

# TCT Rural Health Summit



**National Rural  
Health Association**

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VP Clinic Division

With Special Guest Carrie Cochran-McLain  
National Rural Health Association  
Chief Policy Officer  
Washington DC

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# Challenges of Rural Health Care

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- Higher Rates of Health Disparities
- Systemic Workforce Shortages
- Lower Health Literacy
- Higher Rates Substance Abuse
- Social Stigma and Privacy Concerns
- Higher Rates of Un/Underinsured Health Care Coverage
- Lack of Medicaid Expansion
- Limited Resources and Capital for Providers
- Poor Broadband Coverage
- Distance and Transportation Options
- Lack of Focus on Population Health
- Health Status of Rural Populations
- Rural Hospital, Pharmacy, and Nursing Home Closures

# COVID-19 Has Increased Challenges

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- Rural Americans are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- Health disparities are exacerbated during a pandemic
- Public health departments have limited resources
- Rural communities have fewer health resources to respond to COVID-19 and other public health emergencies
- Shortages of PPE, testing supplies, and ventilators
- COVID-19 has exacerbated the financial instability of rural providers
- Outdated facilities and support services makes response harder
- Reduced revenues and utilization
- Limited COVID-19 surge capacity
- Transferring patients to higher levels of care has been challenging
- Workforce supply can't meet demand for care due to shortages

# COVID-19 – A Rural Story

Via | webex by cisco

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
IN THE UNITED STATES  
NEW CASES  
7-DAY AVERAGE  
**103,076**  
↓ **11%**  
FROM A WEEK AGO  
SOURCE: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
FULLY VACCINATED  
**56%**  
SOURCE: CDC

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
COVID MORTALITY RATE IN RURAL AREAS MORE THAN 2X THE RATE IN CITIES

LIVE  
CNN  
S&P ▼ -26.33

**FOX NEWS LIVE**

**SMALL TOWNS HAVE LARGER ELDERLY POPULATIONS, PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES**

AMERICA'S NEWS HQ

19 DEATH RATES HAD LOWER LEVELS OF VITAMIN D ... RESEARCHERS ALSO FOUND A STRONG CORRELAT

**BREAKING NEWS**

**TOM MORGAN** | NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOC. CEO

CORONAVIRUS SELL-OFF  
-4.58% -973.51  
▼ DJI 20,263.87  
LIVE

MSNBC  
DOW ▼ 989.37 | 6:54 AM



# The Opportunity

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The experience of COVID has exposed the disparities in rural underserved communities.

All people, no matter where they live , no matter what their age, should have access to high quality healthcare.

Now is the time to engage in a conversation about how to transform our rural health care delivery system.



# More.....

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- RHCs have grown in numbers and are now more than 5000.
- The program is garnering greater attention and interest from policy makers as well as larger hospitals and health systems.
- RHC will have to participate in public reporting imminently
- RHC Modernization Act changed reimbursement, and therefore strategy and operational performance requirements
- Expect increased competition due to change in reimbursement methodology
- Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) concept underscores that all rural communities need primary care but perhaps not a full service nor critical access hospital
- How do we maintain primary care without a “hospital” anchor?
  - Increased specialty care
  - Magnet for physicians or expand/redefine physician oversight
  - Behavioral Health imperative
- Telemedicine will emerge as an expectation and strategy, but we need to address financing

# The Opportunity

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Start now and build momentum as we go.

Your advocacy is needed to make it happen!

# Rural Health Clinics

NRHA advocates to modernize and improve the rural health clinic program:

- Allow provider-based RHCs to receive reimbursement rates not subject to the upper-payment limit cap in exchange for quality reporting measures.
- Permanently extend CARES Act telehealth flexibilities for both RHCs and FQHCs and allow for telehealth service reimbursement closer to their in-person rate
- Rural Health Clinic Behavioral Health Initiative at \$10 million in the FY23 Appropriation
- Modernize Medicare Mental Health benefits to allow licensed professional counselors and Family Therapists
- Census bureau rural definition change alignment with RHC location requirements



## **NRHA Advocacy Campaigns**

Please utilize our advocacy campaigns to ensure the rural voice is adequately heard on Capitol Hill!

**Urge Congress to Include Rural Friendly Provisions in PREVENT Pandemics Act**

**Urge Congress to pass Save America's Rural Hospitals Act**

**Urge Congress to Use the Upcoming Pandemic Relief Package to Ensure Stability for Rural Providers**

**Urge Congress to Invest in Rural Health**

# QUESTIONS?

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## Contact Information

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