

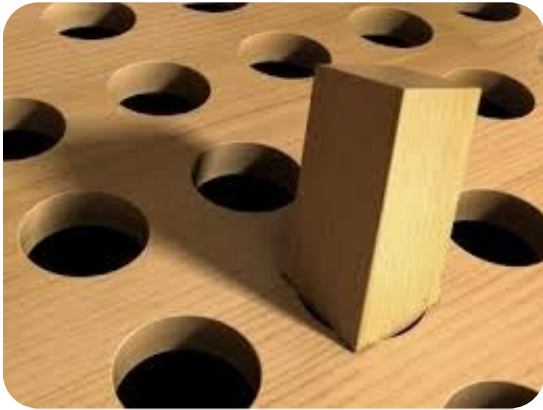
# National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Rural Health Equity: A Policy Perspective

**Tom Morris**  
**Associate Administrator**  
**Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)**  
**Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**



# Myth Busting/Preaching to the Choir

## Rural America is Not ...



## A Smaller Version of Urban America

# What Are the Differences?

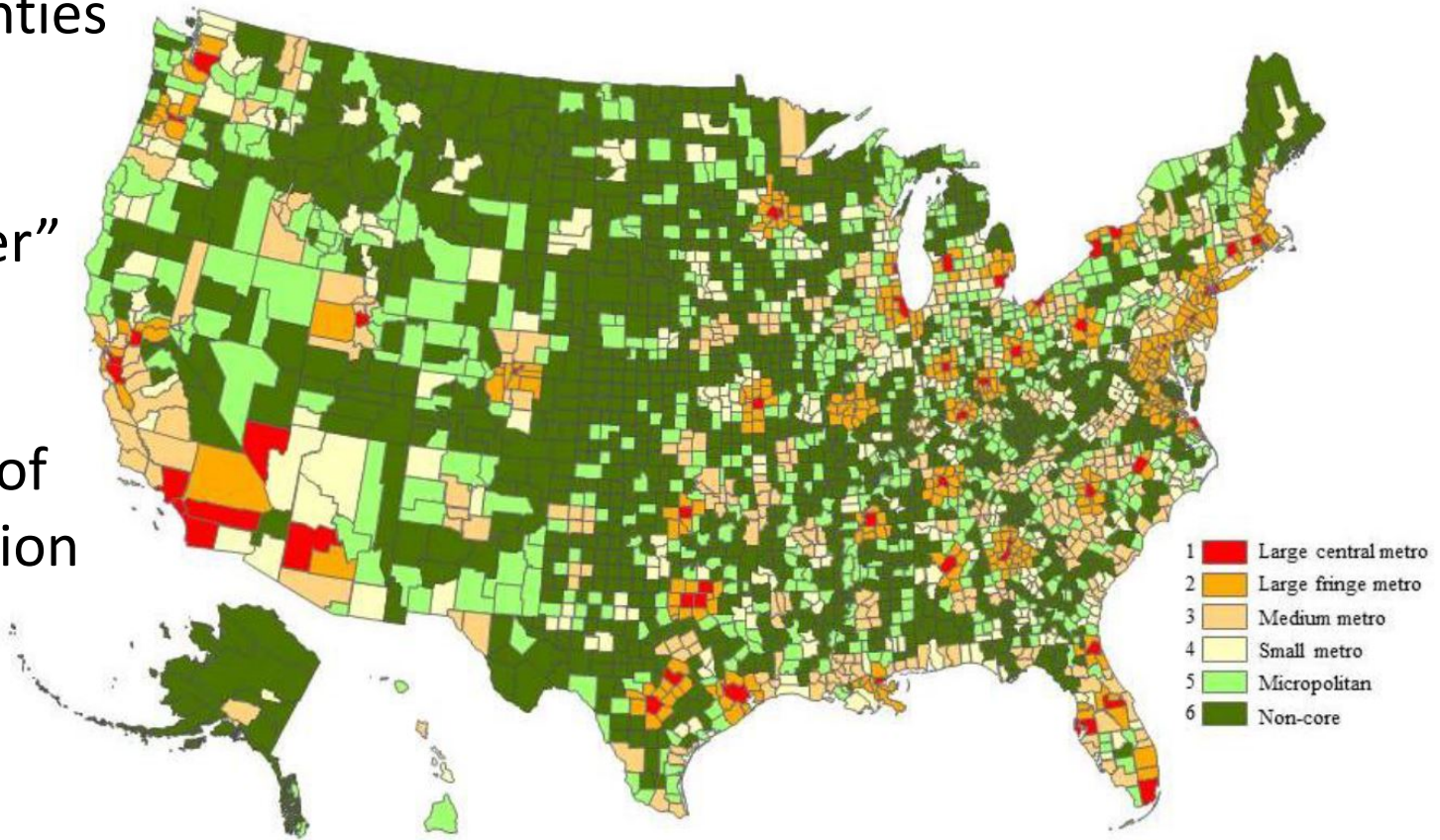
- Significant Regional Variation
- Infrastructure
- Mix of Clinicians, but overall shortages
- Higher Poverty
- Geographic Isolation
- Weather as a Risk Factor
- Higher Percentage of Elderly
- Financial Viability/Payer Mix
- Employment and Economics



- Patient Volume
- Health Disparities
- Declining Population

# Defining “Rural”

- 65% of counties are rural
- 445 “frontier” counties
- About 17% of the population lives in a rural area



Source: 2013 NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties.

# Rural Health Workforce

Physicians

- MDs/Dos 5.5/10K non metro vs. 7.9/10K in metro

All Primary  
Care

- MD/DO/NP/PA 11.6/10K in non metro vs. 16.2/10K in metro

Dentists

- 3.6/10K non metro vs. 5.9/10K in metro

Dental  
Hygienists

- 4.5/10K in non metro vs. 5.0/10K in metro



- [http://depts.washington.edu/fammed/rhrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/09/RHRC\\_DB160\\_Larson.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/fammed/rhrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/09/RHRC_DB160_Larson.pdf)

# Rural Mental Health Workforce

U.S. Counties Without Behavioral Health Providers by Urban Influence Category.

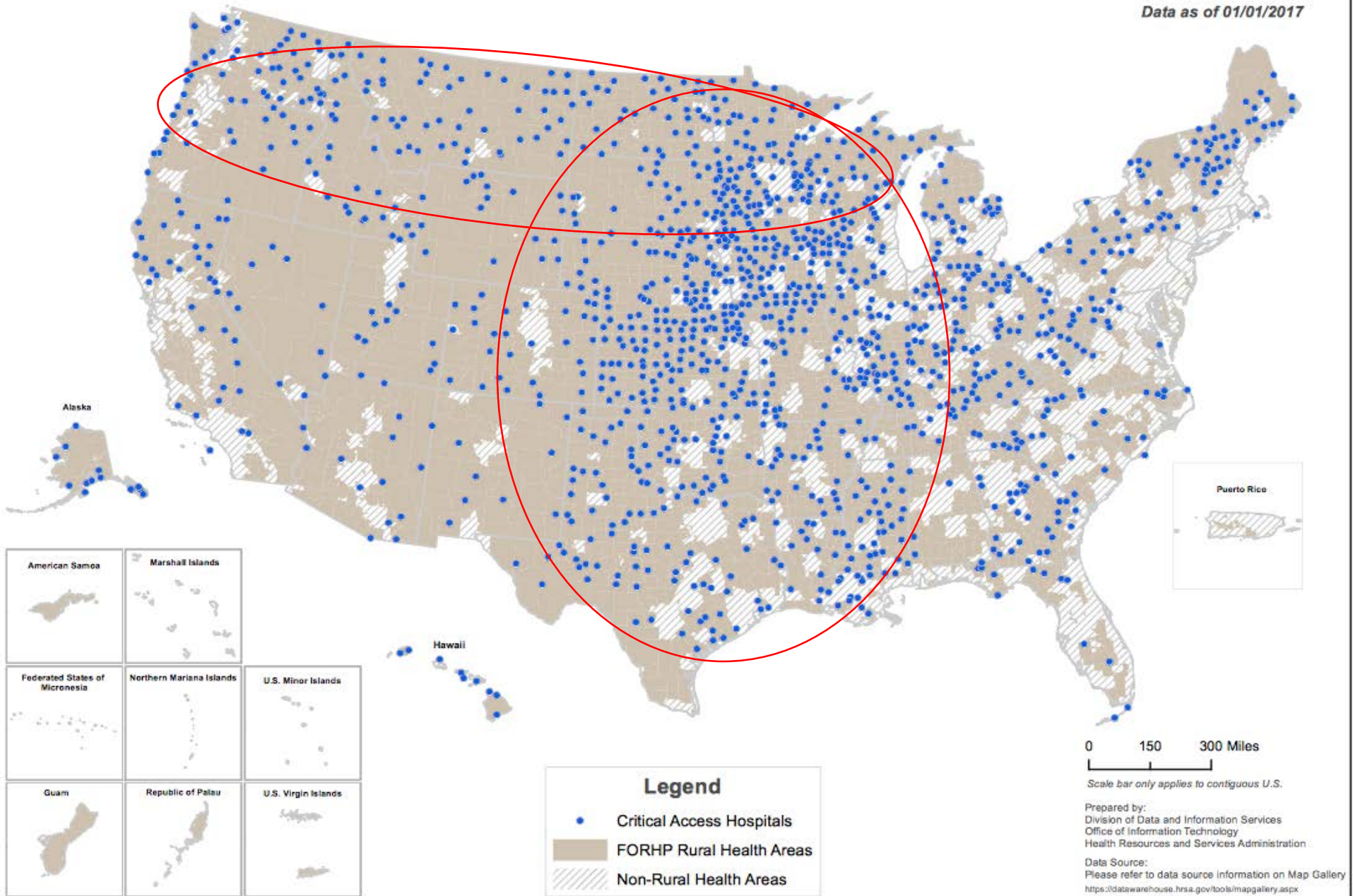
|                                     | Counties without Psychiatrists (Percent) | Counties without Psychologists (Percent) | Counties without Social Workers (Percent) | Counties without Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (Percent) | Counties without Counselors (Percent) | Total Counties without Behavioral Health Providers (Percent) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>U.S (3135 counties)</b>          | 1,606 (51%)                              | 1,153 (37%)                              | 641 (20%)                                 | 2,092 (67%)                                                | 430 (14%)                             | 284 (9%)                                                     |
| <b>Metropolitan (1164 counties)</b> | 315 (27%)                                | 218 (19%)                                | 102 (9%)                                  | 491 (42%)                                                  | 67 (6%)                               | 32 (3%)                                                      |
| <b>Non-Metro (1971 counties)</b>    | 1,291 (65%)                              | 935 (47%)                                | 539 (27%)                                 | 1,601 (81%)                                                | 363 (18%)                             | 252 (13%)                                                    |
| Micropolitan (640 counties)         | 222 (35%)                                | 124 (19%)                                | 68 (11%)                                  | 387 (60%)                                                  | 38 (6%)                               | 31 (5%)                                                      |
| Non-core (1331 counties)            | 1,069 (80%)                              | 811 (61%)                                | 471 (35%)                                 | 1,214 (91%)                                                | 325 (24%)                             | 221 (17%)                                                    |

Data Sources: National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI) data, October 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS) Urban Influence Codes, 2013.



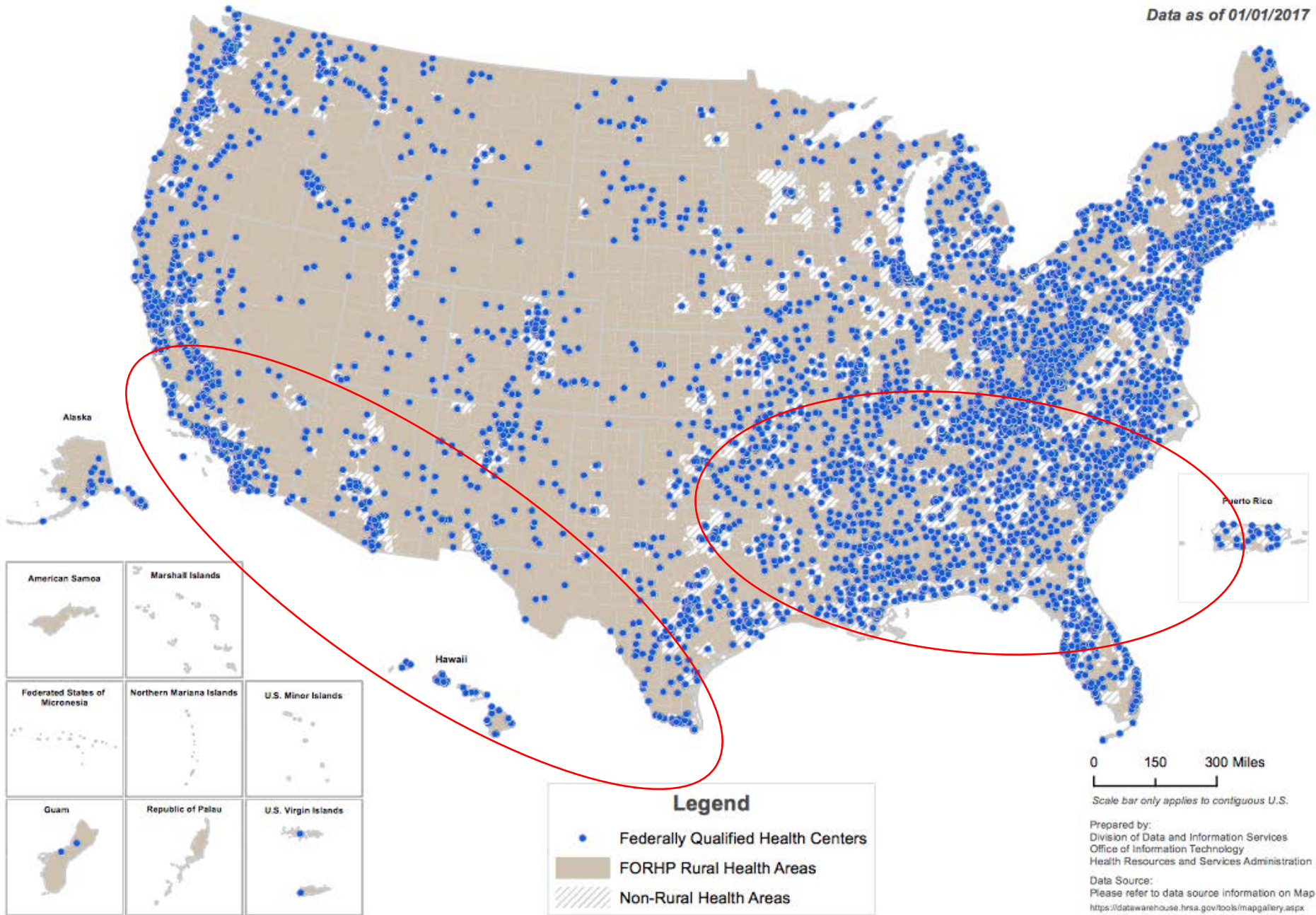
[Source: WWAMI Rural Health Resource Center](#)

Data as of 01/01/2017

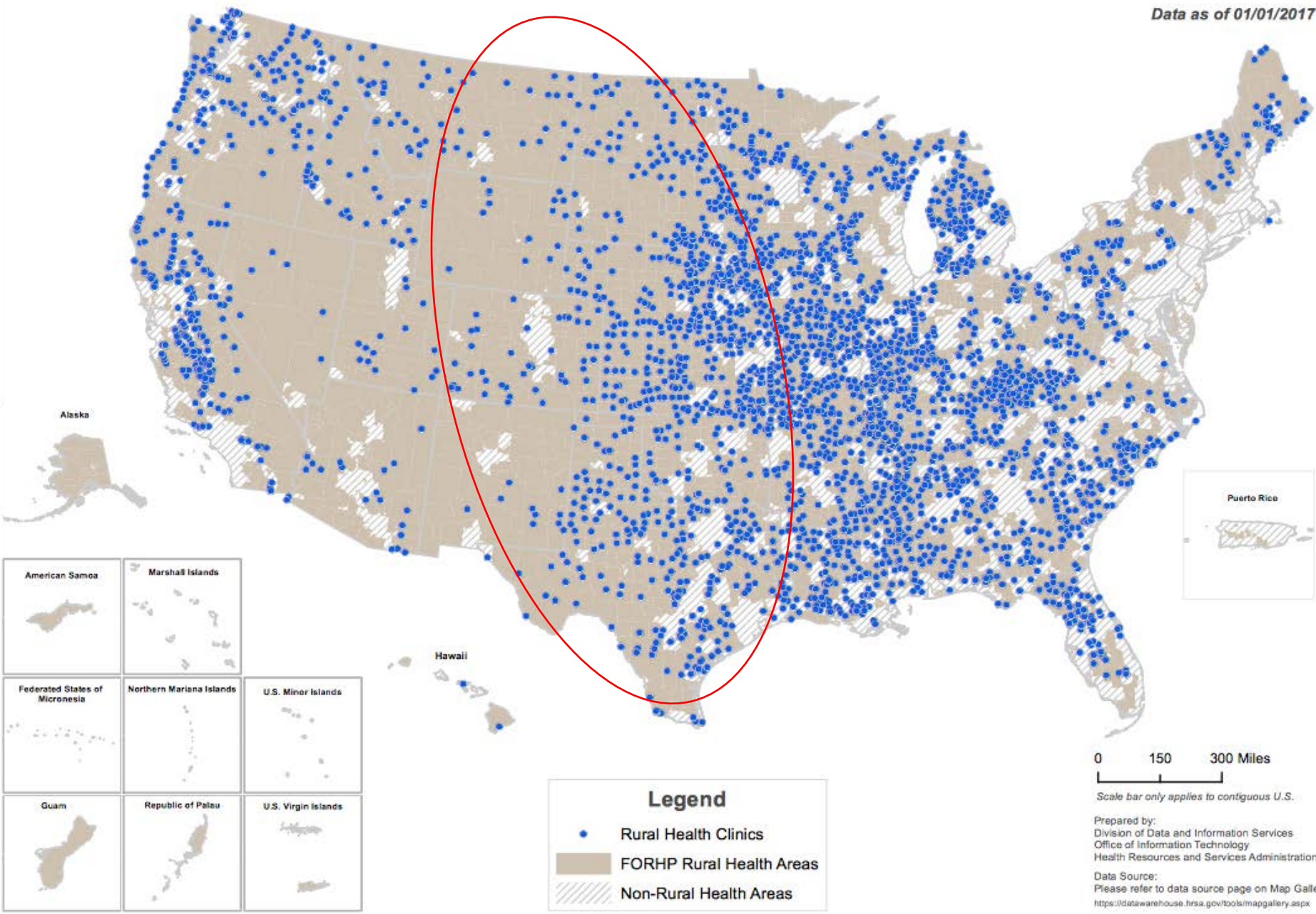


## Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) Rural Health Areas

Data as of 01/01/2017

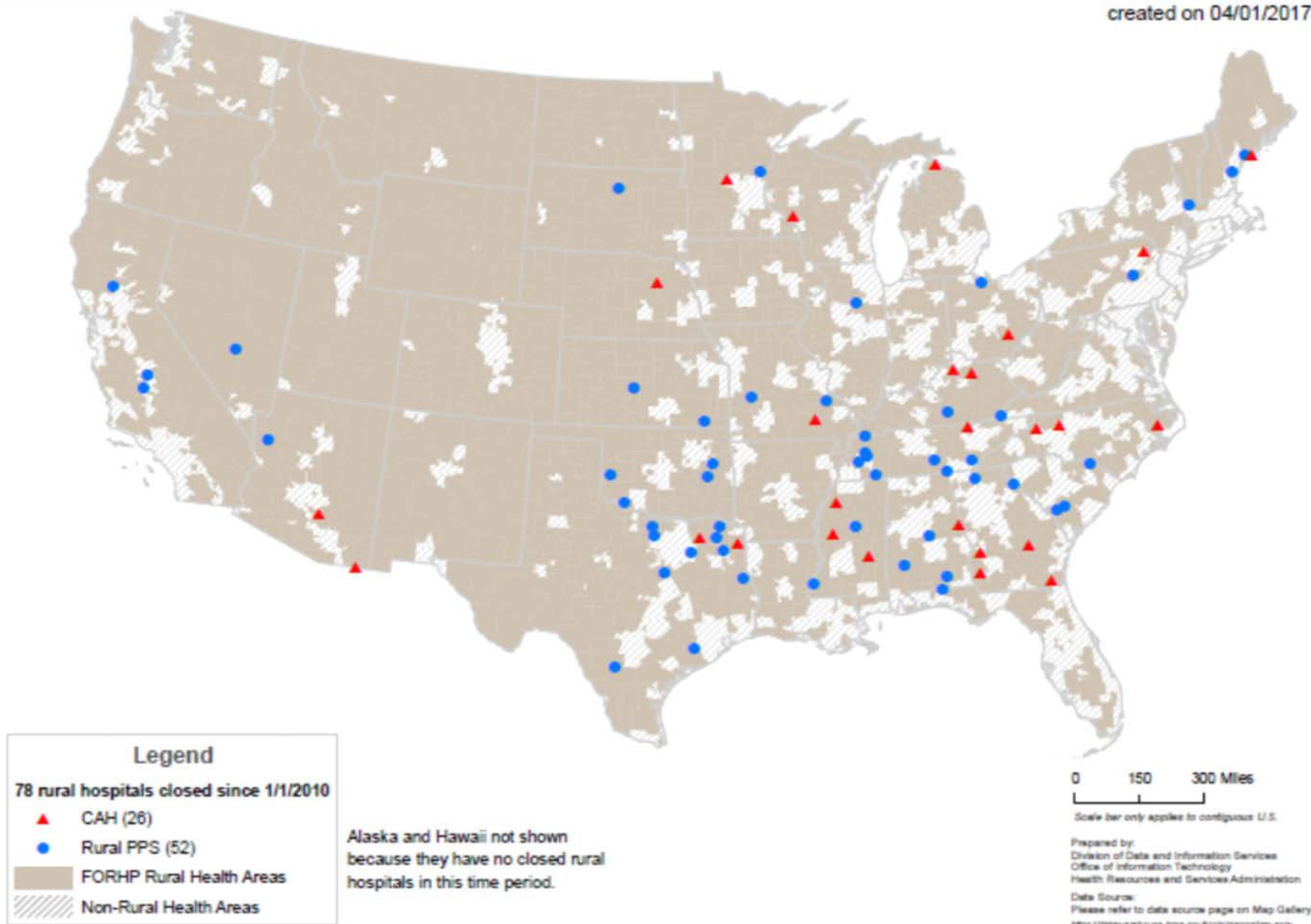


Data as of 01/01/2017



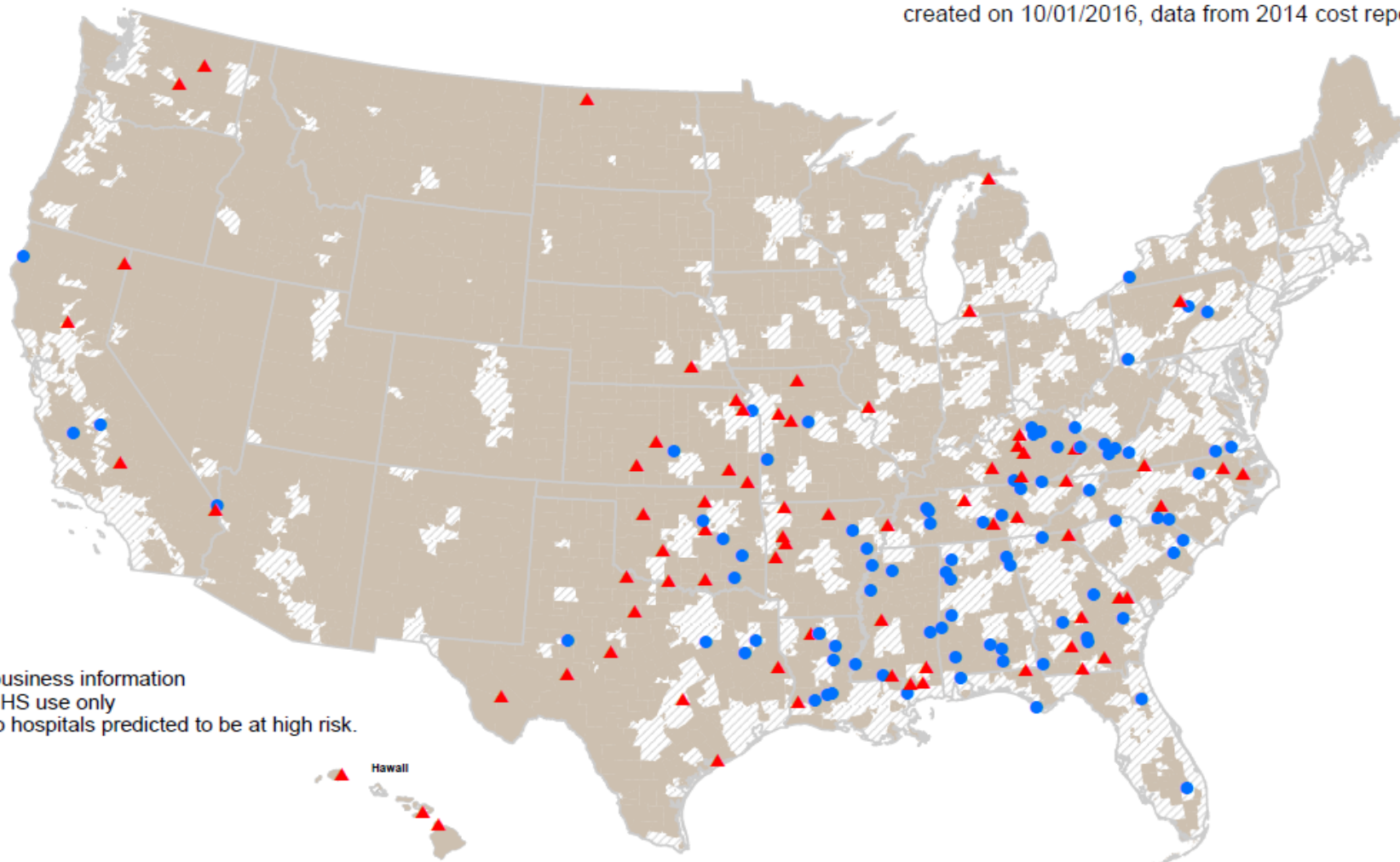
## Figure 2. Closed rural hospitals, 2010 - 2017

created on 04/01/2017



## Figure 3. Rural Hospitals at High Risk of Financial Distress in 2016

created on 10/01/2016, data from 2014 cost reports



Confidential business information  
For internal HHS use only  
Alaska has no hospitals predicted to be at high risk.

### Legend

158 rural hospitals predicted to be at high risk of financial distress in 2016 based on 2014 cost reports

▲ CAH (73)

● Rural PPS (85)

■ FORHP Rural Health Areas

▨ Non-Rural Health Areas

0 150 300 Miles

Scale bar only applies to contiguous U.S.

Prepared by:  
Division of Data and Information Services  
Office of Information Technology  
Health Resources and Services Administration

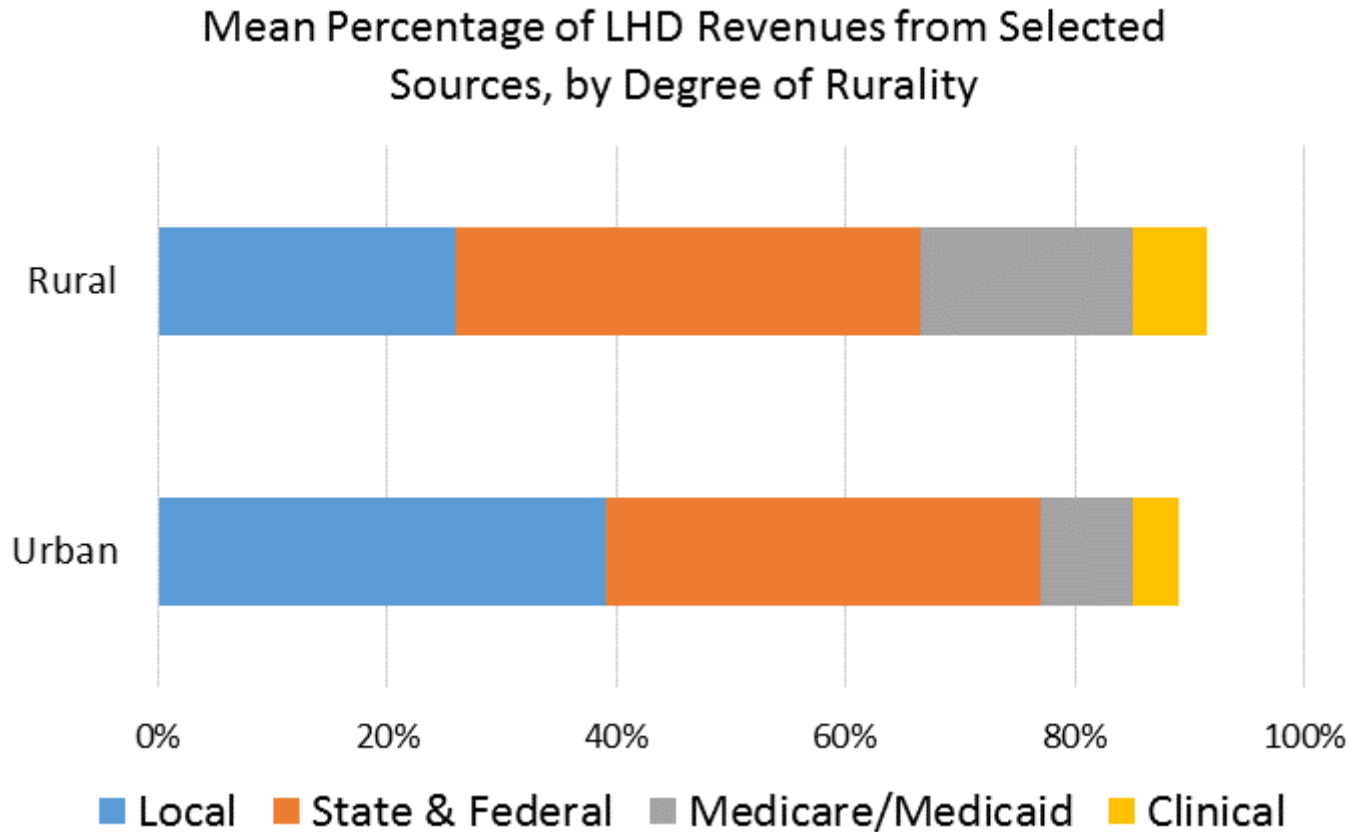
Data Source:  
Please refer to data source page on Map Gallery  
<https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/mapgallery.aspx>

# Rural Emergency Medical Services Considerations

- Little Data Available
- 911 Coverage Not Universal
- High Fixed Costs, Low Patient Volume, Long Trips
- Heavily Reliant on Volunteers
- Financially challenged



# Key Rural-Urban Public Health Differences



Source: Analysis by Dr. Kate Beatty, ETSU



# Rural Health Policy Pitfalls

- Finance
- Health Care Team Assumptions
- Evidence-Base
- Population Thresholds
- The Evaluation Trap
- Block Grants vs. Direct Community Funding



# Rural Health and the Elusive Technology Solution

- Telehealth
- Electronic Health Records
- Mobile Health
- Broadband



# Rural Health and the Department of Health and Human Services



 Social Security

SEARCH MENU LANGUAGES SIGN IN / UP

Compilation Of The Social Security Laws

 OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH POLICY

Sec. 711. [42 U.S.C. 912] (a) There shall be established in the Department of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the "Department") an Office of Rural Health Policy (in this section referred to as the "Office"). The Office shall be headed by a Director, who shall advise the Secretary on the effects of current policies and proposed statutory, regulatory, administrative, and budgetary changes in the programs established under titles XVIII and XIX on the financial viability of small rural hospitals, the ability of rural areas (and rural hospitals in particular) to attract and retain physicians and other health professionals, and access to (and the quality of) health care in rural areas.



# Rural Health Policy and Research



- Getting the Rural Voice in to the Policy Process
- Putting Research Findings into the Hands of Rural Leaders

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>

<https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org>



# Rural-Specific Programs

## Community-Based Division

- **Pilot Programs for Rural Communities**
  - Expanding the Community Health Gateway
- **Public Health Programs**
  - Screening
  - AEDs and Opioid Reversal Programs



## Hospital-State Division

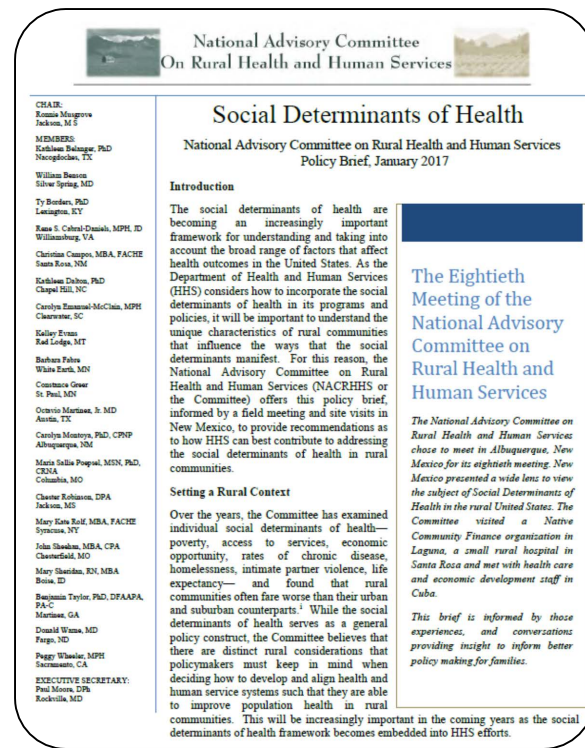
- Grants Focusing on Performance and Quality Improvement for Small Rural Hospitals
- State Offices of Rural Health

## Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

- Telehealth Network Grants
- Telehealth Resource Centers
- Licensure and Portability

# Another Voice for Rural Policy to HHS

- National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services
- Issues Policy Briefs and Makes Recommendations to the HHS Secretary
- Focus on Both Rural Health and Rural Human Service Issues

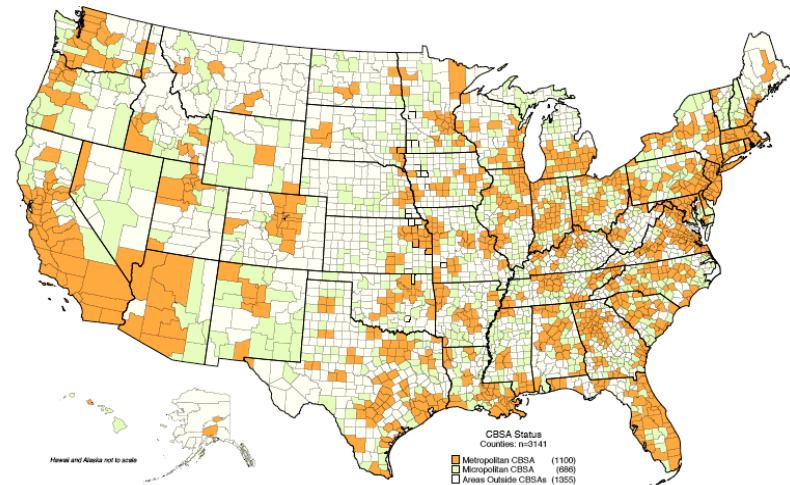


<http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/rural/publications/index.html>

# The Federal Investment in Rural Health

- **Supporting Access via ...**

- Workforce Training
- Clinician Placement (National Health Service Corps)
- Infrastructure Support
- Targeting Resources by Designating Shortage Areas
- Enhanced Payments through Medicare and Medicaid
- Pilots and Demonstrations
- Provision of Public Coverage
- Support of Private Coverage
- Investments in Technology
  - Telehealth
  - Broadband
  - Electronic Health Records



# Rural Health and the Department of Health and Human Services



Agency for Health Research and Quality



Administration for Children and Families



Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services



National Institutes of Health



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration



Centers for Disease Control



Health Resources and Services Administration



Indian Health Service



Administration for Community Living



# HHS Activities in Health Equity

## Federal Interagency Health Equity Team (FIHET)



# Health Resources & Services Administration And Rural Health

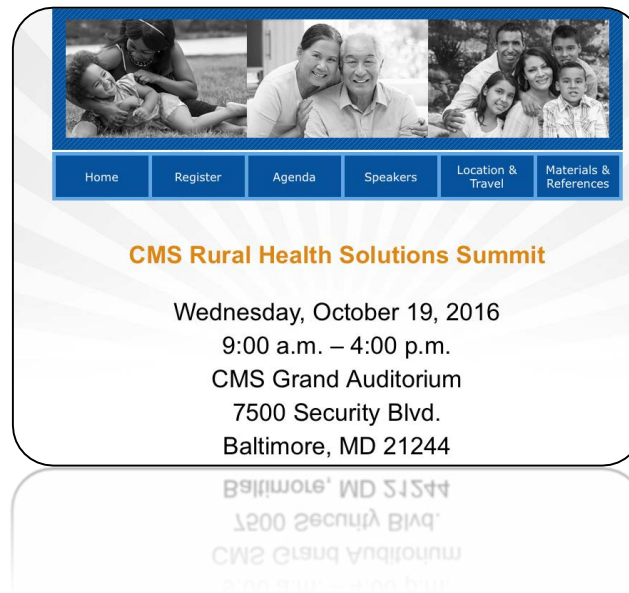


- **Health Centers**
  - Serve 1 in 3 people living in poverty and 1 in 6 rural residents
- **Maternal and Child Health**
  - Home Visiting: In FY 2016, 160,000 parents and children nationwide received HRSA-supported home visiting services, in 35% of all urban counties, and 23% of all rural counties
- **Bureau of Health Workforce**
  - In FY 2016, 160,000 parents and children nationwide received HRSA-supported home visiting services, in 35% of all urban counties, and 23% of all rural counties
  - 28 of 59 Teaching Health Centers include a rural rotation
  - Training grants support 187,764 students from rural areas; HRSA-supported training spots include 8,409 rural locations



# Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

- Rural Council
- Innovation Center Awards
- Technical Assistance Targeted to Rural and Underserved
- The Chronic Care Management Campaign
  - Focus on Rural and Underserved



# CDC Rural MMWR Series



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Search MMWR Only

CDC A-Z INDEX ▾

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MMWR

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MMWR Ebola Reports

MMWR Polio Reports

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**MMWR Rural Health Series**

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**April 28, 2017**

- [Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs in Nonmetropolitan Counties — United States, 2016](#)

**March 17, 2017**

- [Differences in Health Care, Family, and Community Factors Associated with Mental, Behavioral, and Developmental Disorders Among Children Aged 2–8 Years in Rural and Urban Areas — United States, 2011–2012](#)
  - [Out of Sight, Out of Mind — Behavioral and Developmental Care for Rural Children](#) *New England Journal of Medicine* ↗

**February 3, 2017**

- [Health-Related Behaviors by Urban-Rural County Classification — United States, 2013](#)
  - [Extending Work on Rural Health Disparities: A Commentary on Matthews and Colleagues' Report](#) *The Journal of Rural Health* ↗

**January 13, 2017**

- [Leading Causes of Death in Nonmetropolitan and Metropolitan Areas — United States, 1999–2014](#)
  - [State Data Accompanying MMWR Surveillance Summary 66\(No. SS-1\):1-8: Potentially Excess Deaths from the Five Leading Causes of Death in Nonmetropolitan and Metropolitan Areas, United States, 2005-2015](#)
- [Reducing Potentially Excess Deaths from the Five Leading Causes of Death in the Rural United States](#)

[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/rural\\_health\\_series.html](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/rural_health_series.html)



# Contact Information

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