

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: Health Resource Advocate (HRA) Program

Program Description:

HRAs provide front-line support for COVID-19 testing and reporting, help identify emerging COVID-19 related health concerns, and amplify best health practices. This is a voluntary program, where COVID-19 testing is just one element- the program is inclusive of an overall K-12 school specific mitigation strategy which can also encompass COVID-19 related wellness services, such as mental health and wellness, health education, or nutrition. It is a requirement of the program that some type of active testing strategy be in place. Testing plans may vary depending on factors such as local transmission, positivity, outbreaks, etc.

HRAs can be school nurses, social workers, community health workers, Master of Public Health (MPH), or others who are looking for an opportunity to get involved in the health/education of communities. HRA funding can also be used to support positions already carrying out duties specified under the HRA position descriptions.

Funding:

HRA Program funding can only be used to hire HRAs to carry out the duties outlined in the position descriptions. HRA Program funding is currently extended to July 2023. Please note, MDHHS reserves the right to adjust the number of HRA positions and reward allocations based on availability of resources.

Position descriptions for both clinical (nursing) and non-clinical (CHW, MPH, etc.) HRAs are below.

Health Resource Advocate Position Description (clinical)

POSITION SUMMARY: The health resource advocate (HRA) will provide front-line support for COVID-19 testing and reporting, help school districts identify emerging COVID-19 related health concerns, and strengthen best health practices by providing consultation, prevention services, and appropriate public health strategies for the district. The HRA will help to address the greatest needs in school health: the health and mitigation challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to other existing and emergent health issues.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (May include but not be limited to):

- Providing consultation, leadership, and professional development opportunities for quality public health services to the school district for prevention of COVID-19.
- Serves as a team member providing COVID-19 preventive services, (including but not limited to: mental health and wellness services, health education, nutrition, etc.), early identification of problems, interventions, and referrals due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Works within the context (characteristics, needs, and circumstances) to determine a set of health strategies appropriate for the district.
- Monitors, interprets, synthesizes, and disseminates relevant research findings and other information related to COVID-19, public health, current legal issues, and new legislation that impacts school health programs and services.
- Interprets, reviews and disseminates model policies, standards, and best practices to promote safe, legal, and effective COVID-19 prevention strategies.

- Plans and uses professional judgment and acts effectively to carry out the functions of this position.
- Serves as the health care representative providing guidance and training to the school district on appropriate COVID-19 prevention strategies including COVID-19 health screening programs, infectious disease reporting, and contact tracing; and identification of students' chronic health care needs and how they may be impacted by COVID-19.
- Reviews policies developed for school start-up to address COVID prevention including classroom set up plans, class staggering schedules, other social distancing activities. Communicates with parents regarding the back-to-school public health nurse program to support COVID prevention strategies and their high-risk children with strategies to ensure their protection.
- Trains students about COVID-19 and best practices for prevention and conduct handwashing classes.
- Provide medical care and services to students according to physician prescribed medical care and treatment orders. With parental consent, provide emergency treatment and routine first aid in case of illness or injury.
- Provide medical first aid and emergency support to faculty and staff, as needed and appropriate.
- Follow confidentiality and privacy rules and regulations in all matters.
- Confer with students, parents, and teachers regarding student health.
- Assist in the management of the school's health system database, updating clinic treatment notes daily and ensuring parents review/update student health information.
- Coordinate with local health agencies and medical treatment facilities as necessary.
- Respond to emergency medical situations; perform first aid as needed; coordinate with local emergency personnel and agencies as required.
- Assist with the coordination of professional development for faculty and staff.
- Maintain inventory of supplies and materials needed in the clinic; develop and monitor procedures for maintaining adequate supplies in all school first aid kits. Assist in the creation of communication to school community concerning health and welfare issues.
- Creates a welcoming and positive teaching and learning climate and culture.

COVID Specific Responsibilities:

- Stay current on the emerging COVID-19 guidance to appropriately answer questions; stay current on cases in the area.
- Outreach to students at-risk (for COVID-19) for social issues related to social distancing and offer guidance and information.
- In coordination with school administration, keep parents, family and staff informed by proactively communicating updates on the illness and how to address related stress and anxiety.
- Assist with best practices and protocols surrounding COVID-19.
- Executes other duties as assigned by superintendent.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: Associates degree in Nursing (preferably working towards bachelor's degree in Nursing) or bachelor's degree in Nursing and two years of professional experience. A Master's degree in Nursing may be substituted for experience. Must be licensed to practice in the state of Michigan.

Health Resource Advocate Position Description (non-clinical)

POSITION SUMMARY: The health resource advocate (HRA) will provide front-line support for COVID-19 testing and reporting, help school districts identify emerging COVID-19 related health concerns, and strengthen best health practices by providing consultation, prevention services, and appropriate public health strategies for the district. The HRA will help to address the greatest needs in school health: the health and mitigation challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to other existing and emergent health issues.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (May include but not be limited to):

- Providing leadership and professional development opportunities for quality public health services to the school district for prevention of COVID-19.
- Serves as a team member providing COVID-19 preventive services, (including but not limited to: mental health and wellness services, health education, nutrition, etc.), early identification of problems, interventions, and referrals due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Works within the context (characteristics, needs, and circumstances) to determine a set of health strategies appropriate for the district.
- Monitors, interprets, synthesizes, and disseminates relevant research findings and other information related to COVID-19, public health, current legal issues, and new legislation that impacts school health programs and services.
- Interprets, reviews and disseminates model policies, standards, and best practices to promote safe, legal, and effective COVID-19 prevention strategies.
- Plans and uses professional judgment and acts effectively to carry out the functions of this position.
- Serves as the public health representative providing guidance and training to the school district on appropriate COVID-19 prevention strategies.
- Reviews policies developed for school start-up to address COVID prevention including classroom set up plans, class staggering schedules, other social distancing activities. Communicates with parents regarding school public health to support COVID prevention strategies and their high-risk children with strategies to ensure their protection.
- Trains students about COVID-19 and best practices for prevention.
- Follow confidentiality and privacy rules and regulations in all matters.
- Confer with students, parents, and teachers regarding school public health.
- Assist with the coordination of professional development for faculty and staff.
- Creates a welcoming and positive teaching and learning climate and culture.

COVID Specific Responsibilities:

- Stay current on the emerging COVID-19 guidance to appropriately answer questions; stay current on cases in the area.
- Outreach to students at-risk (for COVID-19) for social issues related to social distancing and offer guidance and information.
- In coordination with school administration, keep parents, family and staff informed by proactively communicating updates on the illness and how to address related stress and anxiety.
- Assist with best practices and protocols surrounding COVID-19.
- Executes other duties as assigned by superintendent.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: Bachelor's degree in one of the following: Public Health, Health Education, Community Health, Social Work or a related field, plus two years of professional experience. Master's degree may be substituted for professional experience requirement. *LPNs are subject to be accepted based on RN supervision and experience.

Note: social workers must be licensed to practice in the state of Michigan.

Commonly asked questions:

1. Is testing a requirement of the HRA Program?

Yes-testing is a requirement of the HRA program. While testing cadence may vary depending on local positivity rate, transmission, etc., an active testing plan must be in place.

2. Can HRAs be used for clinical duties?

Yes- HRAs may be hired as clinical or non-clinical and must have the background to support clinical duties if hired as a clinical HRA (i.e., nursing degree).

3. How long is funding available for the HRA Program?

Currently, HRA program funding has been extended past fiscal year 2022 to July 2023 with the possibility of an extension.

4. Can HRAs be used for other tasks outside of COVID-19 testing and reporting, particularly now that cases have decreased in many areas?

Yes-HRAs can also provide COVID-19 prevention services related to mental health, health education, nutrition, and wellness, etc. The focus of HRAs may increase in these areas during times of low transmission and cases, however, an active testing plan must remain in place.

Questions or concerns regarding HRA's can be sent to MDHHS-COVIDTestingSupport@Michigan.gov.

HRA reports should be sent to MDHHS-HRAreporting@michigan.gov.