The Status of Rural Health in the Southeast United States

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Rural Health in the Southeast U.S.

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South Carolina Rural Health Research Center

- Competitively funded research program of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, HRSA
- Focus on rural vulnerable populations and problems

Key Facts in Rural Health

HIV/AIDS in Rural America

January 2013

With the availability of effective anti-retroviral therapies and advances in treatment options, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) disease has become a chronic disease. Such transformation, however, has brought a focus on HIV care utilization. For the estimated 1.2 million Americans living with HIV/AIDS, adherence to not only antiretroviral medications, but also regular HIV care is crucial to HIV management and overall health maintenance. Many persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) face challenges in accessing needed health care. Lack of providers who accept and treat PLWHA is one important contributor to inconsistent utilization of health care services among PLWHA. Ryan White medical providers are the safety net providers who offer primary care and referral services to PLWHA irrespective of their insurance status or ability to pay.

Key Findings:

HIV/AIDS Prevalence (78 states)

1. The proportion of the population affected by HIV/AIDS is greatest in the South. In 2008, the overall prevalence of PLWHA was 29.78 per 100,000 among the 78 states that provided county-level data, with the South having the highest rate (30.2 per 100,000).

2. New York ranked first for overall prevalence of PLWHA (609.6 per 100,000) while South Carolina ranked first for rural prevalence of PLWHA (420.0 per 100,000) among the 28 states that provided county-level information. In South Carolina, rural PLWHA prevalence was greater than the overall state prevalence (520.0 versus 317.0 per 100,000 residents).

Ryan White Medical Providers (39 states)

3. A higher proportion of rural counties (29%) lacked a Ryan White medical provider compared to urban counties (19%).

PLWHA Living in Counties Lack a Ryan White Medical Provider (28 states)

4. Across Census regions, the Midwest had the highest proportion of rural PLWHA living in counties without a Ryan White provider (99.3%) followed by the Northeast (98.6%), South (97.0%), and West (90.4%).

A full copy of this report can be obtained from the SCRIEC at hr@hsri.com.
HIV+ Prevalence, 2015

- The Rural SE is a high-prevalence area
- Nationally, HIV prevalence is higher in metro (379/100K) than rural (152/100K) counties.
- In SC, the rural rate (439) exceeds the urban (373).
- In FL, rates almost equal (rural 604, urban 609)

Note: Many counties are missing data due to suppression. Rates are calculated from the available county-level data.
Source: CDC NCHHSTP AtlasPlus. 2015

Source: https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer?id=193
Takeaways for today

- HIV is transmitted and treated in a specific social and health care context

- In the rural South, that context includes challenges
  - Personal resources
  - Personal behaviors
  - Access to care

- Good change, bad change are both possible
Rural and urban counties

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Common to all definitions

- Rural = more space with fewer people
- And, coincidentally:
  - Fewer physicians
  - Fewer nurses
  - Fewer hospitals
  - (etc)
Examining the social determinants of health

- Poverty
- Education
- Debt
Rural Southeast marked by poverty

Nonmetro county poverty rates, 2011-2015 average

Persistent poverty

Child poverty

Nonmetro related child poverty rates by county, 2011-2015 average

Note: Related children are defined as any child under 18 years old who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.
Rural America: lagging recovery

U.S. employment, metro and nonmetro areas, 2007-2016 (quarterly)

Employment, index (2008 Q1=100)

Educational disparities affect health literacy

Counties where 20 percent or more of adults 25-64 do not have a high school diploma/equivalent, 2008-12

Note: Metro/nonmetro status determined by Office of Management and Budget's 2013 metropolitan area definitions. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year average, 2008-12.
Restricted upward mobility

The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States
Chances of Reaching the Top Fifth Starting from the Bottom Fifth by Metro Area

Source: https://www.vividmaps.com/2018/01/geography-upward-mobility-u-s.html
Many lack health insurance

Percent of persons under age 65 without Health Insurance, 2015

Households with debt in collections

Any debt:

27% white

45% nonwhite

https://apps.urban.org/features/debt-interactive-map/
Households with medical debt

Nationally:
16% white
21% nonwhite

Locally:
Tennessee:
  24% white
  26% TN nonwhite

Georgia:
  20% white
  28% nonwhite

https://apps.urban.org/features/debt-interactive-map/
Current Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions

NOTES: Current status for each state is based on KCMU tracking and analysis of state executive activity. *AR, AZ, IA, IN, MI, MT, and NH have approved Section 1115 waivers. WI covers adults up to 100% FPL in Medicaid, but did not adopt the ACA expansion.

Uniquely rural barriers

- Distance
- Absence of providers
- Absence of privacy
Shortages of health professionals

Health Professional Shortage Areas
Primary Care

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not to scale. HRSA scores HPSAs on a scale of a whole number (0-25 for primary care), with higher scores indicating greater need.

Source(s): HRSA Data Warehouse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, November 2016
Lack of privacy

- The flip side of “everybody knows your name”
- Stigmatized diagnoses and care-seeking are difficult to conceal
  - HIV
  - Mental health issues
Personal behaviors

- Generally risk behaviors
  - A mixed picture – some protective, some advance risk

- Indicators of sexually risk behaviors
  - Not mixed
Smoking: Higher in the region

2015 percentage of adults who are current smokers in rural areas

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Natality files
Binge drinking: lower than average

2015 percentage of adults reporting binge or heavy drinking in rural areas

Source: National Center for Health Statistics - Natality files
Physical inactivity, 2013
Obesity, 2013

CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation

South Carolina
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Access to opioids - moderate

The amount of opioids prescribed per person varied widely among counties in 2015.

NME PER PERSON
- Insufficient data
- 0.1 - 453
- 454 - 676
- 677 - 953
- 959 - 5,543

https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioids/infographic.html#graphic-b
Health outcomes
Teens births common in the SE

Teen births per 1,000 females ages 15 – 19, US, 2015

https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/alt-text/map-county-text.htm
High GC rates in the SE
Similarly high syphilis rates

Source: https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/nchhstpatlas/maps.html
Drug mortality high in parts of SE

Life expectancy at birth (2014)
But I promised a ray of hope...
The SE does have practitioners....

Nonmetropolitan Federally Qualified Health Centers

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not to scale
Source(s): HRSA Data Warehouse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, December 2019
Working together might be an option
New rural toolkit

There are information resources for rural communities

Module 1: Introduction to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment in Rural Communities

Since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S., its impact on rural communities has
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

- Substance Abuse Treatment Telehealth Grant Program
- Rural Health Opioid Program
- Delta Region Community Health Systems Development
- Rural Health Network Program grants
  - Planning and implementation grants, including a series specific to the Delta States
  - Tend to run on a 3-year cycle
Additional source of info

Whole Kids School Garden Grant Program
Grants to support new or existing edible gardens at K-12 schools and nonprofit organizations.

Geographic coverage: Nationwide
Application Deadline: Nov 15, 2017
Sponsor: Whole Kids Foundation

NBCC Foundation Rural Scholarships
Offers scholarships to students residing in rural areas who are currently enrolled in a master's level counseling program and are committed to practicing in rural communities after graduation.

Geographic coverage: Nationwide
Application Deadline: Oct 31, 2017
Sponsor: NBCC Foundation
Thanks!

- Our core funder:
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