



Day 3: Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) in Alaska Convening Recap

Overview of the Day

Day Three of the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) convening focused on direct engagement with vendors, participants, and Department of Health (DOH) staff, providing dedicated time for relationship-building, questions, and individualized discussion. The agenda was intentionally structured to prioritize accessibility, transparency, and meaningful dialogue between DOH staff and organizations interested in supporting rural health transformation efforts.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Commissioner Heidi Hedberg opened the day by thanking participants for their engagement throughout the convening and reaffirming the Department's commitment to collaboration as the RHTP moves from planning into implementation. The remarks reinforced that vendor partnerships will play a critical role in advancing innovation, strengthening infrastructure, and supporting sustainable health system change across Alaska.

Vendor Networking

From mid-morning through the afternoon, the Vendor Hall provided networking opportunities for participants to learn more about technology solutions that may support their project goals. Vendors and participants exchanged ideas on how their services might align with RHTP goals, expectations around collaboration with applicants, and how innovation, technology, and operational support may be incorporated into future projects.

Office Hours: One-on-One Conversations

The extended availability of Department staff was intended to give participants time to ask questions, receive clear responses, and better understand the program's vision and direction. It also provided an

opportunity for DOH staff to hear early ideas and perspectives that may help inform future efforts to improve health care delivery across Alaska.

Department of Health staff who remained available throughout the day to meet individually with participants included:

- Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner
- Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner
- Lindsey Kato, Director, Public Health
- Deb Etheridge, Director, Public Assistance
- Jen Carson, Director, Behavioral Health
- Bobby Nave, Health Care Services
- Leah Van Kirk, Deputy Director
- Tony Newman, Director, Senior and Disability Services
- Betsy Wood, Associate Director
- Dana Loutey, Senior Policy Advisor

The Department extends sincere appreciation to participants for dedicating significant time to engage in direct conversations, answer questions, and support relationship-building.

Why This Matters

By creating space for individualized discussion, the Department emphasized transparency and partnership while gathering input to inform next steps. These conversations helped ensure that future RHTP-funded efforts are practical, well-aligned, and grounded in community needs. The approach taken on Day Three reflects how the Department plans to continue engaging with individuals and communities as the program moves forward.

Staying Engaged and What's Next

The Department of Health encourages vendors, partners, and stakeholders to stay connected as additional information becomes available. More announcements, including upcoming informational sessions and engagement opportunities, will be shared as they become available.

To learn more about the Rural Health Transformation Program, visit the [RHTP website](#).

To receive the latest news and update sign up for [program updates](#).