MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program Updates

April 2026

RHTP Advisory Council Update

April marks an exciting milestone for the RHTP. We have finalized seats for the newly established RHTP Advisory Council.

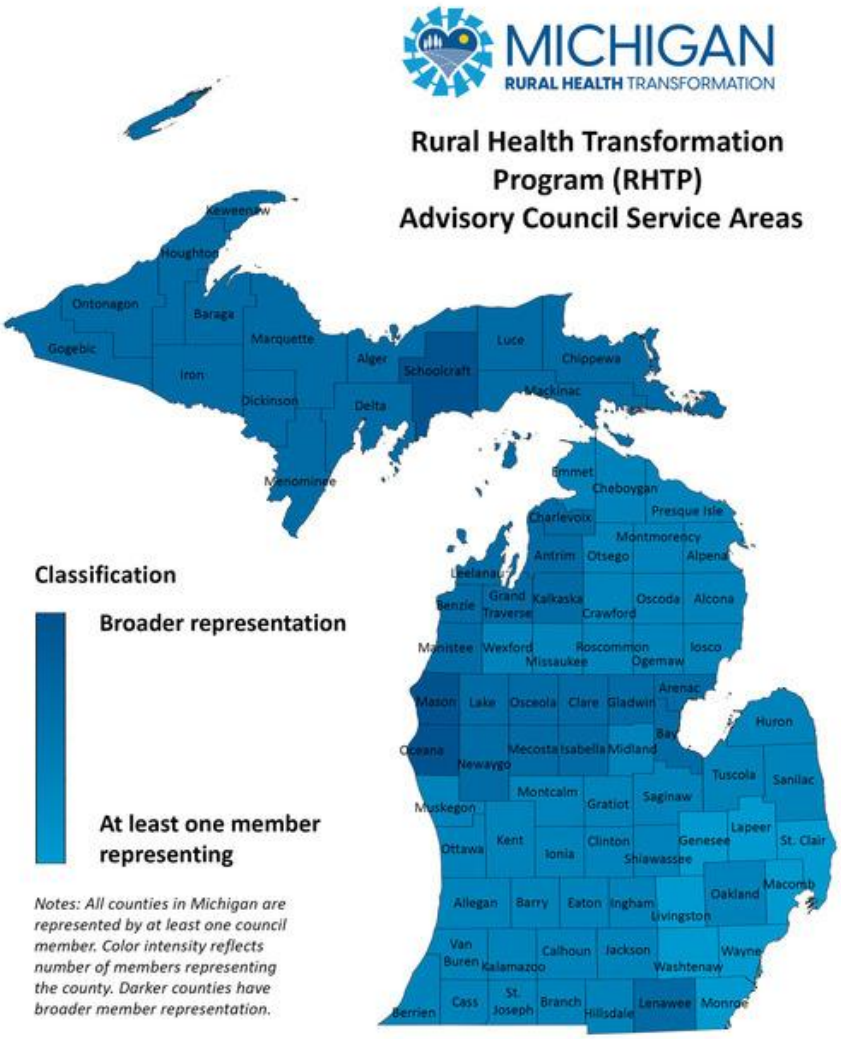
RHTP Advisory Council Members

- **Alan Bolter**
  Community Mental Health Association
- **Andrea Wendling, M.D.**
  Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, Boyne Area Medical Center (affiliated with Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Hospital)
- **Andrew Chosa**
  Upper Peninsula Health Care Solutions
- **Angela Madden**
  Michigan Association of Ambulance Services
- **April Kay Osburn**
  Central & Western Area Health Education Center / Central Michigan University
- **Catherine A. Macomber**
  Saginaw Valley State University
- **Crystal Barter**
  Michigan Center for Rural Health
- **Elise Marie Bur**
  Northern Michigan University
- **Heidi Britton**
  Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc.
- **Jeremy Cannon**
  Kalkaska Memorial Health Center
- **Julie Kay Yaroch, D.O.**
  ProMedica
- **Kim Bachelder**
  Michigan Health Information Network (MiHIN)
- **Lauren LaPine**
  Michigan Hospital Association
- **Megan Murphy**
  Superior Health Foundation

- **Nicholas Cushman**
  Indian Health Service / University of Michigan College of Pharmacy
- **Phillip Berquest**
  Michigan Primary Care Association
- **Robert Walter Mach**
  Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital
- **Sarah Oleniczak**
  Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region / District Health Department #10
- **Stephanie Winslow**
  PACE Association of Michigan
- **Wilbert Morris**
  Sanilac County Community Mental Health Authority

The RHTP Advisory Council members were selected through a structured, rubric-driven process to ensure transparency, objectivity, and alignment with rural health priorities.

The map below shows the geographical coverage of the organizations and individuals selected:

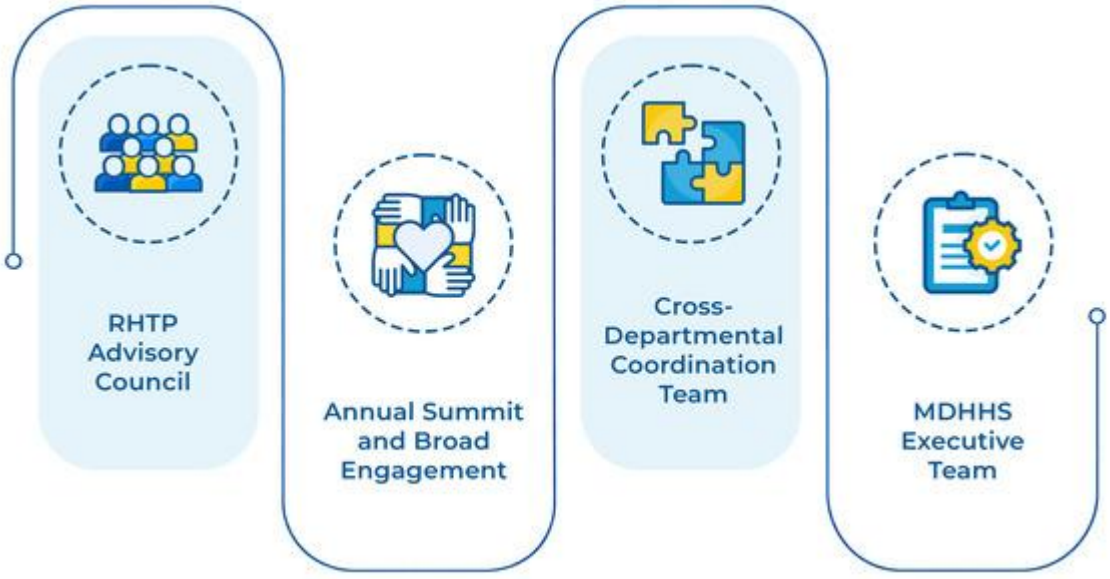


Source: Self-reported representation through the Advisory Council application. February 2026. Map prepared by MDHHS Policy, Planning & Operational Support.

Next Steps for the RHTP

The RHTP is supported by a multilayered governance structure that brings together leadership from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), cross-department collaboration and community input to guide implementation and ensure investments respond to the needs of rural Michigan communities.

- **RHTP Advisory Council:** A group of external partners and community representatives who provide insight on rural health priorities, review program progress and offer recommendations to MDHHS leadership.
- **Annual Summit and Broader Engagement:** Creates opportunities for partners across Michigan to share feedback, highlight best practices and identify emerging needs. The Annual Summit will serve as a statewide convening to discuss progress and inform future RHTP priorities.
- **Cross-Departmental Coordination Team (CDCT):** Aligns work across MDHHS divisions to coordinate implementation activities, share information and ensure program efforts are integrated across departments.
- **MDHHS Executive Team:** Provides overall strategic direction and final decision-making for the program, including approvals related to policy, funding and major program initiatives.



Rural Health Transformation Program Pillars

Transforming Rural Health through Partnerships Initiative RHTP is advancing collaborative care efforts through funding that supports chronic disease management and integrated care models. These investments are helping rural providers and community partners coordinate services, expand screening and referral pathways and improve outcomes for residents managing ongoing health conditions.

Workforce for Wellness Initiative Efforts to strengthen the rural health workforce are progressing through pipeline and retention strategies. Current activities focus on creating education to employment pathways, supporting rural training opportunities and offering incentives that help recruit and retain providers in underserved communities.

Interoperability in Action Initiative Technology and data infrastructure work is underway to improve care coordination and reduce administrative burden. Investments support electronic health record upgrades, telehealth capacity and resource connectivity efforts that help rural providers share information and better connect residents to care and services.

Care Closer to Home Blueprint Initiative Blueprint activities are advancing models that expand access to care within rural communities. Early work includes planning for transportation supports, behavioral health service expansion, aging-in-place strategies and hub-and-spoke partnerships that bring services closer to where residents live.

Tribal Partner Carve Out Five percent of Michigan's total RHTP award is dedicated to Tribal partners. The 12 federally recognized tribes in Michigan and the American Indian Health & Family Services each receive a direct allocation to support priorities that strengthen health systems and improve access to care in Tribal communities.

Rural Health Transformation Program Progress Update

RHTP continues to move forward with investments and partnerships aimed at strengthening access to care across rural Michigan. With more than $173 million awarded to Michigan for the first program year, work is underway across all program pillars to support communities and build a more connected rural health system. Funding

will be distributed through directed grants and MDHHS will offer proposal-based grants to reach critical rural health partners.

RHTP operates within a structured governance framework that ensures strong oversight, coordination and accountability. Executive leadership, cross-divisional teams and external partners work together to guide strategy and implementation.The Advisory Council serves as the primary external voice, connecting MDHHS leadership with rural providers, Tribal governments and community stakeholders to help ensure initiatives reflect local priorities and community needs.

Stay tuned for additional updates in upcoming newsletters.

Sign up to Receive Updates

To stay informed about RHTP updates, please subscribe to the RHTP listserv.

Contact

Please email MDHHS-RHTP@michigan.gov with any questions.

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Rural Health Transformation Program Website

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