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Rural Primary Care Workforce: A National Perspective

The Robert Graham Center
Primary Care Forum
January 14, 2014

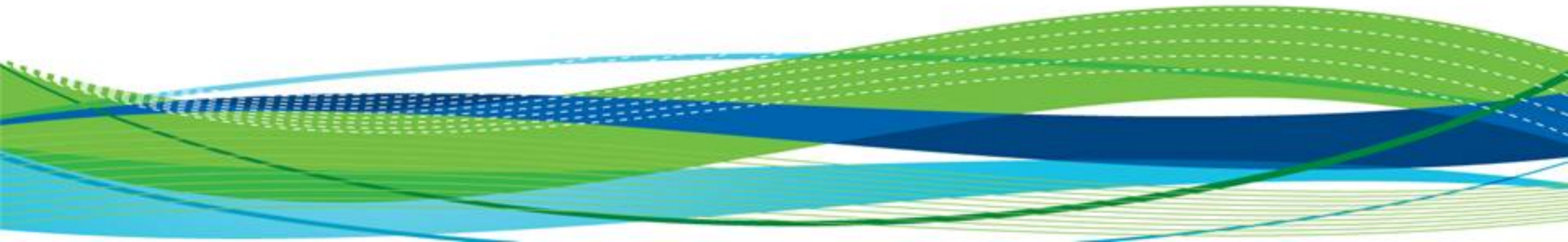
Amy Elizondo, MPH
Vice President, Program Services
National Rural Health Association



NRHA Mission

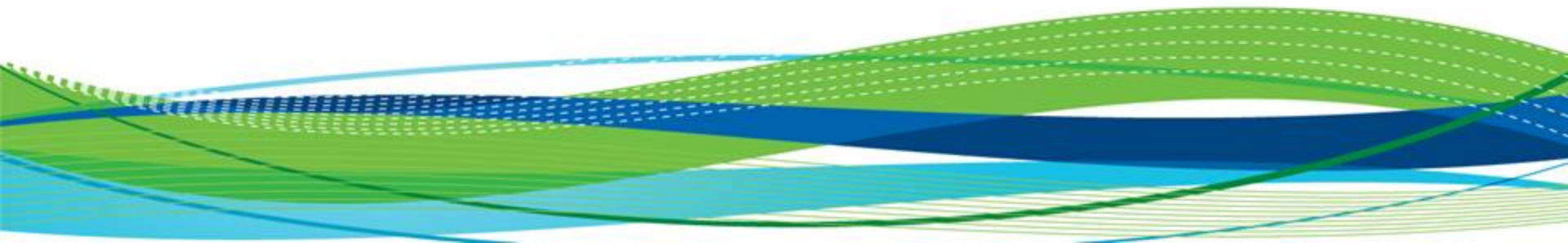


The National Rural Health Association is a national membership organization with more than 21,000 members whose mission is to *provide leadership on rural issues* through advocacy, communications, education and research.

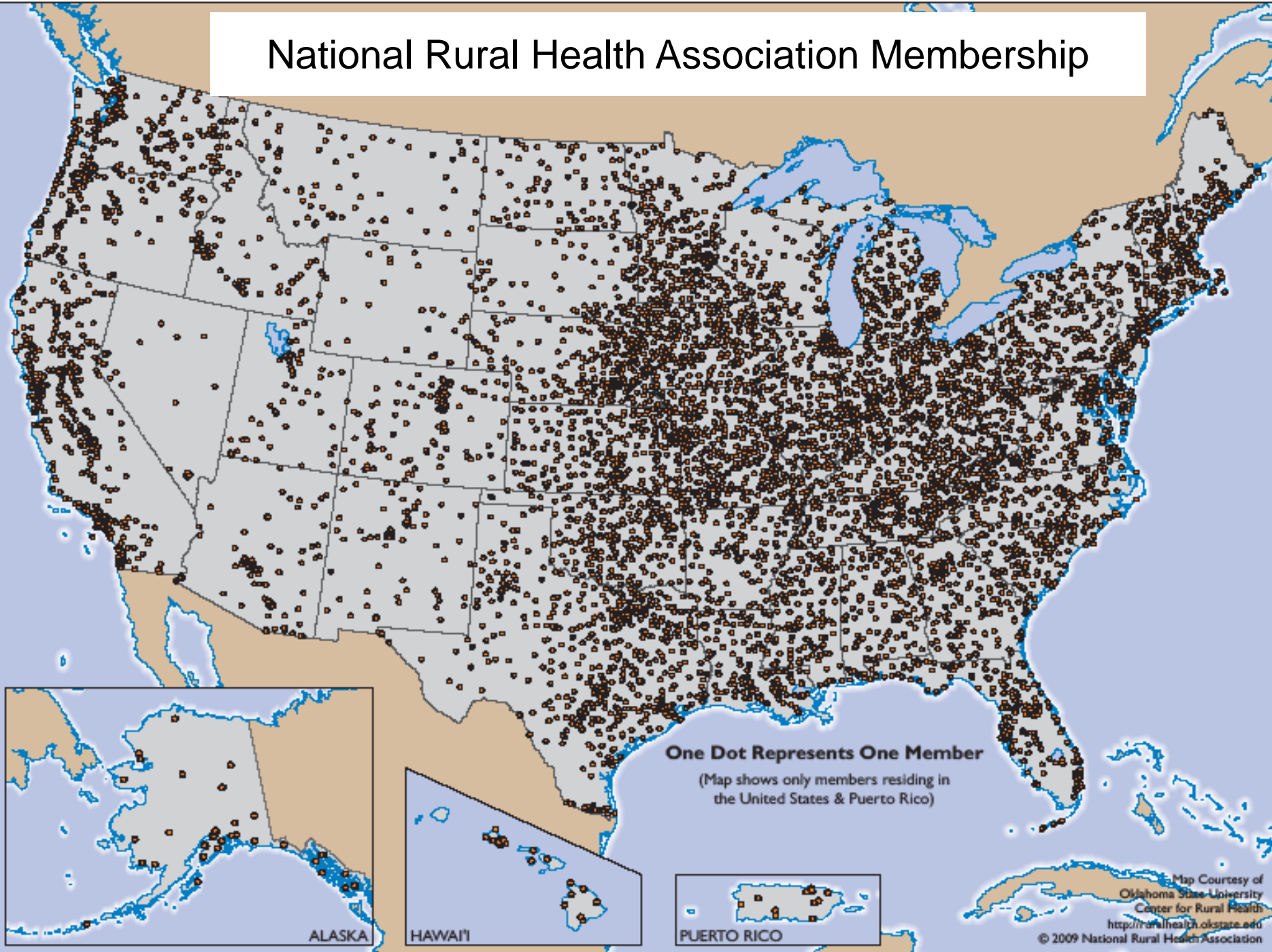


Improving the health of the 62 million who call rural America home.

NRHA is non-profit and non-partisan.

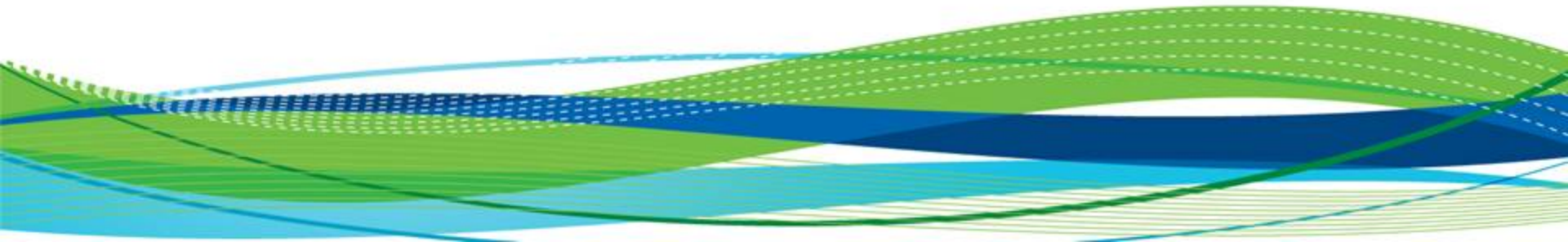


National Rural Health Association Membership



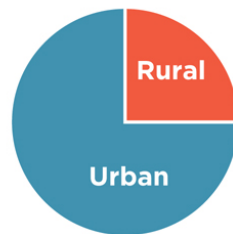
Rural is Different

*“If you’ve seen one rural area, you’ve
seen one rural area.”*

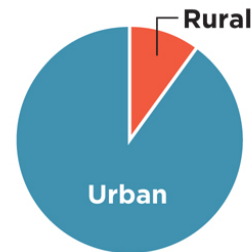


What's Different About Rural Health Care?

Percentage of U.S. population



Percentage of U.S. physicians



■ Rural ■ Urban

Population below the poverty level



Adults who describe health status as fair/poor



Medicare beneficiaries without drug coverage



Medicare spending per capita compared with U.S. average



Percentage of poor covered by Medicaid



SOURCES: National Rural Health Association; Dallas Morning News research

Rural Patients

- 62 million rural Americans rely on rural health providers.
- 20 percent of the population lives in rural America, yet they are scattered over 90% of the landmass.
- Extreme distances, challenging geography and weather complicate health care delivery.
- “Rural Americans are ***older, poorer and sicker*** than their urban counterparts... Rural areas have higher rates of poverty, chronic disease, and uninsured and underinsured, and millions of rural Americans have limited access to a primary care provider.” (HHS, 2011)
- Disparities are compounded if you are a senior or minority in rural America.



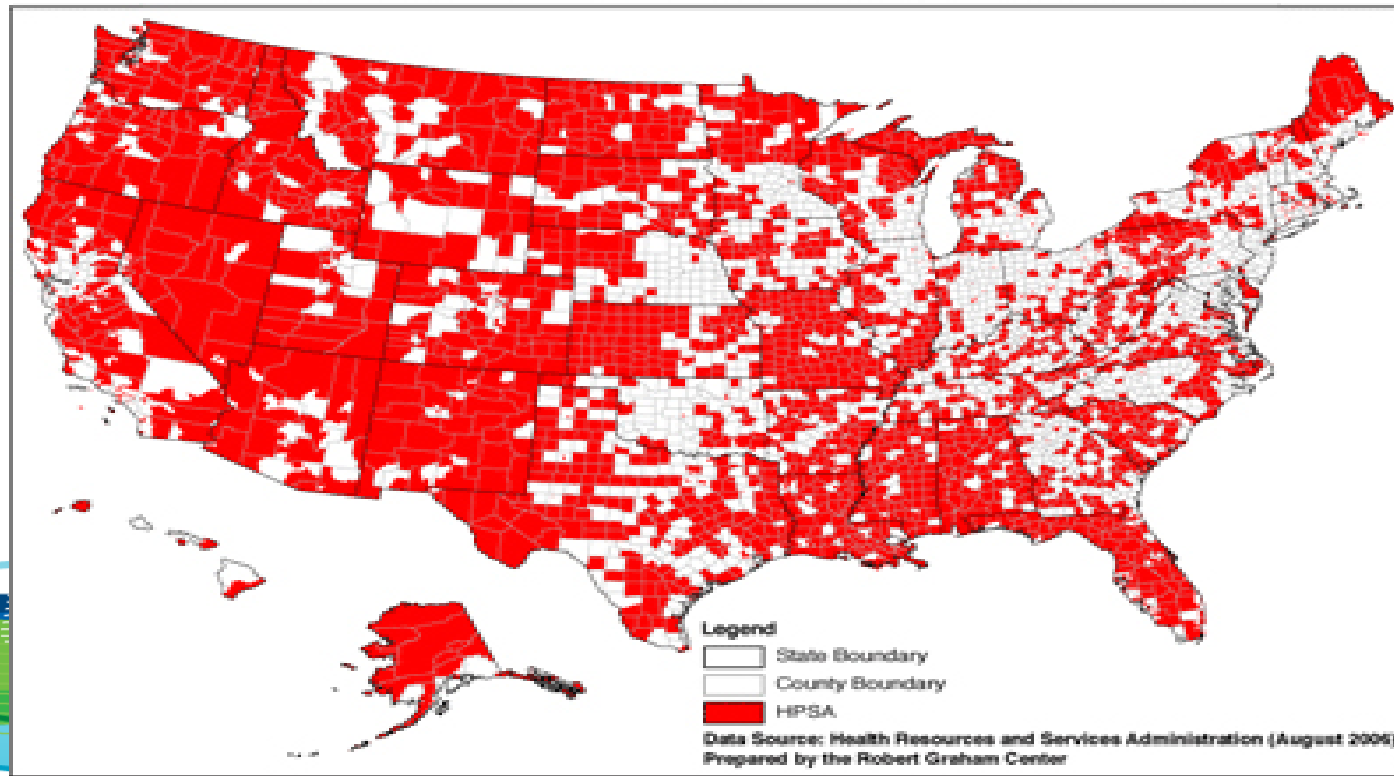
Workforce Shortages



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- “Access to Quality Health Care” is the number one health challenge in rural America. Rural Healthy People 2020
- Only 9% of physicians practice in rural America.
- 77% of the 2,050 rural counties are primary care HPSAs.
- More than 50% of rural patients have to drive 60+ miles to receive specialty care.

U.S. Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA): 2006

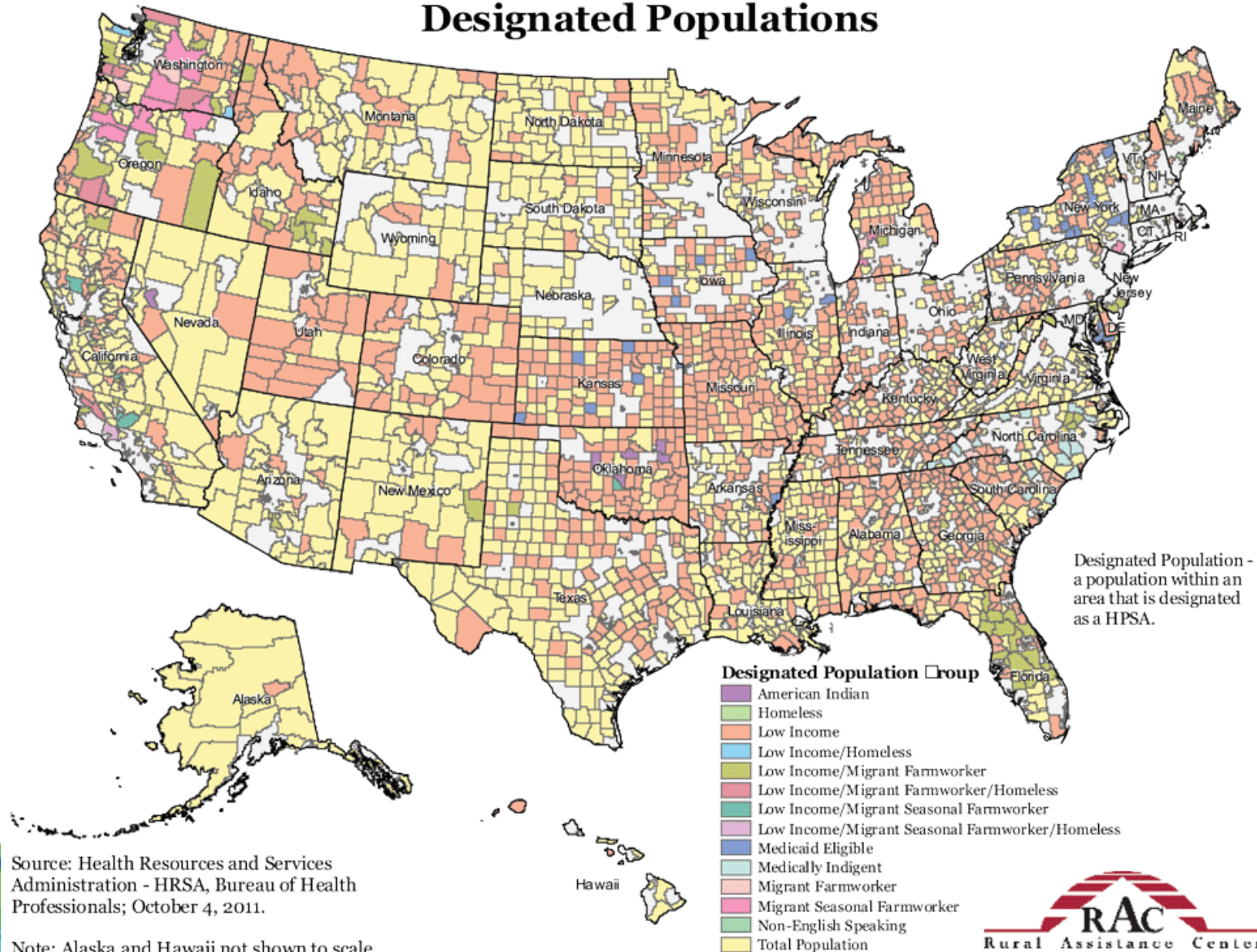


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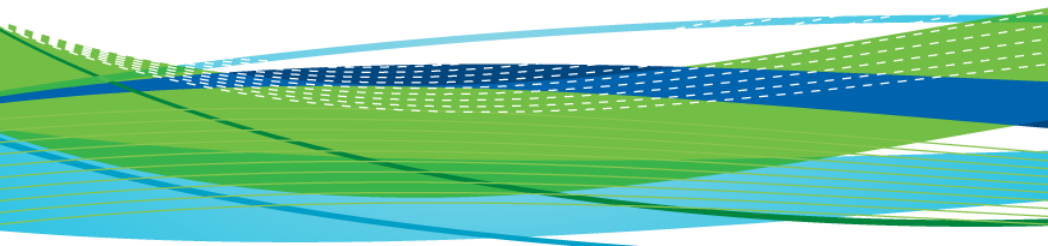
Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) - Primary Health Designated Populations



Rural Economy

- Health care is the fastest growing segment of the rural economy.
- Each rural physician can add more than 20 jobs in the local rural economy. (RHW)



Rural Training Track Technical Assistance Demonstration Program



- Cooperative agreement to support rural training track residency programs as a national strategy in training physicians for rural practice.
 - Improve fill rates of RTT programs.
 - Increase the sustainability of existing RTT programs.
 - Help new RTT sites get started.
 - Build an evidence base of RTT program characteristics and graduate outcomes.

Rural Training Track
technical assistance program

www.raconline.org/rtt/



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Thank you.

Amy Elizondo, MPH
Vice President, Program Services
National Rural Health Association
1025 Vermont Avenue, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
aelizondo@nrharural.org
(202) 639-0550
(202) 639-0559 (f)

