

New Rural Mental Health and Substance Abuse Toolkit Launched

March 18, 2014 -- The [Rural Assistance Center](#) (RAC), the [University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center](#), & the [NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis](#), today launched the new [Rural Mental Health and Substance Abuse Toolkit](#). The toolkit is designed to help rural communities & orgs develop & implement programs that meet the targeted mental health needs of communities based on proven approaches & strategies. The [toolkit is available for free](#) on the RAC website.

Mental health and substance abuse issues facing rural communities are often complex and require comprehensive approaches and proven strategies to coordinate and focus available resources for success, commented Walt Gregg, MA, MPH, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center.

The Rural Mental Health and Substance Abuse Toolkit contains 8 modules with information and links to resources, websites, publications, and tools. The toolkit includes:

- [an overview on mental health issues in rural areas](#)
- [program model examples](#)
- [guidance on implementation, evaluation methods, and more.](#)

Many rural communities are looking for programs that can be adapted to their unique situation, said Alana Knudson, PhD, Co-Director of the NORC Walsh Center. This toolkit's program clearinghouse provides many rural examples and also includes contact information so that communities can directly connect with rural program directors who have successfully implemented their programs.

Content for the Mental Health & Substance Abuse Toolkit was developed by the University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center, in collaboration with the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, as part of the [Rural Community Health Gateway](#). The Gateway, located on the RAC website, is designed to help rural communities learn about proven methods of providing rural residents with better access to health care services. Development of these resources is part of an ongoing effort by NORC, UMN, & RAC to provide evidence-based health information to rural America.

Addressing behavioral health issues is such a challenge for rural communities given that they often lack specialized providers and infrastructure. We are pleased to provide this toolkit on the RAC website to help rural communities find evidence-based strategies that can make a difference, even with limited resources, noted Kristine Sande, MBA, Program Director of the Rural Assistance Center.

Funding for this project is provided by the federal [Office of Rural Health Policy](#), part of the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#).

About the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis: The NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis' mission is to conduct timely policy analysis, research and evaluation to inform policy makers and other key stakeholders on issues that impact the health status of rural Americans. Learn more about the Walsh Center at walshcenter.norc.org and NORC at www.norc.org.

About the University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center: The University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Centers mission is to conduct high quality, empirically driven, policy-relevant research that can be disseminated in an effective and timely manner to help improve the quality and fiscal viability of rural healthcare. Learn more about the Rural Health Research Center at <http://rhrc.umn.edu/>.

About the Rural Assistance Center

The Rural Assistance Center (RAC) helps people learn about programs, funding and research that can assist them in improving and maintaining healthcare and human services in rural communities. Located at the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, RAC provides information and customized assistance through its call center and online resource library, www.raconline.org.