Rural Public Health: A High-Level Overview

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cdc.gov/coronavirus
Rural: What Is It and Why Focus On It?
This is Rural
So is this...

Most US counties are non-metro

15% of the population
(15-20%, depending on rural definition)

What Are Some Rural Challenges?
**MMWR Rural Health Series (2017)**

Leading Causes of Death (1/13/17)
Reducing Potentially Excess Deaths (1/13/17)
Health-related Behaviors (2/3/17)
Children’s Mental Health (3/17/17)
Diabetes Self-Management Education (4/28/17)
Air and Drinking Water Quality (6/23/17)
Cancer (7/7/17)
BRCA Genetic Testing (9/8/17)
Passenger Vehicle Deaths (9/22/17)
Suicide (10/6/17)
Illicit Drug Use (10/20/17)
Occupational Air Quality (11/3/17)
Racial/ethnic disparities (11/17/17)

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/rural_health_series.html
Health Disparities Can Be Found in Rural Communities

- Communities differ in their demographic, environmental, economic, and social characteristics

- **Nonmetropolitan areas**
  - Have higher rates of cigarette smoking, hypertension, obesity, and physical inactivity during leisure time
  - Have more residents who live in poverty AND
  - Have residents who are more likely to report less access to health care and lower quality of health care

Barriers to Accessing Health Services in Rural Areas

- Distances
- Transportation
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Health Literacy
- Stigma
- Privacy
- Workforce shortages
- Limited capacity

https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/healthcare-access
Rural Poverty

- Gaps persist across:
  - Geographic region
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Family household type
  - Age group

https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/#demographics
Rural and COVID-19
CDC’s COVID Data Tracker and Rural: “Demographic Trends” Tab

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#pop-factors_totaldeaths
CDC’s COVID Data Tracker and Rural: “Demographic Trends” Tab

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#pop-factors_totaldeaths
Vaccination Status and Intent by Demographics - United States

Data Collection Period: August 8 – August 14, 2021 (N= 13,901)

Overall

75.1% are Vaccinated (71.9%) or Definitely Plan to Get Vaccinated (3.2%)

8.9% Probably Will Get Vaccinated or Are Unsure

16.0% Probably or Definitely Will Not Get Vaccinated

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccine-confidence
Assets and Opportunities
Assets in rural communities

- Creativity and innovation
- Vetting and approvals might “go faster”
- Values
  - Importance of kinship
  - Independence
  - “The communal individual”
  - Pride of place
  - Trust in neighbors
  - “Native wisdom”
  - Hard-working

The Importance of Rural Culture and History

- Social connectedness, cooperation, cohesion
- Importance of family and neighbors
- Religious affiliation
- Pride in self and family
- Self-reliance and independence
- Importance of justice, loyalty, and faith
- Regional differences

Getting More Local
State, County, and City Connections

▪ State-level Connections
  • State Office of Rural Health (SORH) (50 states)
    https://nosorh.org/nosorh-members/nosorh-members-browse-by-state/
  • State Rural Health Associations (44 states covered)
    https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/programs/state-rural-health-associations

▪ County and City Connections
  • NACCHO Directory with COVID-19 Points of Contact
  • National Association of Counties (NACo)
Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Program

- HRSA Rural Health Clinic Program
  - Testing & Mitigation
  - Vaccine Confidence
  - Vaccinations

For more information: https://www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus/rural-health-clinics
Funding to States

- Public Health Departments
  - Awards ranging $500,000 to $50 million
  - Period of performance 2 years
  - COVID-19-related health disparities
  - Advance health equity
    - Racial and ethnic minority groups
    - People living in rural areas
  - 107 awardees, with rural carve-out for each state
    [Link to CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/partnerships/COVID-19-Health-Disparities-OT21-2103.html)
Funding to States (cont.)

- Immunization Programs
Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) 2019–2024

https://www.cdc.gov/ prc/center-descriptions/index.htm
Resources
CDC’s Rural COVID-19 Resources

- Printable Resources [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc)
CDC’s COVID-19 Vaccine Resources (not rural-focused)

- Request a Vaccine Confidence Consultation: confidenceconsults@cdc.gov
- Vaccinate with Confidence https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence.html
CDC’s COVID-19 Vaccine Resources (not rural-focused)

- Resources for Disproportionately Affected Populations
  https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/disproportionately-affected-communities.html

- Vaccinating Migrant/Migratory and Seasonal Food and Agriculture Workers

- For Providers:
  - How to Talk to Your Patients About COVID-19 Vaccination
    https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/engaging-patients.html
  - Clinical Resources for Each COVID-19 Vaccine
    https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html
Communication Resources and Toolkits (rural-focused, non-CDC)

- National Rural Health Association (NRHA) COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

- Rural Health Information Hub (RHIhub) https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/
  - COVID-19 webpage https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/covid-19
  - COVID-19 vaccination page https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/covid-19/vaccination

Communication Resources and Toolkits (not rural-focused, non-CDC)

- Public Health Communications Collaborative [https://publichealthcollaborative.org/](https://publichealthcollaborative.org/)
- National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)Vaccine Education Toolkit [https://www.nab.org/vaccine/default.asp](https://www.nab.org/vaccine/default.asp)
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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.