

ALABAMA OFFICE OF  
**PRIMARY CARE  
RURAL HEALTH**



# Rural Health Clinic (RHC) 101

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NOSORH Technical Assistance (TA) Director  
For AL TTA3: 1/29/2025*

National Organization of **State Offices of Rural Health**

# Hi! I'm Tonne



- Earned an MS in Psychological Science from Shippensburg University
- Current doctoral candidate in the Experimental Psychology program with an emphasis in rural health at Idaho State University
- Nearly 10 years of rural health experience
- Holds Certified Rural Health Clinic Professional (CRHCP) credentials
- Holds Lean Six Sigma Green Belt status

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Thank you to Karl Bryant!

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# Upcoming Webinars

## 1. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) Compliance Overview Part 1

**I. Date:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025

**II. Time:** Noon – 1 p.m. CT

## 2. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) Compliance Overview Part 2

**I. Date:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025

**II. Time:** Noon – 1 p.m. CT

## 3. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) Compliance Overview Part 3

**I. Date:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025

**II. Time:** Noon – 1 p.m. CT

## 4. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Community Engagement

**I. Date:** Wednesday, May 28, 2025

**II. Time:** Noon – 1 p.m. CT

## 5. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) Strategic Planning

**I. Date:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025

**II. Time:** Noon – 1 p.m. CT

# Objectives

- Overview of the RHC program
- How they are unique from all other clinic types
- Overview of compliance



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# What Are They?

An RHC is an outpatient clinic that provides at least some primary care and is ...

- located in a rural area
- designated as a shortage area
- is not a rehabilitation agency or a facility primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases
- and meets all other requirements of 42 CFR 405 and 491.

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/CertificationandCompliance/RHCs>

# History

- 1977 - Established in federal statute (95-210)
- Purpose – to allow mid-level (advanced practice) providers to care for rural Medicare beneficiaries due to the lack of physicians and promote a collaborative model of care delivery

# Unique

- At least 1 NP, PA, or CNW must be an employee (W2)
- NP, PA, or CNW must be available to provide services at least 50% of the time the clinic is open
- Practitioners – MD, DO, NP, PA, CNW, LCSW, MFT, LPC, and Clinical Psychologist



# Unique cont...

- A physician must be the medical director of the clinic
  - Can be contracted
- RHC Encounter = Medically necessary face-to-face patient visit
- 4 basic labs
- NO LONGER HAVE productivity standards



# All-Inclusive Rate

- AIR = a set rate for an RHC encounter

## MEDICARE

- In 2022, at \$113 per visit
- In 2023, at \$126 per visit
- In 2024, at \$139 per visit
- In 2025, at \$152 per visit
- In 2026, at \$165 per visit
- In 2027, at \$178 per visit
- In 2028, at \$190 per visit

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mm12185.pdf>

# The difference between RHCs and FQHCs



## Rural Health Clinics – Higher Reimbursement Rate

## Federally Qualified Health Centers – Federal Grant Program

For-profit or nonprofit	Nonprofit or public facility
May be limited to a specific type of primary care practice (e.g., OB-GYN, Pediatrics)	Required to provide care for all age groups
Not required to have a board of directors	Required to have a board of directors – at least 51% must be patients of the health center
No minimum service requirements	Minimum service required – maternity & prenatal care, preventive care, behavioral health, dental health, emergency care, and pharmaceutical services
Not required to charge based on a sliding fee scale	Required to treat all residents in their service area with charges based on a sliding fee scale
Not required to provide a minimum of hours or emergency coverage	Required to be open 32.5 hours a week for FTCA coverage of licensed or certified healthcare providers. Must provide emergency service after business hours either on-site or by arrangement with another healthcare provider
Required to conduct a biennial program evaluation regarding quality improvement	Required to have ongoing quality assurance program
Must be located in a Health Professional Shortage Area, Medically Underserved Area, or governor-designated and secretary-certified shortage area. May retain RHC status if designation of service area changes.	Must be located in an area that is underserved or experiencing a shortage of healthcare providers
RHCs must be located in non-urbanized areas	FQHCs may operate in both non-urbanized and urbanized areas
Required to submit an annual cost report; however, auditing of financial reports is not required	Required to submit an annual cost report and audited financial reports

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RHIHub

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/rural-health-clinics#fqhc>

# 42 CFR 491



§ 491.1 [Purpose and scope.](#)

§ 491.2 [Definitions.](#)

§ 491.3 [Certification procedures.](#)

§ 491.4 [Compliance with Federal, State and local laws.](#)

§ 491.5 [Location of clinic.](#)

§ 491.6 [Physical plant and environment.](#)

§ 491.7 [Organizational structure.](#)

§ 491.8 [Staffing and staff responsibilities.](#)

§ 491.9 [Provision of services.](#)

§ 491.10 [Patient health records.](#)

§ 491.11 [Program evaluation.](#)

§ 491.12 [Emergency preparedness.](#)

# Alabama



- 158 RHCs
  - 96 PB (Thank you for the update Karl!)
- 4 options to become certified as an RHC
  - Through the State
  - The Compliance Team
  - Quad A
  - The Joint Commission



Bibb Medical Associates,  
February 1992



Baileyton Family Medicine,  
December of 2024

# Additional Resources

RHC Covered Services – CMS Chapter 13: <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/bp102c13.pdf>

Medicare Claims Processing Manual – Chapter 9:  
<https://www.cms.gov/regulations-and-guidance/guidance/manuals/downloads/clm104c09.pdf>

CMS MLN Booklet – Information for Rural Health Clinics:  
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mln006398-information-rural-health-clinics.pdf>

# Additional Resources

- RHC – Specific Billing and Coding Information: <https://www.archprocoding.com/>
- 42 cfr 491: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-G/part-491?toc=1>
- CMS RHC Center: <https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Rural-Health-Clinics-Center>
- National Association of Rural Health Clinics (NARHC): <https://www.narhc.org/narhc/Default.asp>

# Next Webinar Session



## Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) Compliance Overview Part 1

- **Date:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025
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# Questions??



Please send questions to Karl Bryant, and we'll follow-up ASAP

[Karl.Bryant@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Karl.Bryant@adph.state.al.us)



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# ***THANK YOU!!!***

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