Defining Rural & Rural Illinois

- **Census Bureau:** population < 2,500 people
- **Office of Management & Budget and 2002 Farm Bill:** one city with population <50,000 people
- **Dept. of Veteran Affairs:** population density < 1,000 people per square mile
- **RUCA Codes:** Based on the population and functional relationships between places as measured by work commuting data
1971 Regional Campus Established
1993 Rural Medical Education Program
2010 Rural Pharmacy Education Program
2003 National Center for Rural Health Professions
2010 Rural Health Professions Program
2010 IL Area Health Education Center Network Program
2015 Behavioral Health Workforce Education, Leadership & Learning Program
2017 Rural Nursing Education Program
RPHARM Program Goals

• Recruit students from rural and underrepresented minority populations and prepare them for practice in rural communities

• Create and implement interprofessional teaching models

• Promote quality programs and services for rural populations

• Impact the rural workforce through retention of rural health profession graduates
RPHARM Program Overview

- 6 Rural Pharmacy Elective Courses
- 18 weeks of Rural Hands-on Experience
- Community-Based Rural Research Project

= Concentration in Rural Pharmacy Services
RPHARM Graduates

• 61 graduates to date

• 44% practicing in community pharmacy

• 37% practicing in health system pharmacy

• 70% practicing in rural locations

• 70% working w/in 100 miles of hometown

• 71% working in Illinois

UIC Health Sciences Campus - Rockford

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Classes of 2014 – 2023

Graduates
No Graduates
PROMOTING HEALTHY RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION, SERVICE, RESEARCH AND POLICY
EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Pipeline and pathways programs
- Rural undergraduate and graduate health professions education
- Continuing education for rural providers in practice
30 Years of RMED
Celebrating Three Decades of Success!

Rural Medical Education Program
Rural Medical Education Program

407
Graduates since start of program in 1993

65%
Are practicing in a Rural area in the U.S.

56%
Are practicing in Illinois

94%
Of those in IL practice Downstate

78%
Of RMED graduates matched to a Primary Care residency program

19 OUT OF 20
RMED physicians practice Primary Care

88%
Of those practicing in-state are providing Primary Care to Rural IL residents
POLICY IN ACTION

- Rural healthcare workforce development road mapping
- Policy briefs, essays, and op-eds
- Associations and working committees
TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

- Equity in access to training programs
- Social accountability and community-based interprofessional training
- Community-oriented primary care research
- Factors that predict rural practice
- Retention of rural health professionals
The Role of Research in Advancing Rural Health

“Research is really important for decision-making. If you don’t know what the situation is, it’s awfully hard to make decisions and educate others.”

-Kristine Sande, MBA, Program Director
Rural Health Information Hub

“Achieving health equity in rural communities requires assessment, collaboration, education, and targeted activities.”

-National Rural Health Resource Center
Defining Rural for Research

- Rural Urban Commuting Codes
- Rural Health Eligibility Analyzer
- Core-Based Statistical Areas
- Rural Urban Continuum Codes
- Urban Influence Codes
- Urban Areas & Urban Clusters
- Frontier and Remote Access Codes
Rural Health Challenges

- Lack of data about rural students in pharmacy school and predictors of rural pharmacy practice
- In 2017, <5% of all incoming medical students were from rural areas
- Number of retail pharmacies in rural areas decreased by almost 10% while the number of retail pharmacies increased by 15% during the same time period (2003 – 2021)
- Hospital closures and risks
- Mortality rates between rural and urban residents widened by >12% between 1999 and 2019
Federal Funding for Rural Research

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Indian Health Services
- National Institutes of Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- United States Department of Agriculture
Building a Strong Rural Health Network

- UIC Rockford Rural Health Sciences Center
- Consortium of rural pharmacy training programs
- Workforce Data
- Expansion of rural health research networks regionally, nationally, and globally
  - Appalachian Translational Research Network
  - Practice-Based Research Network Special Interest Groups
  - National Rural Health Association connections and collaborations
  - Pan American Organization/World Health Organization Primary Care Collaborating Centre
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