

ST. VINCENT HEALTH RECEIVES USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

As part of the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative, USDA Rural Development presented a \$205,706 Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant to Indianapolis-based St. Vincent Health. The health system received one of 79 Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants awarded nationally, which are designed to enhance educational and health care services in rural America.

St. Vincent Health is one of Indiana's largest healthcare providers, with 16 facilities serving 45 counties in central Indiana. St. Vincent Health is a Catholic institution dedicated to the spirit of caring, guided by a spiritual culture that reflects their commitment to quality, compassion, and affordability in health care.

The grant will be used to expand and extend the availability of medical information and training to rural Indiana communities through advance telecommunication. The project will provide training and information needs of rural clinical support staff, physicians, and EMS personnel. Six critical access hospitals will provide medical services through this project to over 48,000 residents in Marion, Randolph, Madison, Clinton, Warren, Fountain, Jennings, and Clay counties.

"This grant will help expand the availability of state of the art medical resources to rural Hoosiers," stated USDA Rural Development Indiana State Director Robert White, "It significantly improves the quality of their health care."

"Through improved access to education resources, physicians, EMS and clinical support staff will be able to deliver more effective, integrated, efficient, quality health care in critical access hospital markets," explained St. Vincent Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jon Rahman.

Last summer St. Vincent Health launched a Distance Education website as a way to combat the increasing difficulty for physicians to meet their Category 1 continuing medical education (CME) requirements. The site also provides general continuing education for clinical support staff in rural communities and is home to dozens of courses on primary care topics.

With the help of USDA Rural Development, St. Vincent Health continues to reach out across Indiana helping rural residents maintain prosperous health.

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