flex subcommittee, others

What does your state look like?
State

- Who are the key stakeholders in your state related to healthcare?
- Surveyors
- QIO – 9th 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

Who are your communities?
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, director of nursing (DONs), others … establish a key connection with someone in each hospital
    • Other local partners: schools, economic development, other healthcare, emergency medical services (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 the 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 politics – 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 Program

Find a mentor and use them

Patience ~~~ Passion ~~~ Rural People!
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