



Federal Programs to Strengthen the Primary Care Workforce in Underserved Rural and Urban Communities

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
Standing Committee on Primary Care
November 14th, 2024

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Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



Setting A Context for Rural Primary Care

Significant Differences from Urban Areas ...

- Broader Range of Practice
 - May Do More Diagnostics
 - Likely Engaged in Post-Acute, Long-Term, Inpatient and Emergency Care
- Potential for Professional Isolation
 - Role of Telehealth
- The Imperative to Do More Given Gaps
 - Obstetrics
 - Addiction Services

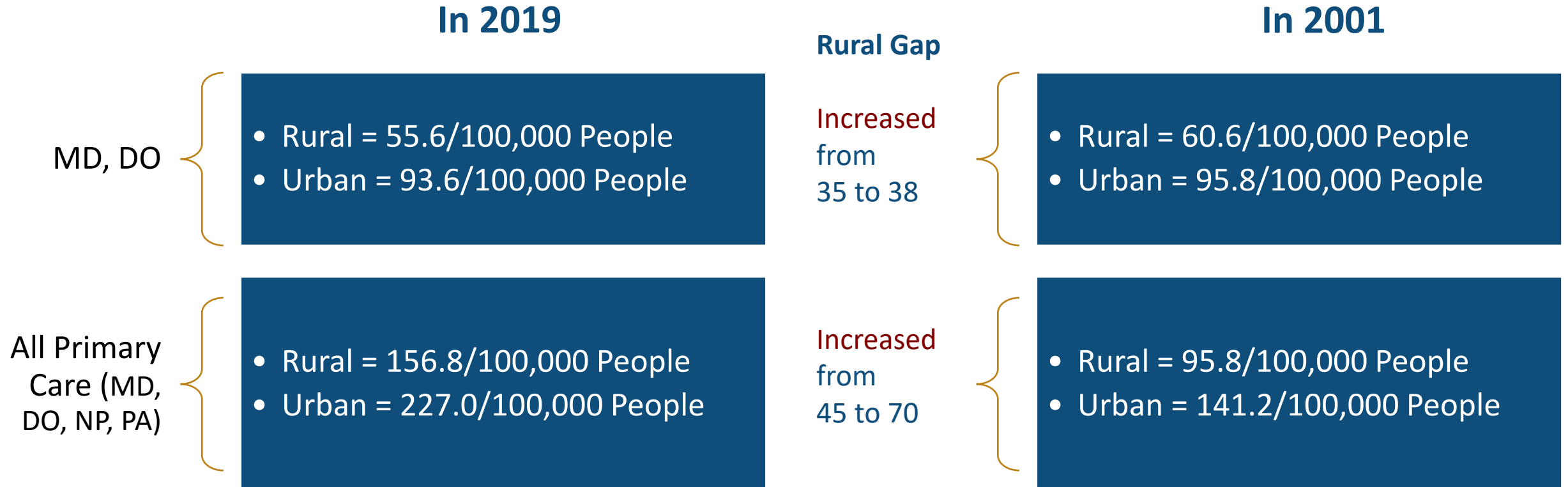


<https://prevention.nih.gov/research-priorities/research-needs-and-gaps/pathways-prevention/improving-rural-health-through-telehealth-guided-provider-provider-communication>



Rural Health Issue: Primary Care Workforce

Historic and Ongoing Gaps ...



Note: Rural and urban defined as nonmetropolitan and metropolitan, respectively
Source: Andrilla CHA, Woolcock SC, Garberson LA, Keppel GA, Graves JM, Patterson DG. *Trends in Health Workforce Supply in the Rural U.S.* Policy Report. WWAMI Rural Health Research Center, University of Washington; October 2024.



Rural Health Issue: Primary Care Workforce

New Research Coming ...



 **TEXAS A&M HEALTH**
**Southwest Rural Health
Research Center**

**Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant
Specialties: Initial Findings from the National
Provider Identification Standard (NPI) Data**

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Key Practice Locations for Rural Primary Care Providers

Special Designations Play a Key Role

Rural Hospital Designations

Designation ³	Total in U.S.
Critical Access Hospital (CAH)	1,364
Sole Community Hospital (SCH)	299
Medicare Dependent Hospital (MDH)	142
Rural Emergency Hospitals	31

Primary Care Designations

Designation	Total in U.S.
Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5,500+
Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nearly 1,500 CHCs• 17K+ delivery sites• Serve 1 in 5 rural residents
HPSA Bonus Payment (+ %10 on Medicare visits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physicians in more than 7,543 primary care HPSAs qualify

1. <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/healthcenterprogram/index.html>

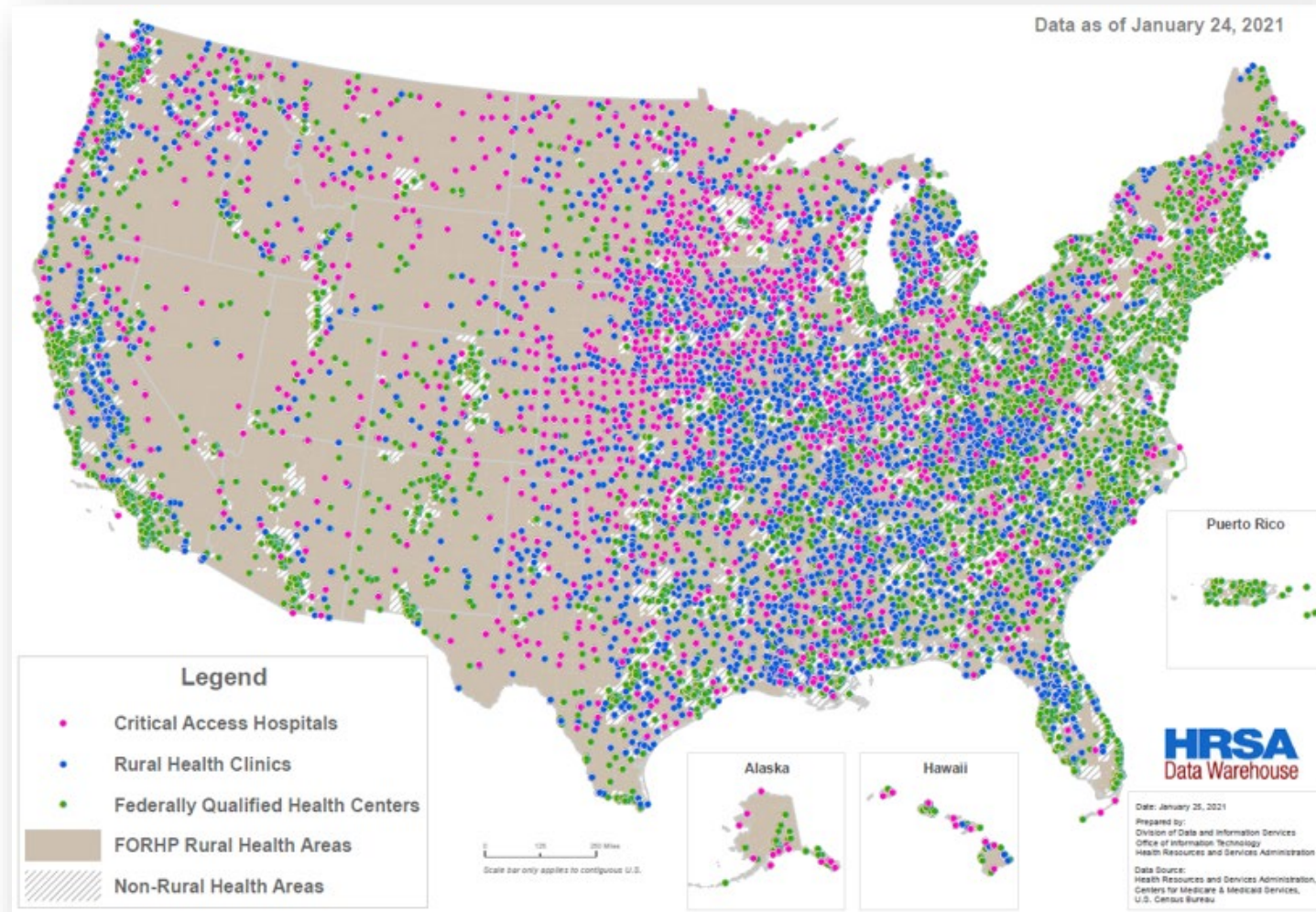
2. 2021 Provider of Service (POS) File

3. University of North Carolina, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research analysis of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid providers reported open January 1, 2020



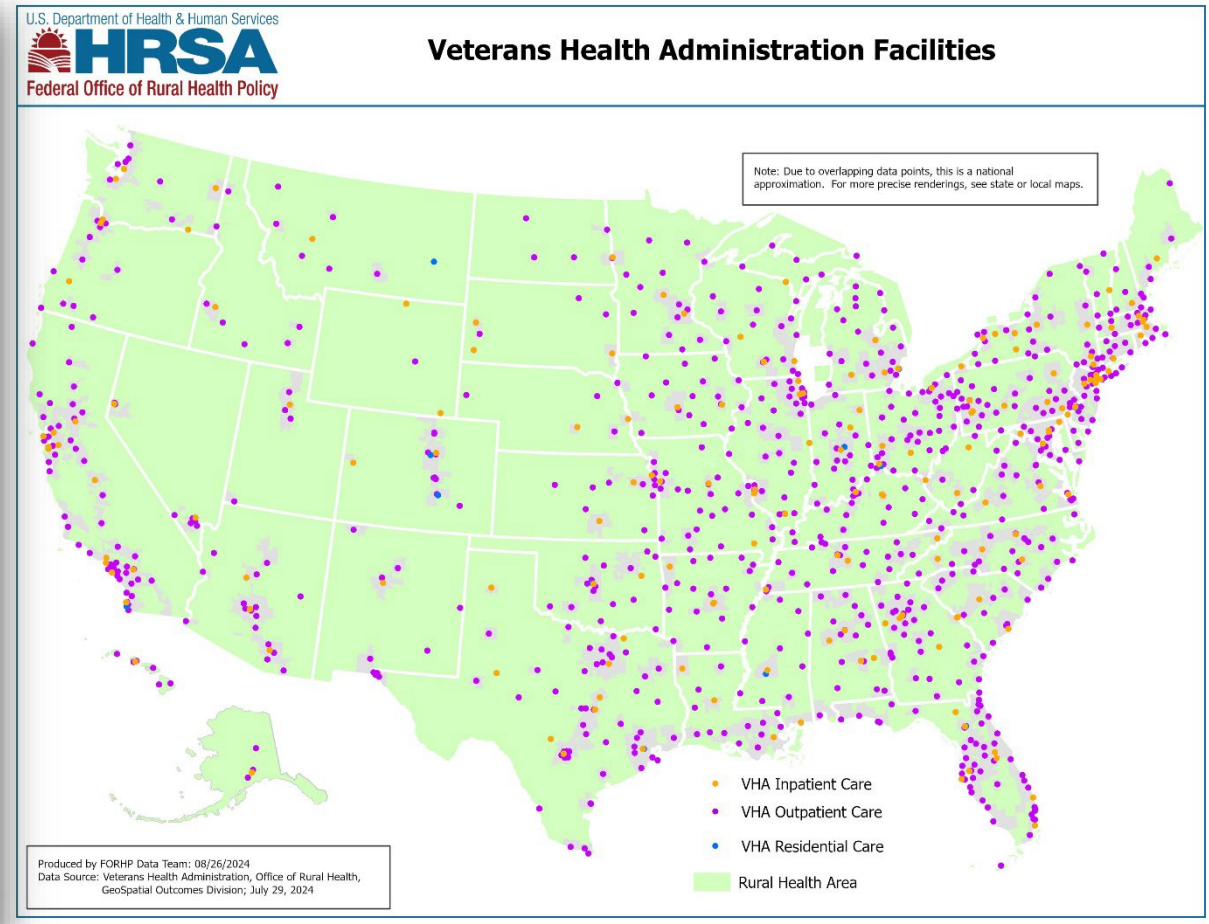
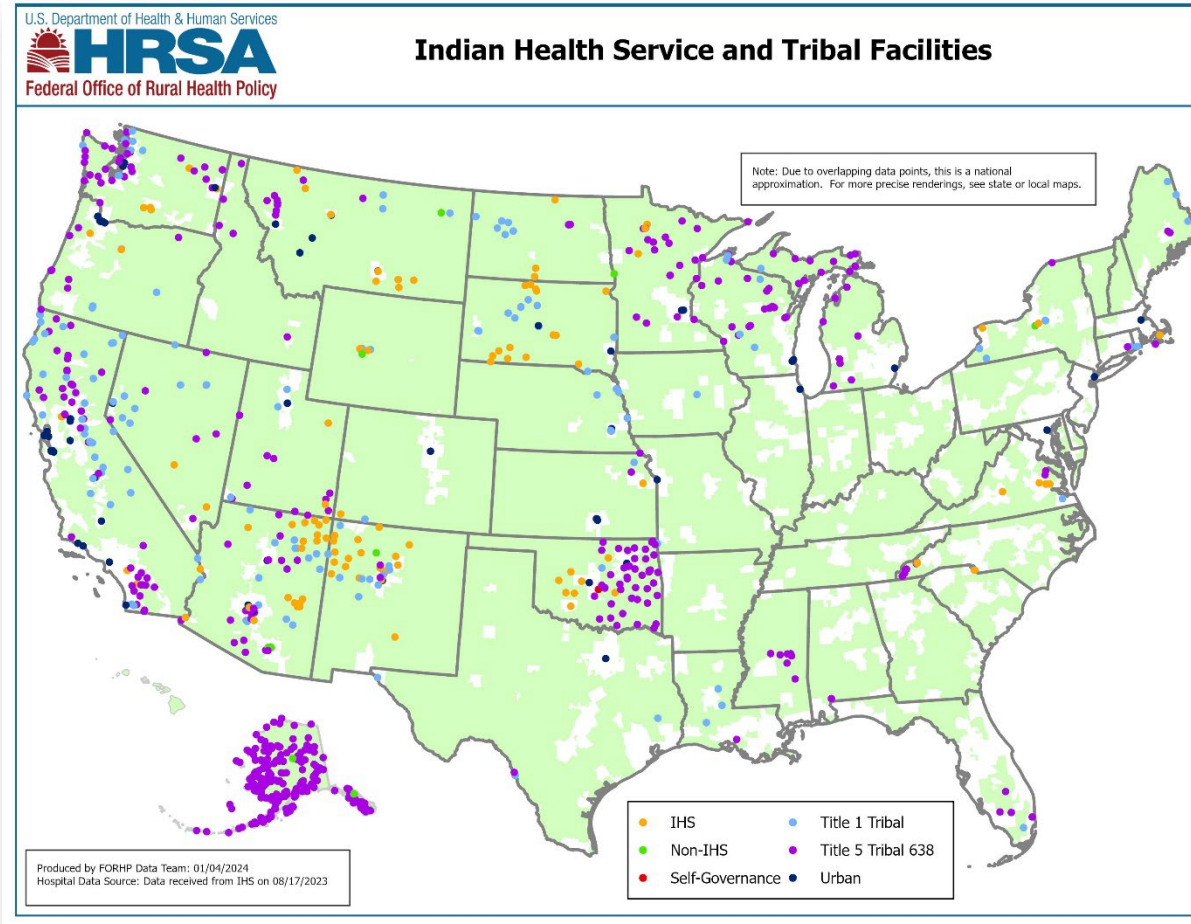
The Federal Dimensions of the Rural Health Landscape

Special Designations Play a Key Role



The Federal Dimensions of the Rural Health Landscape

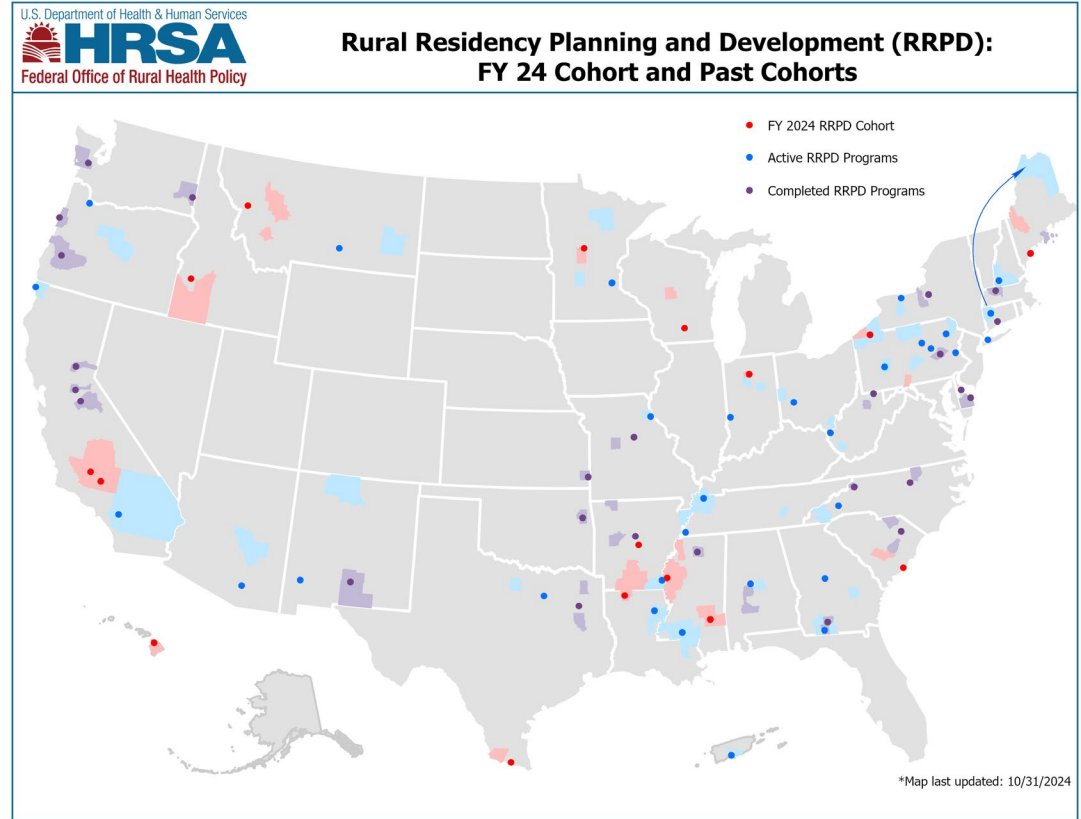
The Veteran's Administration and Indian Health Service Serve Rural Communities



Creating New Rural Residencies

Rural Residency Planning and Development (RRPD)

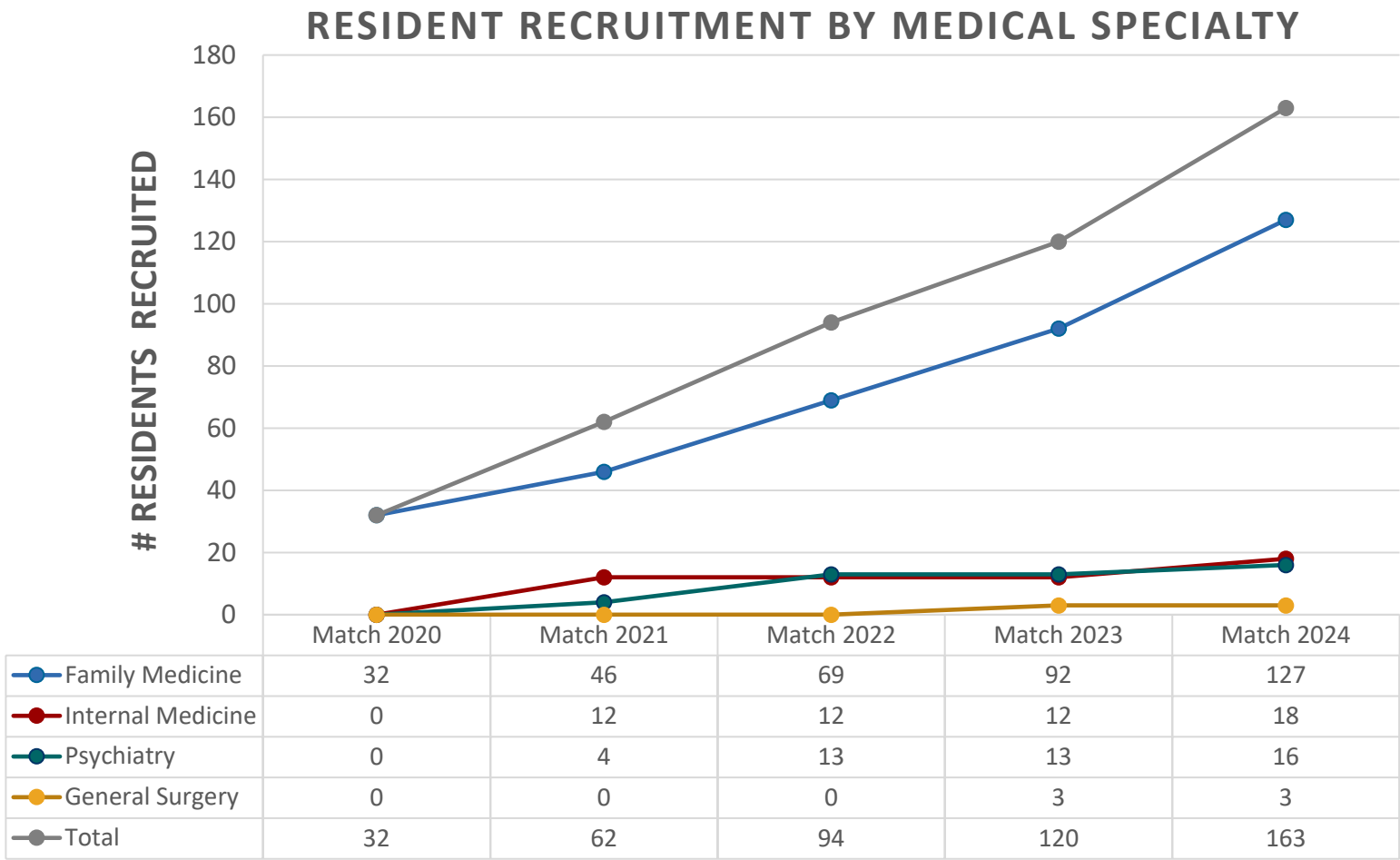
- Background
 - Delayed Leveraging of a Key Medicare Flexibility
 - Historical Rural Challenge
 - ✓ Start-Up Costs
- Program Design
- Research Findings
 - Five-fold greater likelihood for rural practice for Rural Training Programs



Impact: Since 2019, HRSA awarded almost **\$66M** to **85** award recipients spanning across 38 states and 6 medicine disciplines.

Creating New Rural Residencies

Rural Residency Planning and Development (RRPD)



- RRPD Programs have been generally successful in the Match with programs filling their requested number of positions in past years.
- For AY24, 163 residents began their training resulting in RRPD programs matriculating **more than 450** residents from AY20-2024
- Impact Will Grow Steadily Over Time



Key Steps Forward

Consolidated Appropriations Act GME Provisions

Promoting the Growth of Graduate Medical Education Programs



Sec. 126
Distribution of Additional
Residency Positions



Sec. 127
Promoting Rural Hospital GME
Funding Opportunity

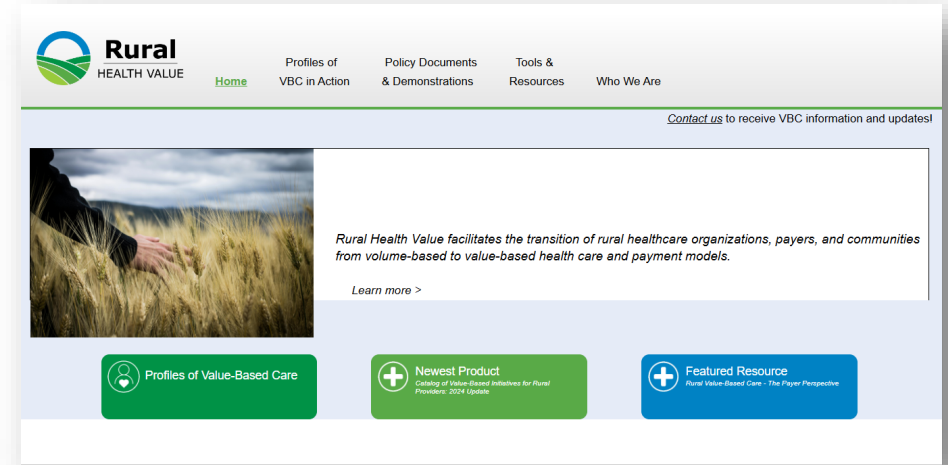


Sec. 131
New Medical Residency
Training Programs after Hosting
Resident Rotators for Short
Durations

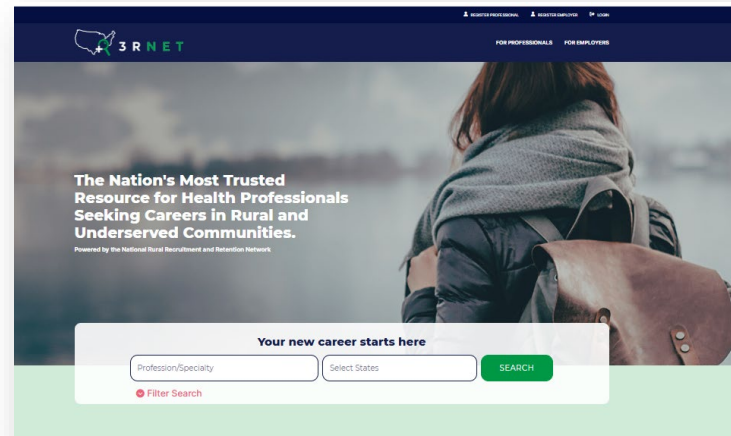
Supporting Rural Primary Care

Several Considerations ...

- CMS Actions A Plus
 - Medicare Shared Savings Flexibilities
 - Expansion of Billing Codes and Incident To Options
- HRSA Efforts for Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners
- Rural Targeted Tracks within Medical Schools
- Creative Approaches to Recruitment and Retention



<https://ruralhealthvalue.public-health.uiowa.edu/>



<https://www.3rnet.org/>



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