

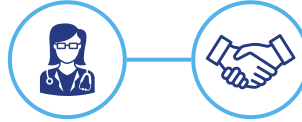
Rural Hospitals and Health Systems

Ensuring Local Access to High-quality, Affordable Care

Rural Hospitals are Essential to the Health and Economic Well-being of the Community



Local access to essential health services

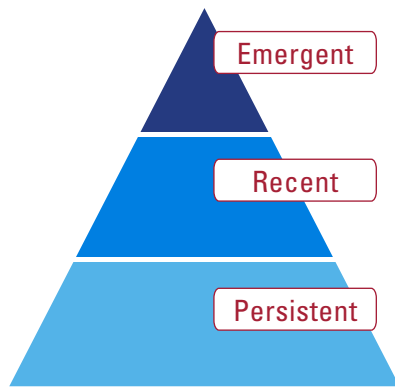


Direct and indirect employment; private-sector investment in the community



Vital part of the increasingly connected and networked health care infrastructure

Challenges Facing Rural Hospitals & Communities



Emergent

- Opioid epidemic
- Violence in communities

- Medical surge capacity
- Cyber threats

Recent

- Care delivery shifts
- Behavioral health
- Economic and demographic shifts
- High cost of drugs

- Regulatory burden
- Coverage
- Medicaid Expansion
- Health Plan Design

Persistent

- Low patient volume
- Payer mix
- Patient mix
- Geographic isolation

- Workforce shortage
- Aging infrastructure
- Limited Access

As challenges facing rural hospitals intensify, accumulate and compound each other, many confront difficult decisions, including whether to reduce services or even close. Moreover, today's issues may hinder rural providers' preparedness for the challenges of tomorrow. Between 2010 and 2018, 95 rural hospitals have closed, and several of these closures have resulted in a complete loss of local access to care.

Recommendations for Action

Update Federal Policies and Invest in Rural Communities

- » Ensure fair and adequate reimbursement
- » Support new models of care
- » Bolster the workforce

- » Remove red tape
- » Support health information technology
- » Rein in prescription drug prices

For more information, visit www.aha.org/rural.