

Rural Hospitals: Community Cornerstones Facing Perilous Threats to Care

Millions of people living in rural areas depend on their community's hospital as an important — and often the only — source of local care. Rural hospitals provide care close to home and serve as economic anchors in the areas they serve. But they face major challenges, and further federal support is needed to ensure access.

Rural Hospitals are Community Lifelines and Economic Engines



46 million people or **14%** of the **U.S. population** live in rural areas*



Rural hospitals support **\$220 billion** of economic activity*



Rural hospitals support **1 in 12** rural jobs in the U.S.*

Workforce and Financial Challenges



Over the last few years, rural hospitals' costs have increased significantly for labor, drugs and supplies



10% of U.S. physicians practice in rural areas

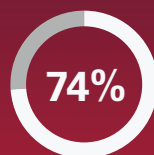


Medicare paid rural hospitals **\$5.8 billion less** than the cost of caring while Medicaid paid **\$1.2 billion less***

Rural Hospital Closures Jeopardize Access



136 total
2010 to 2020



74% of closures happened in states where Medicaid expansion was not in place or had been in place for less than a year

19 closures
in 2020 alone, the most of any year in that decade

More Federal Support Needed

Congress can take the following actions to support rural hospitals and communities:

- Support Flexible Payment Options
- Support Telehealth Coverage
- Ensure Fair and Adequate Reimbursement
- Protect the 340B Program
- Bolster the Workforce

See AHA's rural advocacy agenda for specific provisions.

*in 2020