Research America!

Improvements to Rural Health Care Through Patient-Centered Research
NRHA is a national nonprofit membership organization with more than 21,000 members, made up of a diverse collection of individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of ensuring all rural communities have access to quality, affordable health care. Our mission is to provide leadership on rural health issues.
NRHA is non-partisan
Challenges in Rural America...

Patient-Centered Research in Crucial

- Workforce Shortages
- Vulnerable Populations: older, poorer, sicker
- Chronic Poverty
• 6,000 areas in the U.S. are primary care health shortage areas;
• 4,300 areas are dental health shortage areas; and
• 3,500 areas are short of mental health shortage areas.
The Growing Divide Between Urban and Rural America

Health disparities continue to grow as care vanishes from rural communities.

In rural areas there are significantly higher rates of chronic diseases, and while these diseases may be curable, in rural America they are often left untreated, leading to higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy.

Income and Health

In rural communities, poverty rates continue to climb, and opportunities for mobility are disappearing. As incomes decline, so does health.

Dying of Curable Cancers

As rates of cancer deaths drop nationally, CDC research shows that rural Americans are still dying from cancers that should be curable. CDC has found higher mortality rates in rural areas than urban areas, and this gap is growing.
A Rural Divide in American Death Rates

CDC 2017 Study:

“The death rate gap between urban and rural America is getting wider”

• Rates of the five leading causes of death — heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, chronic respiratory disease, and stroke — are higher among rural Americans.

• Mortality is tied to income and geography.

• Minorities, especially Native Americans die consistently prematurely nation-wide, but more pronounced in rural.
Prevalence of Medicare Patients with 6 or more Chronic Conditions

The Prevalence of Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries 65 Years or Older With 6 or More Chronic Conditions, by County, 2012

Age-adjusted prevalence
Quintile classification
- 4.1%–10.3%
- 10.4%–12.9%
- 13.0%–14.9%
- 15.0%–17.2%
- 17.3%–32.3%
- Insufficient data

National age-adjusted prevalence is 15%.
Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.
Opioids Ravage Rural America

- 197 deaths each day across the nation.
- Up 30% in 2017 from 2016.
- In rural America opioid death rates quadrupled among those 18-25 years old and tripled for females.
- *Death rate is 45% higher in rural counties.*
From August 2017-2018, the number of jobs in nonmetropolitan counties grew by less than 0.2 percent, compared to a growth rate of 1.1 percent nationwide. Rural counties that are located farthest from cities lost jobs over the year.
107 Rural Closures...Why are Rural Hospital Closures Escalating?

Rural Hospitals Operating at a Loss

2017: 40%  
2019: 46%
Status of State Action on the Medicaid Expansion Decision: Current Status of Medicaid Expansion Decision, as of January 23,

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation's State Health Facts.
What happens to rural patients and communities when a rural hospital closes...

- 107 rural hospitals closures mean that patients are left without access to emergency rooms and rural communities are left in economic decline.
- When closures occur:
  - Patients suffer;
  - Economies buckle; and
  - Medical deserts form
Maternity Care is Disappearing in Rural America

• More than 200 rural maternity wards closed between 2004 and 2014.

• In 1985, 24% of rural counties lacked OB services. Today, 54% of rural counties are without hospital based obstetrics.
Rural counties with higher percentages of African American women were:

- more than **10 times** as likely to have never had hospital-based obstetric services; AND
- 4 times as likely to have lost obstetric services between 2004-2014.
Research makes headlines...

If you want to watch a rural community die, kill its hospital
- Ruffington Post, Sept. 2017

A new divide in American death:
Statistics show widening urban-rural gap
- Washington Post, April 2016

Drug OD Rate Now Higher in Rural U.S. than Cities
- Consumer Healthday, Oct. 2017

Rural hospital closures hit poor communities hardest
- Daily Yonder, October 2017

Rural Hospitals Are Dying
and Pregnant Women are Paying the Price
- Politico, October 2017

Rural Shoppers Face Slim Choices, Steep Premiums on Obamacare Exchanges
- CNN Money, May 2017

Now, more than ever, the headlines are troubling...
But now, more than ever, Congress is listening...
The politically powerful are listening

“If we’ve learned nothing from the last election, it’s that we can’t listen to rural America enough.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
A renewed awareness of rural issues on Capitol Hill

- Key hearings on Rural Health in Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committee
- Joint Economic Committee Report on Rebuilding Rural America
- Senate Democrats Rural Summit
- Senate Finance Rural Mental Health bill
The rural economy is struggling, but health care may just be its lifeline.

Rural America did not recover from the Great Recession, and in many communities, jobs continue to disappear. Even though 20% of Americans live in rural counties, these areas make up just 3% of job growth since the Recession. According to the USDA, nearly 25% of rural children are growing up in poverty, compared to only 20% of urban children.

Across the country, health care generates jobs and growth. The same is true in rural areas struggling to create opportunities.
Current Research Centers & Areas of Expertise

NC RHRP

Rural Health Reform Policy Research Center

Rural & Underserved Health Research Center

University of Minnesota Rural Health Research Center

RUPRI

Rural Policy Research Institute

Rural Telehealth Research Center

Southwest Rural Health Research Center

RURAL & MINORITY Health Research Center

WWAMI Rural Health Research Center

Celebrating 30 Years

Workforce, Health Services
Thank you
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