

THE TOP 10 RURAL ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

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THE TOP 10 RURAL ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

1. Unique Rural Economy
2. Public Health Insurance Plans
3. Stressed Delivery System
4. Workforce Shortage
5. Aging Population



THE TOP 10 RURAL ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

6. Sicker Population
7. Preventive Care Resources
8. Mental Health Services
9. Technology
10. Emergency Medical Services



THE TOP 10 RURAL ISSUES FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

1. Unique Rural Economy

- Dominated by self-employment and small business
- Results = Less employer-provided coverage; Greater risk of uninsurance and underinsurance
- Rural nonadjacent residents 70% greater chance of being underinsured
- Rural residents responsible for more health care costs



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1. Unique Rural Economy

- Unique health care issues for self-employed and small businesses
- Cost and availability of health insurance
- Promotion of rural entrepreneurship
- Relevance of reform based on employer-based coverage



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2. Public Health Insurance Plans

- Greater rural dependence on public health insurance programs
- Many rural people and businesses not eligible for public programs (despite lower rural incomes)
- Helps explain lower rural adult insurance coverage rates and general lack of choices



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2. Public Health Insurance Plans

- Lessons from SCHIP and rural children for expanded coverage
- Ramifications for public health insurance option in reform legislation



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3. Stressed Delivery System

- Economic stress on rural web of small hospitals, clinics and nursing homes
- Rural consequences of health care policy
 - Low reimbursement rates
 - Revenue dependence on Medicare and Medicaid
- Domino effect of financial stress



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4. Workforce Shortage

- Health Professional Shortage Areas
- Medically Underserved Areas
- Crisis in primary care shortages
- Aging workforce



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4. Workforce Shortage

- Medical student preferences
 - 3% plan to practice in rural areas
 - 2% plan to go into primary care
- Coverage ≠ Access



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5. Aging Rural Population

- Rural areas have 25% greater number of residents over 65
- Expected to double by 2030
- Fastest growing rural age cohort -- 85 and older



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5. Aging Rural Population

- Consequences
 - Greater incidence of chronic disease and disability
 - Social and community issues
- Services in community setting
- Ability of seniors to remain in communities



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6. Sicker Population

"The rural population (of the United States) is consistently less well off than the urban population with respect to health."

Center on an Aging Society, Georgetown University, Washington DC



Seven horizontal lines for notes.

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6. Sicker Population

Health and Health Behavior Disparities

- More rural residents in fair to poor health status
- More rural adults with diabetes
- More rural adults with obesity
- Less rural receipt of preventive services
- Role of health insurance and type of coverage in rural areas

Source: South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, 2009



Seven horizontal lines for notes.

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7. Preventive Care Resources

- Case Study = Rural obesity rates
- Connection to workforce and insurance issues
- Role of food in rural areas
- Community-based wellness
- Transformation from "sick care" to "health care"



Seven horizontal lines for notes.

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8. Mental Health Services

- Over half of U.S. counties have no mental health professionals
- 20-25% of primary care physician time mental health related
- Nebraska Farm Crisis Hotline – July 2008 to March 2009, over half of calls mental health issues
- Workforce and insurance issues
- Mid-level professionals as a rural response



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9. Technology

- Increasing dependence on medical technology
- Adoption of HIT slow in many rural areas
- Mixed results of telehealth in rural areas
- Rural barriers
 - High speed broad technology
 - Capital resources
 - IT professionals in rural areas
 - Rural physician resistance



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10. Emergency Medical Services

- Growing demands (due to rural demographics)
- Underfunded – “What kind of health care system is depends on selling brownies and calendars?”
- Workforce and volunteer shortages
- Communication issues
- Greater integration of EMS with the rest of health delivery system
- Recognition in reform legislation of EMS as part of health care delivery system



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For More Information

- CFRA rural health care publications
<http://www.cfra.org/policy/health-care/research>
- CFRA rural health care reform news and advocacy
<http://www.cfra.org/policy/health-care>



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Thank You!

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