



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
Federal Bldg. 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: (614) 255-2394 • Fax: (614) 255-2559 • TDD: (614) 255-2554 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.govohj>

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Contact: Michael Jones 614-255-2394
michael.jones@oh.usda.gov

Rural Development's Efforts Bring Ohio More Than \$481,000 in Distance Learning Grants

COLUMBUS, OHIO, DECEMBER 19, 2005 – The United States Department of Agriculture's Ohio Rural Development Office awarded two Distance Learning Telemedicine (DLT) Grants totaling \$481,453.00 to two rural community health care service providers.

"Competition for these and other Rural Development program funds continue to increase," said State Director Randy Hunt. "Ohio's sustained education and outreach efforts and successful track record clearly help keep us positioned to benefit from this program."

Grants were awarded to Allen County Health Partners, Inc., and Adams County Hospital. Allen County's grant was \$339,641.00 while Adams County's grant was \$141,812. Allen County Health Partners will use the funding to establish an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system that will link five clinic sites and 12 providers in rural Ohio. The EMR system will enable attending physicians to access patient records and make medical treatment decisions. Approximately 28,000 residents near the City of Lima, Ohio will benefit from this program.

Adams County Hospital is a repeat recipient, receiving more than \$400,000 in 2003. They will use the funding to provide home health care nurses with wireless Internet laptop computers, video conferencing software, cameras and portable equipment. Home care nurses will be able to access the Adams County Hospital clinical information system during patient visits to rural areas. Their project will serve more than 28,000 residents spread over 548 square miles.

Nationally, 79 distance learning and telemedicine grants totaling more than \$29.4 million were awarded to 36 states. The grants will provide improved educational and medical services to rural citizens. During the past five years USDA Rural Development has invested more than \$4.6 billion in telecommunications programs across America.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs, and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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