



RHODE ISLAND
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

Rhode Island Rural Health Transformation Program

March 2026

Acknowledgements

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What is the Rural Health Transformation Program?

In July 2025, Congress created the Rural Health Transformation Program as part of [H.R.1](#). RHTP is a partnership between the federal government and state governments to support rural communities across the country.

Overview

RHTP was designed to help states create innovative solutions that address the unique health needs of their rural residents. The federal and state governments will work together to achieve this.

Approach

- The program sets aside \$50 billion to distribute to states over the next five years (FFY26-FFY30).
- In order to get funds, each state had to submit an application in late 2025.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced award amounts for the first year of the program on December 29, 2025.
- Over the next year, states will begin to develop and implement projects that transform the delivery of care in rural communities. Future funding will be determined based on the progress they make, pending CMS review and approval.

Sources: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#); [Notice of Award](#)

CMS set clear guidelines about how states should use RHTP funds.

What must these funds be used for?

- Investments in rural communities through three or more of the below funding categories:
 - Chronic disease prevention and management
 - Provider payments
 - Consumer technology solutions
 - Training and technical assistance
 - Workforce development and retention
 - IT advances
 - Appropriate care availability
 - Behavioral health
 - Innovative care models

What is not allowed?*

- New construction
- Independent research and development
- Duplicate billable services
- Currently funded investments (i.e., supplanting state or federal funds)
- EMR replacement over a 5% cap**
- Administrative spending over the 10% cap (direct and indirect)

Note: This is one time funding, which States are not allowed to use to fill current or potential budget holes.

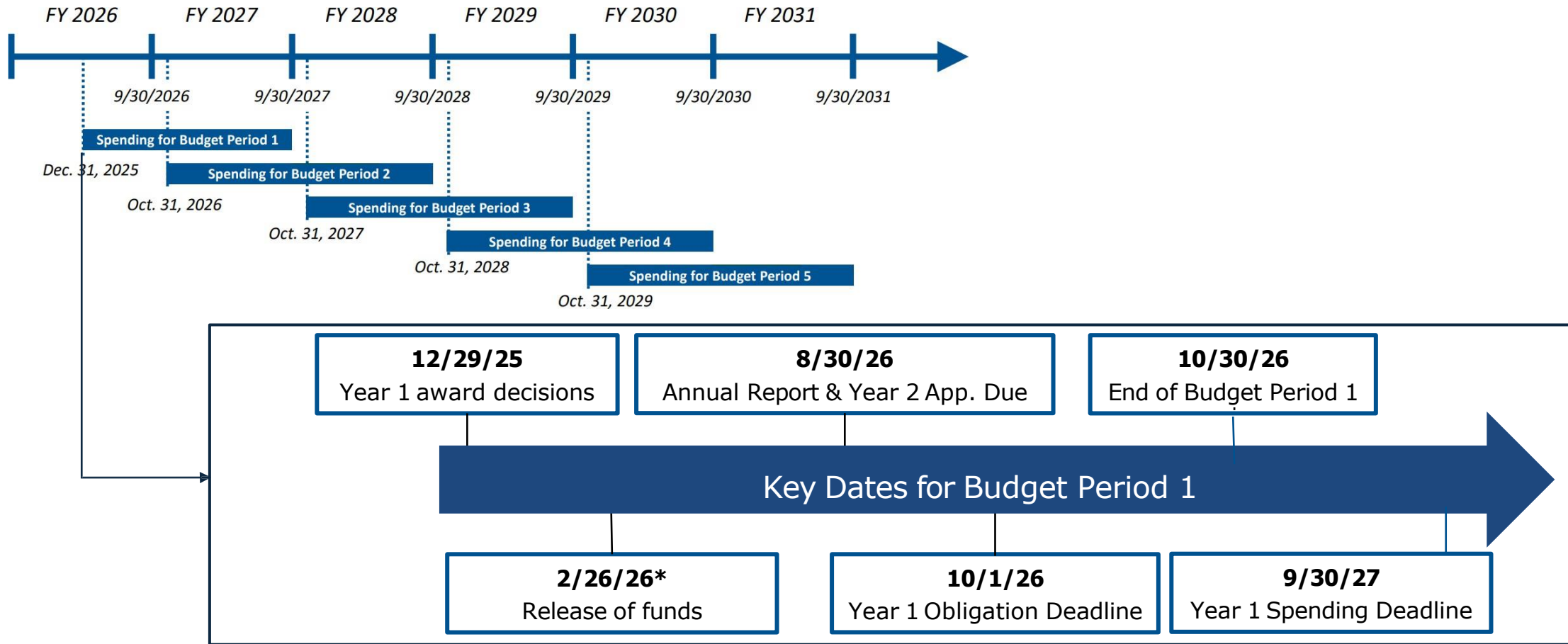
* This is not exhaustive. CMS has final approval for all funding uses.

** 5% cap applies to upgrading EMRs that are HITECH certified.

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

RHTP Overall Timeline

RHTP will be implemented over five years, from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 26-30, with key milestones throughout.



Sources: [CMS Webinar for Applicants](#); Notice of Award

**RI's final amount was released on 3/13/26, but 99% of funds were released on 2/26/26.*

What does RHTP mean for Rhode Island?

RI is working towards a connected, community-based system that ensures every rural resident has timely, coordinated, high quality care where they live. This marks a fundamental shift from top-down, state-driven approaches to building lasting infrastructure that empowers communities to lead their own health transformation.



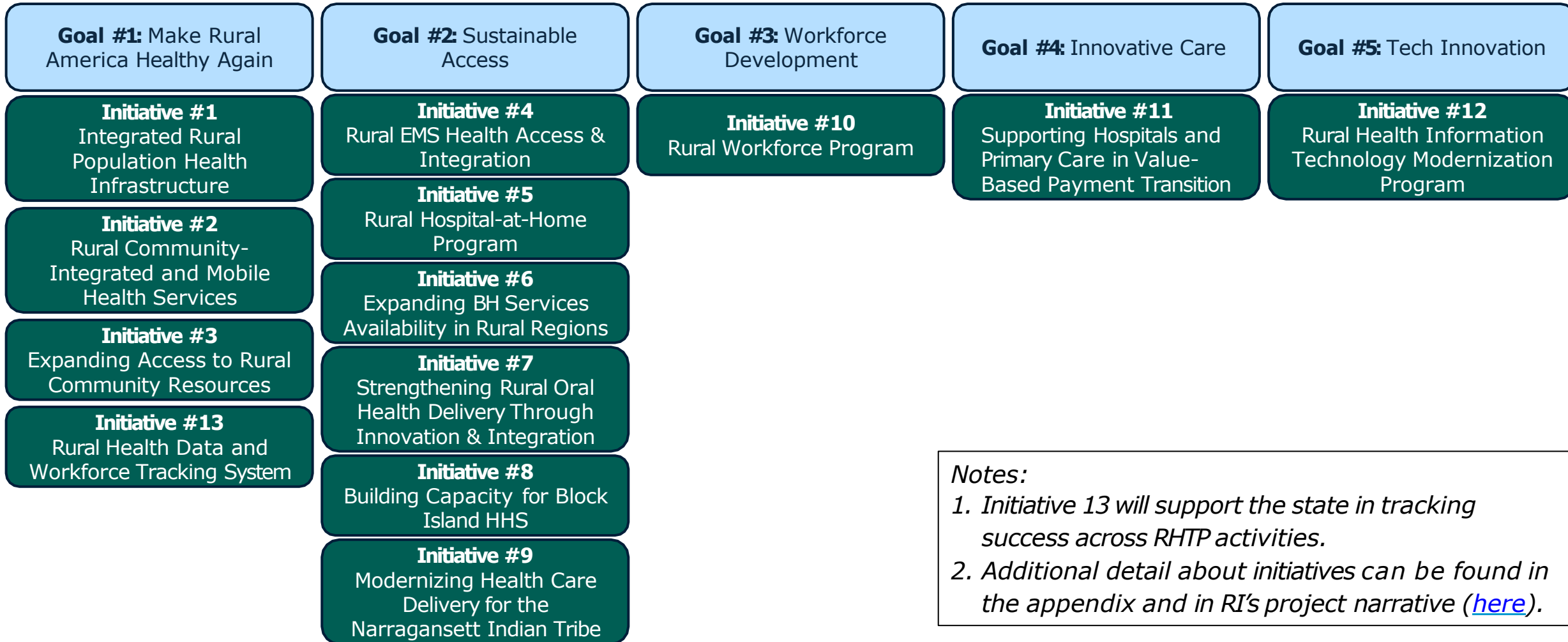
RHTP is structured around five strategic goals that will help achieve this vision:

1. Make Rural America Healthy Again - Improve the health of rural residents
2. Sustainable Access - Expand access to comprehensive, quality, low-cost care
3. Workforce Development - Strengthen the rural health care workforce
4. Innovative Care - Accelerate value-based & affordable care models
5. Tech Innovation - Integrate technology into rural practice

Note: This aligns with the five goals set in [H.R. 1](#).

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

Rhode Island has developed 13 initiatives that will be used to achieve the five RHTP goals, which CMS has approved as part of the State's application.



Notes:

1. Initiative 13 will support the state in tracking success across RHTP activities.
2. Additional detail about initiatives can be found in the appendix and in RI's project narrative ([here](#)).

Goal: 3. Sustainable Access – Strengthen the Rural Health Care Workforce

Overview:

- Launch a rural-focused Family Medicine Residency in partnership with Thundermist Health Center and Block Island Health Services.
- Expand rural clinical rotations and field experiences for medical, NP, and PA students in community-based settings, including FQHCs.
- Establish a centralized clinical placement system to streamline student placements and strengthen rural training partnerships.
- Expand early exposure in K-12 to health careers through Career and Technical Education programs in rural school districts.
- Support rural dental residency opportunities to expand access to oral health services through community health centers and mobile care units.
- Provide financial incentives—such as hiring bonuses, relocation stipends, and retention payments—to attract and retain clinicians and frontline staff (CNAs, home health aides, CHWs).

RHTP in Rhode Island

CMS awarded Rhode Island \$156.2 million to serve rural Rhode Islanders for the first year of RHTP.

CMS awarded Rhode Island **\$156.2 M** for the first year of RHTP (until 10/30/26).

These funds will be used to support residents of Rhode Island’s rural towns, which are defined as having fewer than 25,000 people and lower population density. This includes the following 18 towns:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| Burrillville | Charlestown | East Greenwich | Exeter |
| Foster | Glocester | Hopkinton | Jamestown |
| Little Compton | New Shoreham | North Smithfield | Portsmouth |
| Richmond | Scituate | Smithfield | Tiverton |
| | West Greenwich | Westerly | |

Some funds will also support members of the **Narragansett Indian Tribe**.

