



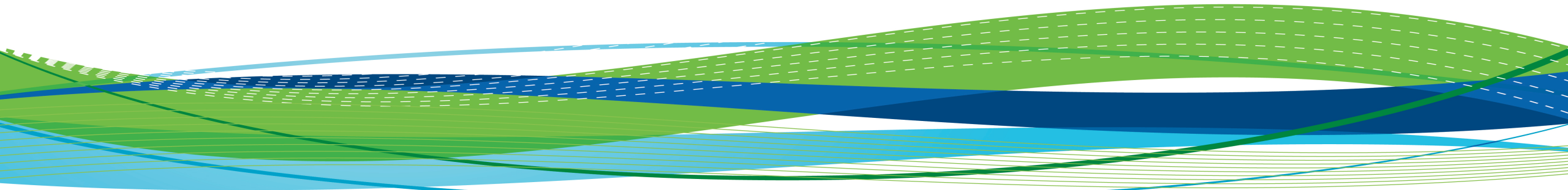
Your voice. Louder.

National Rural Health Association:
***Rural Oral Health Care Access- A National
Policy Perspective***

Alan Morgan

Chief Executive Officer

National Rural Health Association



NRHA...

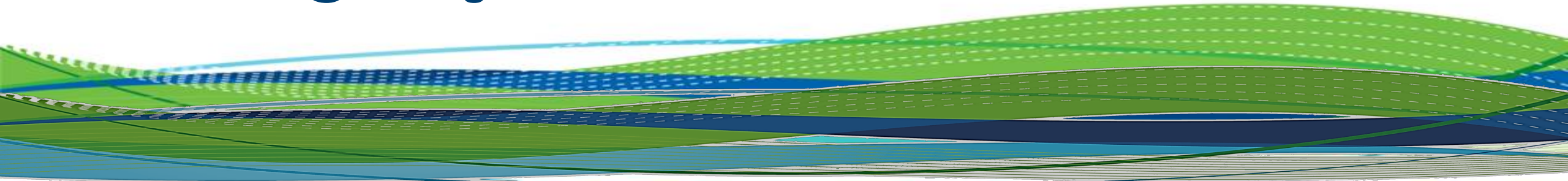


Improving the health of the 62 million who call rural America home

NRHA is non-profit and non-partisan

NRHA: [#ruralhealth](#)

Alan: [@Amorganrural](#)



Rural Oral Health Initiative

- **Policy:** Development of a Special Rural Oral Health Interest Group to provide policy recommendations/analysis that target legislative and regulatory barriers.
- **Communications:** Disseminate rural oral health information and best practices via NRHA avenues.
- **Education:** Integrate rural oral health related tracks within NRHA conferences, Rural Community Health Worker Training, and within strategies utilized by State Rural Health Associations.
- **Research:** Advance rural oral health related research and policy.

Rural Oral Health Webpage

www.ruralhealthweb.org/programs/rural-oral-health-initiative



<https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/programs/rural-oral-health-initiative>

☆ then ☆, and drag to the Favorites Bar folder. Or import from another browser. [Import favorites](#)

NRHA National Rural Oral Health Initiative

The National Rural Oral Health Initiative is the combined effort of the National Rural Health Association and the DentaQuest Foundation to improve oral health disparities in rural America through policy, communications, education and research. As oral health issues have long impacted those living in rural communities, the activities included in this initiative are designed to enhance access to quality oral health care.

NRHA is pleased to announce the release of its 2017 [Compendium of Rural Oral Health Best Practices](#).

The specific purpose of the National Rural Oral Health Initiative is to provide leadership on rural oral health care with the intent to establish oral health care as part of primary care, thereby increasing health care access for all rural Americans.

The yearlong initiative will focus on:

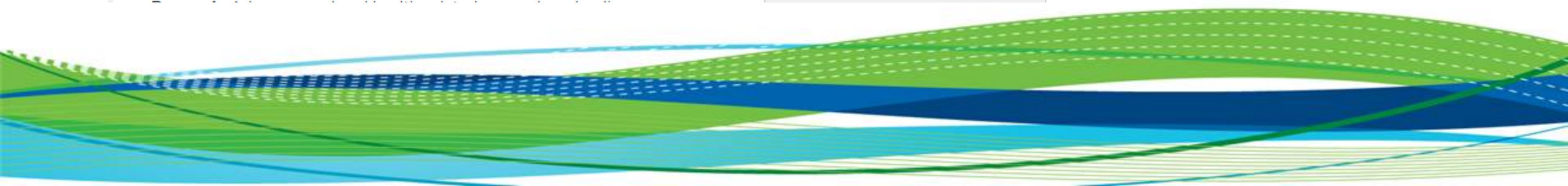
- **Policy:** Development of a special rural oral health interest group to provide policy recommendations/analysis that target legislative and regulatory barriers.
- **Communications:** Disseminate rural oral health information and a compendium of best practices via NRHA.
- **Education:** Integrate rural oral health-related tracks within NRHA conferences, rural community health worker training, and within strategies utilized by state rural health associations.

Evident
The EHR that transforms community healthcare

[DISCOVER MORE](#)

Programs

- State Rural Health Associations
- Rural Medical Education
- Rural Health Fellows
- Rural Health Students
- NRHA Student Liaison Program
- NRHA Student Resources

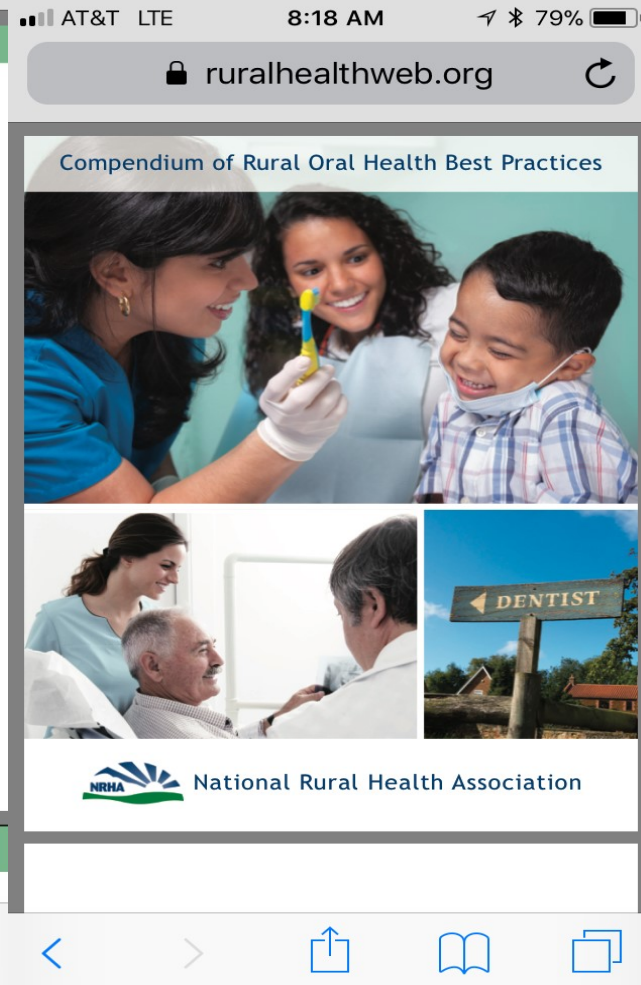
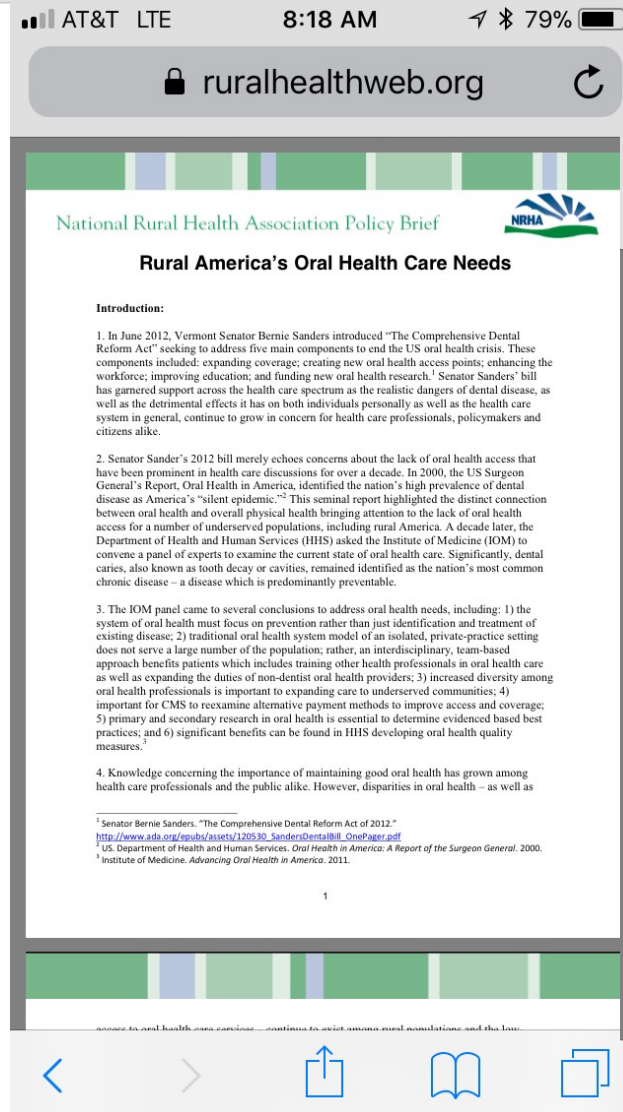




Home / Programs / Rural Oral Health Initiative

NRHA National Rural Oral Health Initiative

The National Rural Oral Health Initiative is the combined effort of the National Rural Health Association and the DentaQuest Foundation to improve oral health disparities in rural America through policy, communications, education and research. As oral health issues have long impacted those living in rural communities, the activities included in this initiative are designed to enhance access to quality oral health care.



**Your voice. Louder.**

For Rural Seniors, Improving Oral Health Care Could Mean Better Health

Nearly one-fifth of America's rural residents are 65 and over, and that proportion is growing.¹ This population faces major barriers to good oral health, including cost, lack of dental coverage, and limited access to providers. Rural seniors suffer many physical and financial consequences as a result. Poor oral health is linked to many health problems that disproportionately affect rural communities, including diabetes and heart disease. To support rural seniors' health, America needs oral health solutions.

Rural seniors face dramatic, disproportionate unmet oral health needs.

Seniors across America face large unmet oral health needs. In rural America, the needs are even more extreme. Twenty percent of rural seniors have not seen a dentist or visited a dental clinic for more than 5 years, as compared to 14 percent of non-rural seniors. Nearly one-fourth of rural seniors (23 percent) have had six or more teeth pulled; an additional one-fifth (20 percent) of rural seniors have had *all* of their teeth pulled due to decay or gum disease, as compared to one-seventh (14 percent) of non-rural seniors without teeth.²

Unmet oral health needs can exacerbate other health problems common in rural areas. A number of studies show strong links between oral health and diabetes³—a disease with much higher rates of death in rural areas than in more populous ones.⁴ Oral health treatment can improve blood sugar control, and diabetics need regular scaling and cleaning to ward off oral health problems that can come with the

disease.⁵ Rural seniors also have high rates of obesity and heart disease,⁶ which are linked to gum infection.⁷ Poor oral health also makes healthy eating difficult, forcing many people to favor foods that are easy to chew or swallow, but are often high in cholesterol and fat, and worsens all of these conditions.

Dental coverage is unavailable or extremely limited for many rural seniors, making oral health care unaffordable.

Medicare, the health insurance program for seniors and people with disabilities, does not cover oral health care. While seniors with very low incomes are eligible for Medicaid in addition to Medicare,⁸ it is optional for states to provide dental care to seniors (or any adults) in their Medicaid programs.

Access to dental providers is often limited in rural communities.

Geographic isolation and acute provider shortages add further barriers to oral health for rural seniors. About 66 percent of the nation's dental health professional shortage areas are in rural communities.⁹

Results

Rural Oral Health Interest Group/Policy Focus:

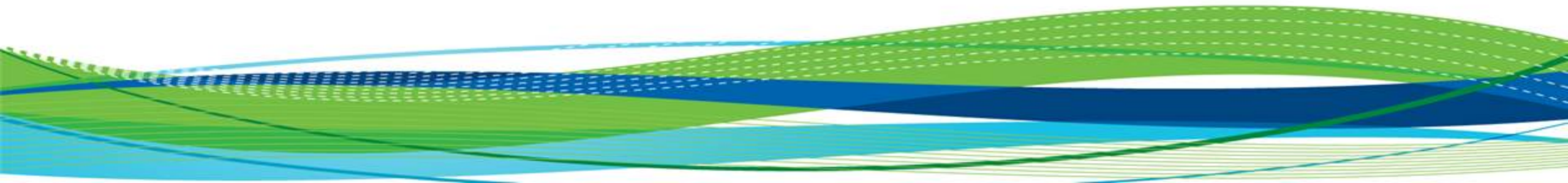
- Support the full scope of practice for oral health practitioners
- Encourage state organizations to engage in rural oral health policy
- Support Medicaid coverage and CHIP authorization

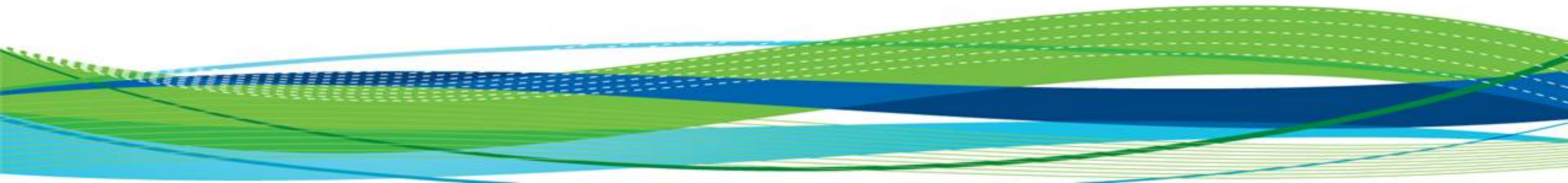
Results



Rural Community Health Worker Training: Rural Oral Health Focus

- First certified-oral health curriculum for the state of Texas

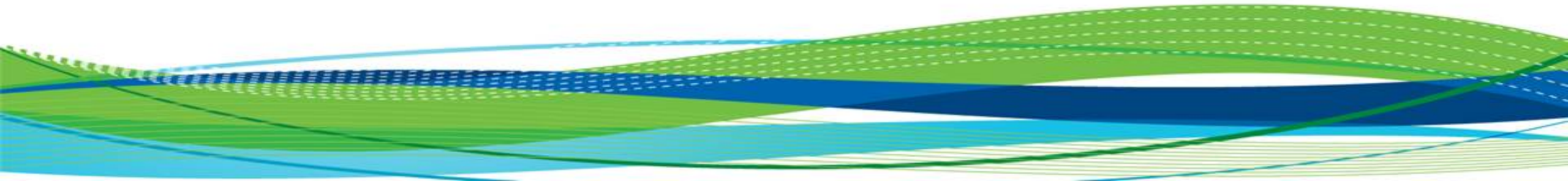




Results

Research:

- Special section on rural oral health within the *Journal of Rural Health*

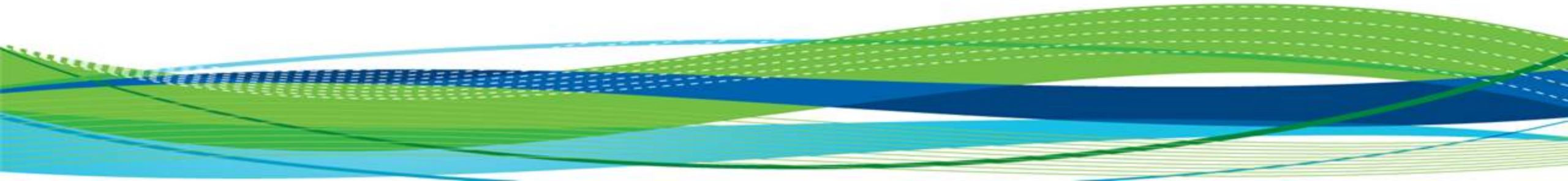


The State of Rural America



Your voice. Louder.

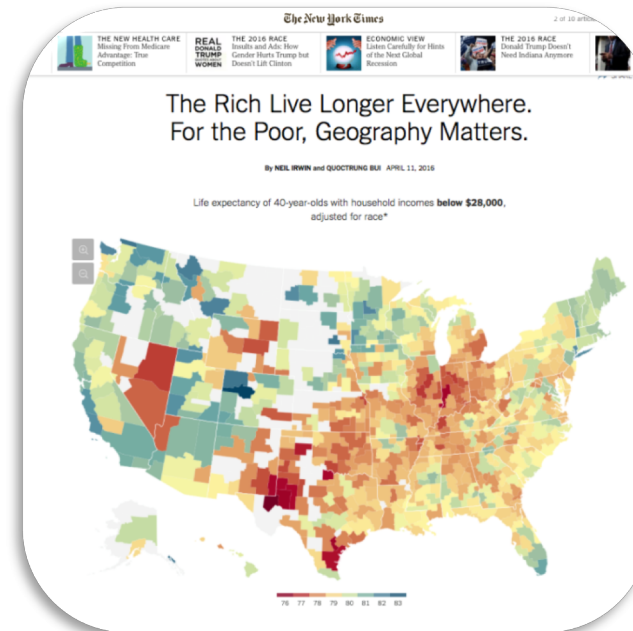
- **Workforce Shortages**
- **Vulnerable Populations**
- **Chronic Poverty**



Declining Rural Life Expectancy

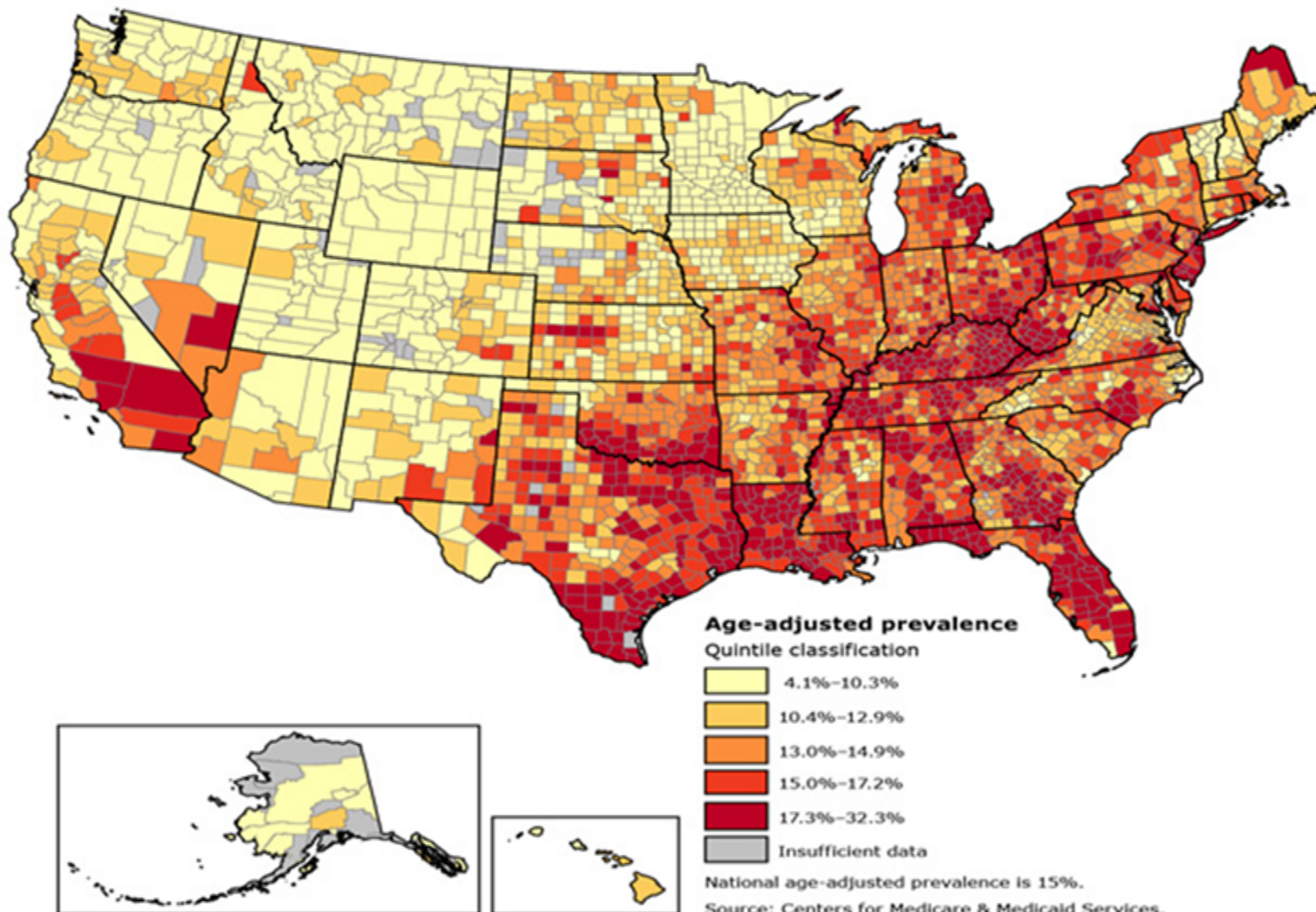


Your voice. Louder.



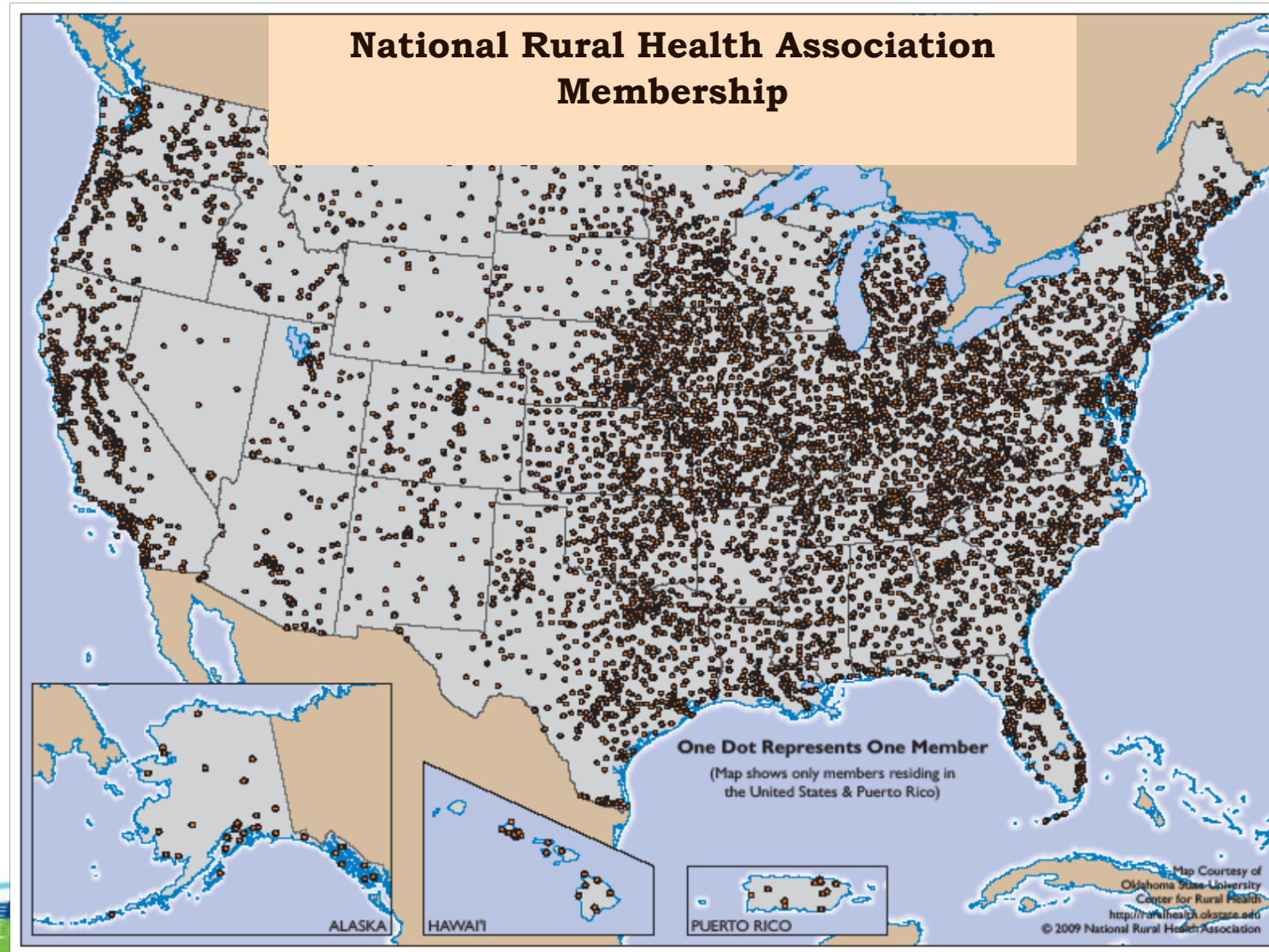
Prevalence of Medicare Patients with 6 or more Chronic Conditions

The Prevalence of Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries 65 Years or Older With 6 or More Chronic Conditions, by County, 2012





Your voice. Louder.



Rural has an Older, Sicker and Poorer Population



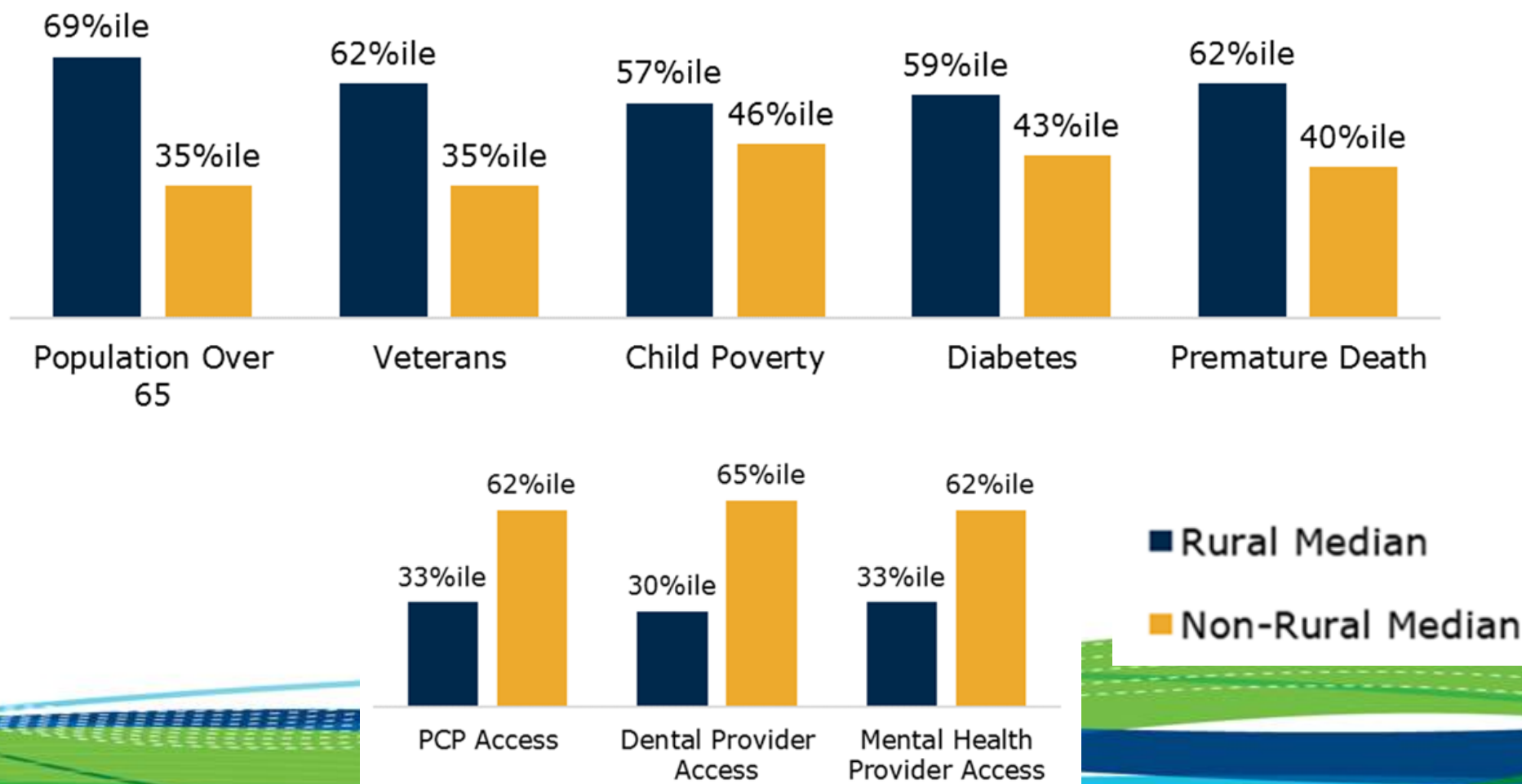
- The median age of adults living in rural areas is greater than those living in urban:
 - Rural: 51 years
 - Urban: 45 Years
- Rural areas have higher rates of several health risk factors/conditions:
 - Obesity, Diabetes, Smoking



Rural has an Older, Sicker and Poorer Population

- Nationally, rural households had lower median household incomes:
 - Rural: \$49.9K
 - Urban: \$66.1K
- 14.7% of rural population is below the federal poverty line, compared with 11.3% of the urban population

Summary: Rural Populations are Older, Less Healthy, Less Affluent and Have Limited Access to Multiple Types of Care

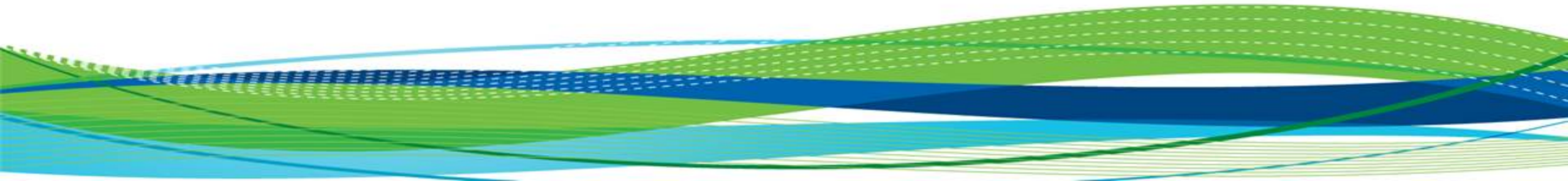


Source: iVantage Chartis Health Analytics

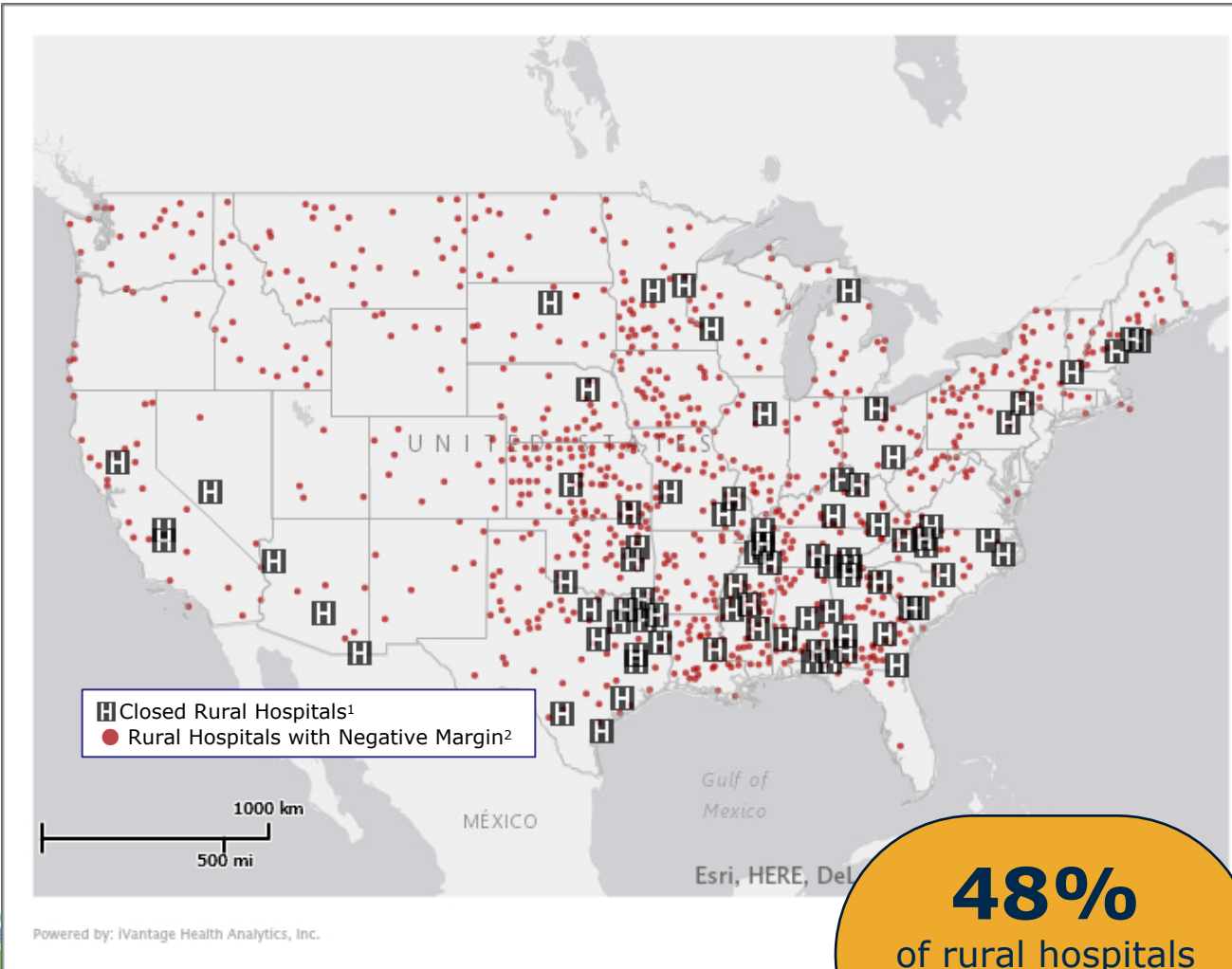
Deaths of Despair: The Rural Opioid Crisis



- The federal government has provided over \$2.4 billion in state grants since 2017, in hopes of stemming an opioid epidemic that killed 47,6600 people in that year alone.
- Most Federal opioid grants cannot be used to treat meth addiction.
- “I don't need more opiate money. I need money that will not be used exclusively for opioids,” said a County Commissioner.

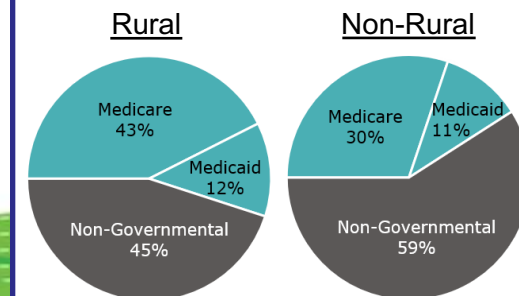


The Rural Health Safety Net is Under Pressure



**120 Rural
Hospital
Closures
Since 2010**

**The Average Rural Hospital
Payor Mix is 55%
Governmental**

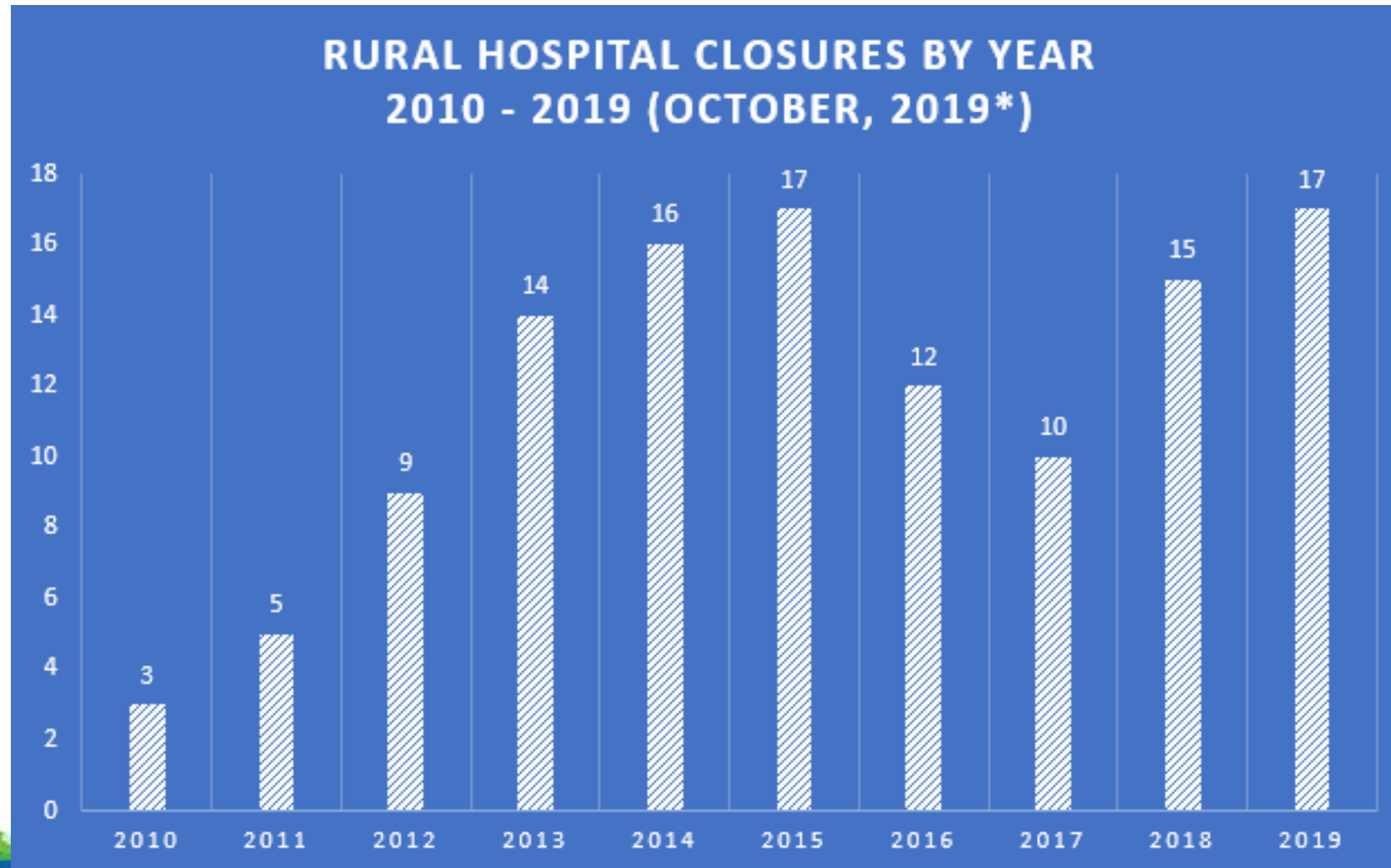


48%
of rural hospitals
in the red in
2019

Rural Hospital Closures – 118 and counting



Your voice. Louder.

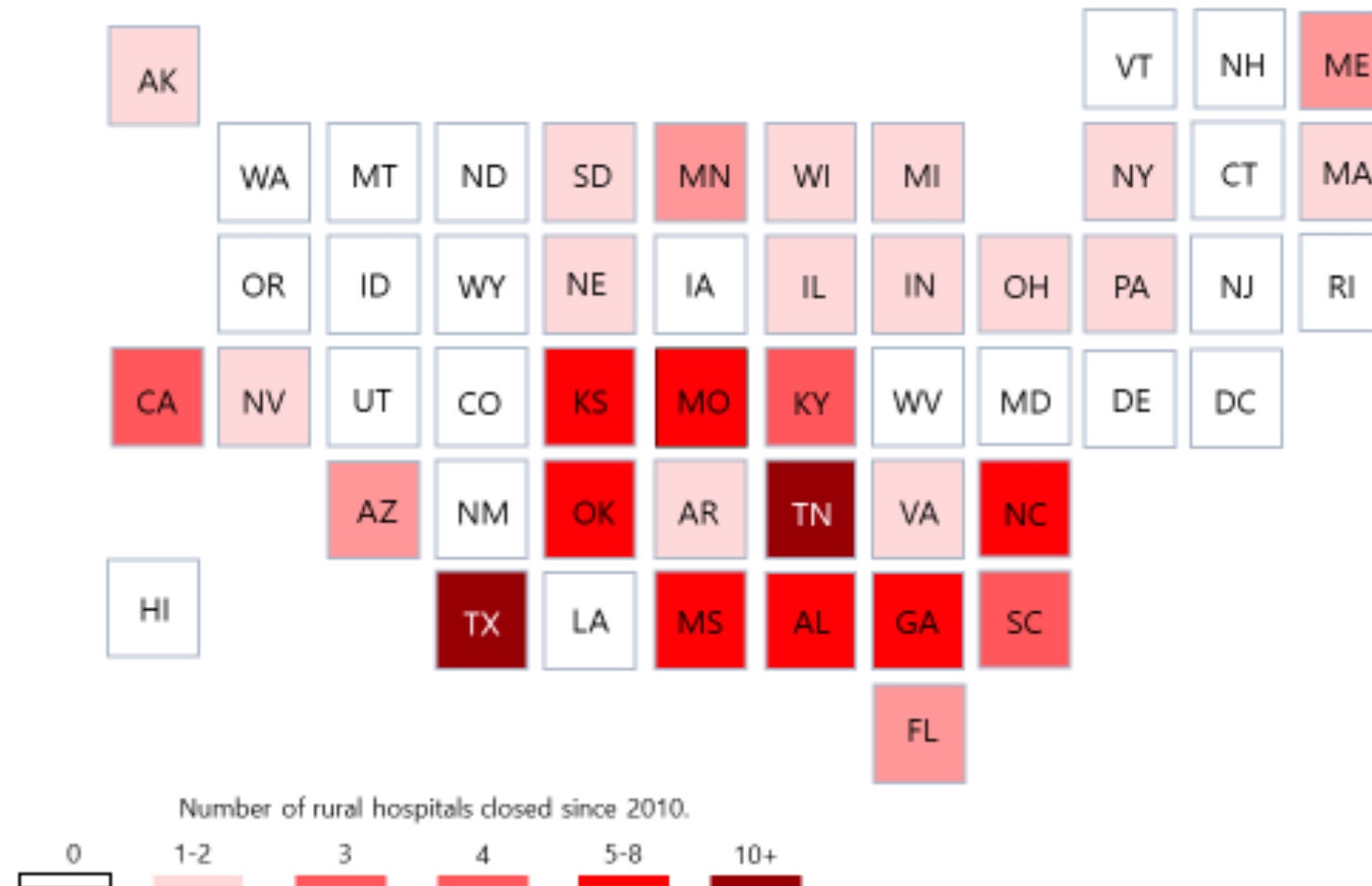


388 Rural Health
Clinic Closures
between
2012 and 2018

Rural Hospital Closures – 120 and counting



Your voice. Louder.

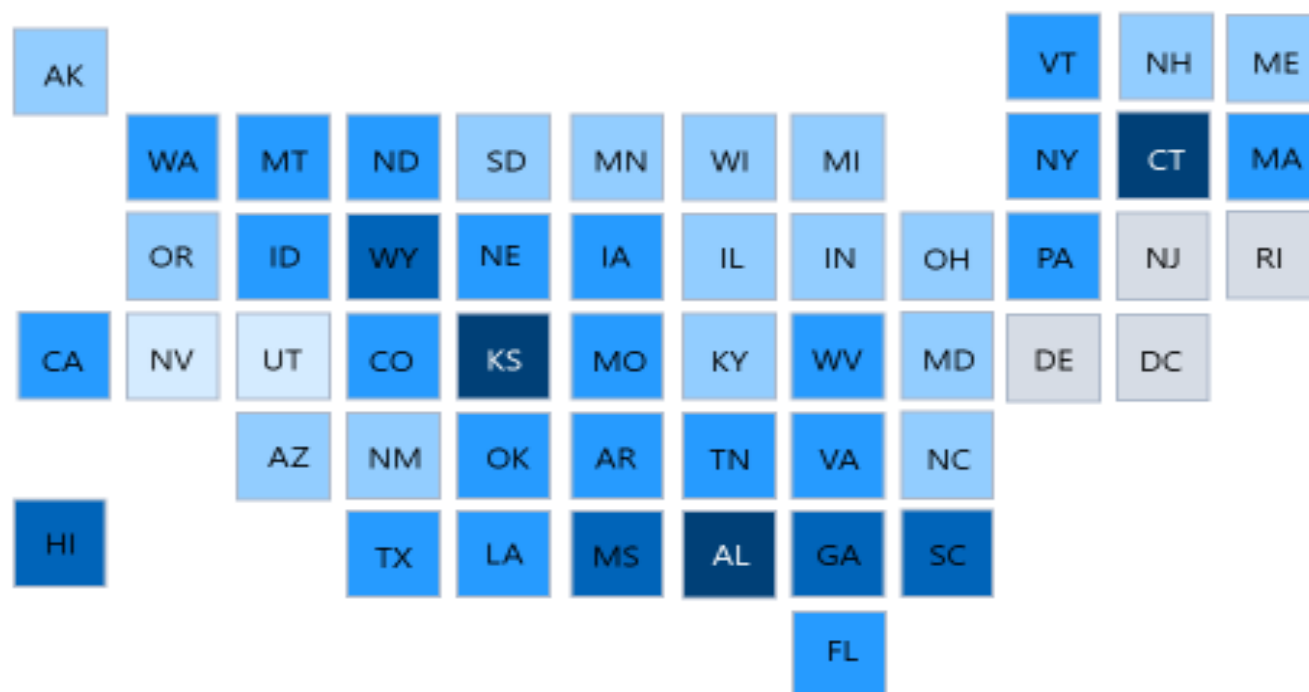


Source: Sheps Center, UNC



Your voice. Louder.

48% of all Rural Providers have a Negative Operating Margin

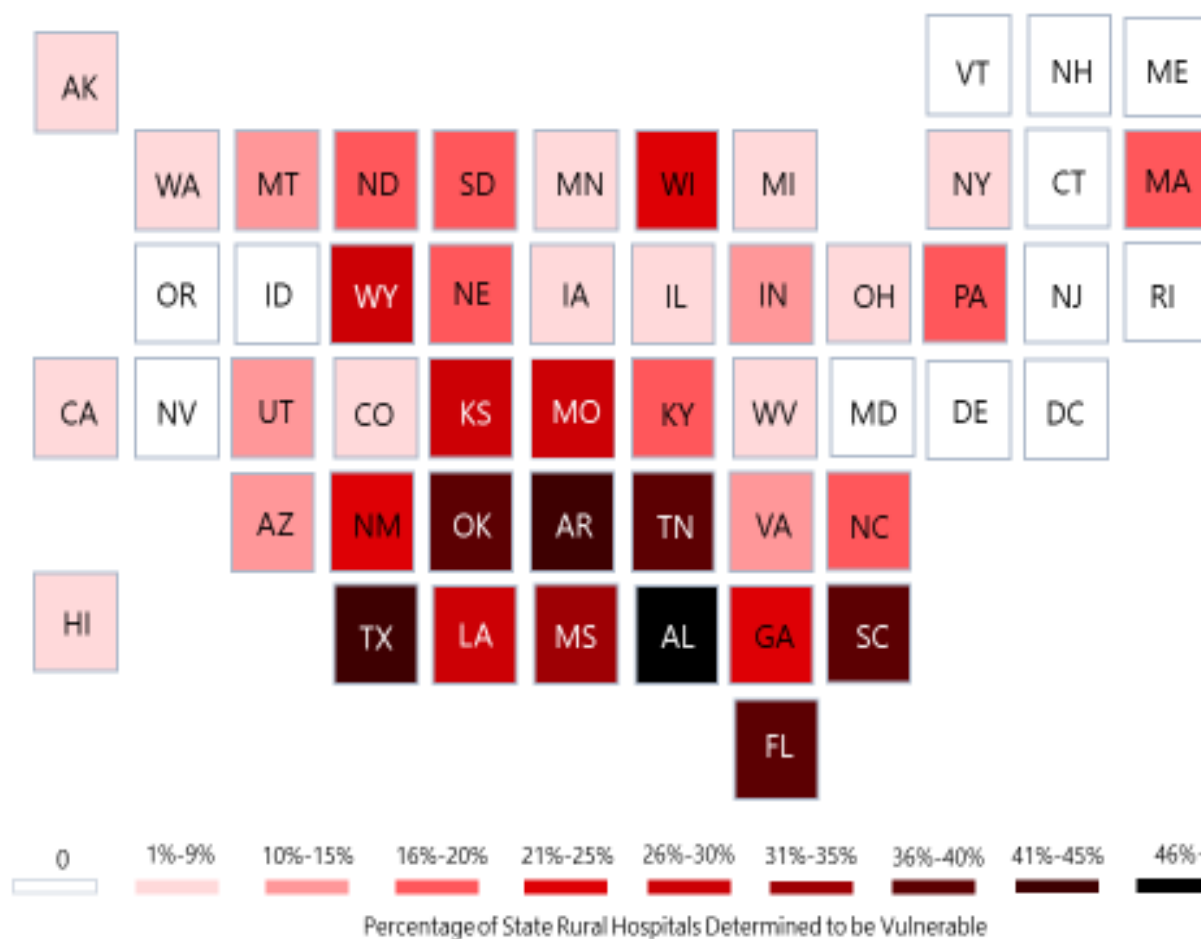


State-level percentage of rural hospitals with negative operating margin.



Source: The Chartis Center for Rural Health, 2019.

Rural Hospital Vulnerability



National Media Attention



Forbes



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

- 2020 Presidential Election:
 - ❖ Campaign platforms; Debate coverage
- Major News Outlets:
 - ❖ The Hill, NPR, CNN
 - ❖ CBS: New reporting on rural EMS shortages
- National Reports & Surveys
 - ❖ National Bureau of Economic Research*
 - ❖ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
 - ❖ Bipartisan Policy Center, etc.

The State of Rural America



Your voice. Louder.

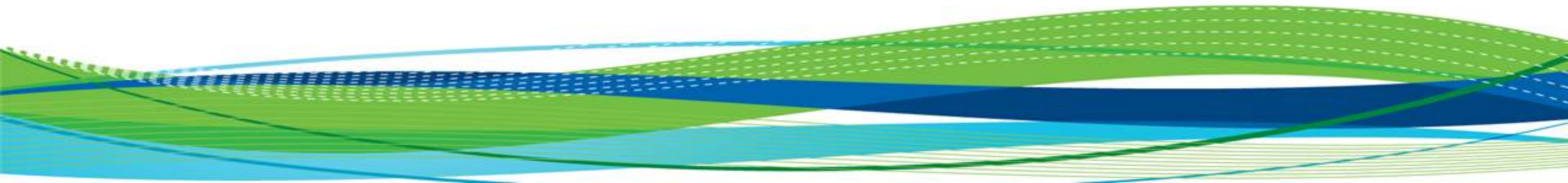
U.S. Census show that after a modest four-year decline, the population in nonmetropolitan counties remained stable from 2014 to 2019 at about 46 million. (2014-2019 rural adjacent to urban saw growth.)

The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for The New York Times. At the top, the URL 'nytimes.com' is visible. Below the site name, there are links for 'SUBSCRIBE' and 'LOG IN'. The article is categorized as 'Opinion' and has the title 'Something Special Is Happening in Rural America'. The lead paragraph reads: 'There is a “brain gain” afoot that suggests a national homecoming to less bustling spaces.' The author is 'By Sarah Smarsh', with a bio stating: 'Ms. Smarsh is the host of the podcast “The Homecomers” and the author of the memoir “Heartland.”'

Celebrate the greatness of rural health care!



- Rural independence; rural work ethic; rural innovation; rural providers doing more with less.
 - ✓ Higher quality
 - ✓ Higher patient satisfaction
 - ✓ Cost-effective
 - ✓ Fewer Resources

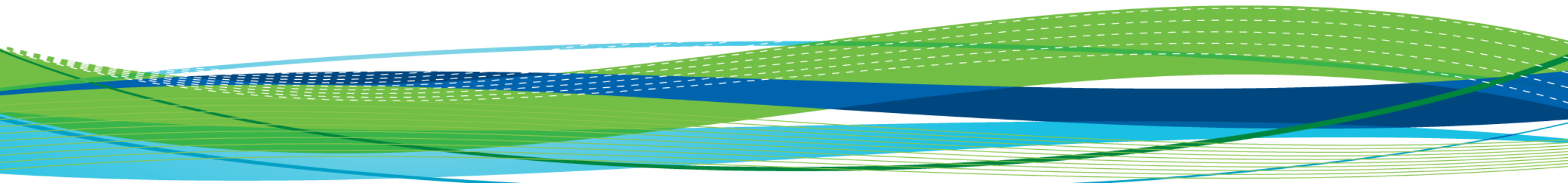




Your voice. Louder.

The Rural Youth Population Is Growing

Although some rural areas are indeed declining in population, this figure obscures the larger overall trend: **The number of students in rural school districts is steadily growing**, according to data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).



Destination NRHA

Plan now to attend these 2020 events.



Policy Institute	February 11-13	Washington, DC
Annual Conference	May 19-22	San Diego, CA
Rural Hospital Innovation Summit	May 19-22	San Diego, CA
Rural Health Clinic Conference	Sept. 22-23	Kansas City, MO
Critical Access Hospital Conference	Sept. 23-25	Kansas City, MO

Visit RuralHealthWeb.org
for details and discounts.

National Rural Health Association

Landscape of Rural Health

Alan Morgan, CEO

amorgan@nrharural.org

Twitter: @Amorganrural

#ruralhealth

