

Does Your State Face Rural Area Provider Shortages?

On average, rural areas have three times fewer specialists per capita than urban areas. Rural communities also have a fewer number of primary care providers (PCPs) than urban communities, although the discrepancy is not as great. Surprisingly, the majority of both rural and urban counties are wholly designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

States	Percent of Population Living in a Rural County	Specialists per 100,000 Population		PCPs per 100,000 Population		Percent of Counties that are Wholly Designated Primary Care HPSAs	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
National Average	4%	40	141	45	75	52%	65%
Alabama	5%	7	119	32	73	19%	67%
Alaska	28%	35	151	76	84	32%	100%
Arizona	1%	15	99	47	49	100%	77%
Arkansas	17%	43	137	51	76	65%	59%
California	0%	45	122	53	79	78%	100%
Colorado	5%	65	150	64	78	66%	72%
Connecticut	0%	N/A	212	N/A	105	N/A	100%
Delaware	0%	N/A	148	N/A	72	N/A	100%
D.C.	0%	N/A	296	N/A	172	N/A	100%
Florida	0%	0	134	6	66	0%	83%
Georgia	5%	29	108	45	70	47%	46%
Hawaii	0%	N/A	164	N/A	93	N/A	100%
Idaho	10%	42	104	50	59	59%	81%
Illinois	3%	50	137	37	52	52%	68%
Indiana	2%	18	121	26	70	33%	49%
Iowa	17%	24	125	36	66	50%	60%
Kansas	13%	22	155	46	76	75%	83%
Kentucky	23%	50	147	45	76	47%	43%
Louisiana	2%	11	181	34	80	44%	55%
Maine	14%	104	173	80	96	100%	91%
Maryland	0%	N/A	166	N/A	101	N/A	71%
Massachusetts	0%	106	219	64	92	0%	100%
Michigan	7%	56	131	46	82	89%	78%
Minnesota	8%	33	133	60	98	64%	59%
Mississippi	23%	25	141	32	62	20%	48%
Missouri	9%	25	156	25	73	64%	73%
Montana	27%	36	156	57	80	53%	85%
Nebraska	17%	11	174	55	91	49%	62%
Nevada	2%	12	110	43	56	25%	78%
New Hampshire	6%	107	189	77	88	100%	100%
New Jersey	0%	N/A	176	N/A	91	N/A	67%
New Mexico	7%	60	142	65	81	15%	50%
New York	1%	165	179	90	81	75%	83%
North Carolina	3%	32	159	40	75	71%	76%

States	Percent of Population Living in a Rural County	Specialists per 100,000 Population		PCPs per 100,000 Population		Percent of Counties that are Wholly Designated Primary Care HPSAs	
North Dakota	36%	26	194	43	104	28%	80%
Ohio	2%	16	142	25	72	38%	58%
Oklahoma	10%	21	116	32	57	77%	93%
Oregon	2%	48	143	68	91	70%	85%
Pennsylvania	2%	40	141	31	82	89%	86%
Rhode Island	0%	N/A	244	N/A	109	N/A	60%
South Carolina	0%	8	140	42	70	0%	73%
South Dakota	31%	42	172	53	88	43%	47%
Tennessee	5%	27	155	34	80	64%	60%
Texas	3%	21	102	31	59	28%	39%
Utah	5%	34	109	36	58	57%	93%
Vermont	35%	130	269	91	140	100%	71%
Virginia	5%	35	153	43	83	21%	33%
Washington	1%	24	125	40	56	50%	91%
West Virginia	13%	25	152	32	82	67%	70%
Wisconsin	5%	53	163	60	84	68%	77%
Wyoming	45%	86	114	67	60	53%	83%

To learn more about rural healthcare value, visit: <http://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/Rural-Health>

Notes:

1. Shaded rows denote rural states, defined here as those in which at least 10 percent of the population lives in a rural county. We used Rural-Urban Continuum codes 7-9 for this designation.
2. Provider counts represent the number of non-federally employed MDs practicing in rural and nonrural environments in 2015. They do not include other types of providers such as DOs, nurse practitioners or MDs employed by the federal government. Primary care physicians (PCP) include MDs working in general family medicine, general practice, general internal medicine and general pediatrics. Subspecialties within these areas are included in the specialist count.
3. A geographic area is designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area in 2016 if the following criteria are met:
 - a. The area is a rational area for the delivery of primary medical services.
 - b. One of the following conditions prevails within the area:
 - i. The area has a population to full-time-equivalent primary care physician ratio of at least 3,500:1.
 - ii. The area has a population to full-time-equivalent primary care physician ratio of less than 3,500:1 but greater than 3,000:1 and has unusually high needs for primary care services or insufficient capacity of existing primary care providers.
 - c. Primary medical care professionals in contiguous areas are overutilized, excessively distant or inaccessible to the population of the area under consideration.

Source: Health Resources and Services Administration, Health Area Resources Files (2017). <https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/topics/ahrf.aspx>