

# HIV Care and Treatment in Rural Communities

## HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, 2022



### Rural Health Fact Sheet | June 2024

The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) provides support and resources to RWHAP recipients, including those in rural areas, to support the delivery of optimal care and treatment for all to end the HIV epidemic in the United States.<sup>a</sup> To that end, addressing HIV health disparities in engagement in care and viral suppression in rural communities is critical.<sup>b</sup> The RWHAP encourages innovative practices to best reach, meet the needs of, and retain in care people with HIV in rural communities. Although barriers remain, RWHAP providers<sup>c</sup> in rural areas have demonstrated success in such areas as telemedicine, rapid antiretroviral therapy starts, transportation services, and the use of community health workers.

<sup>a</sup> Klein PW, Geiger T, Chavis NS, et al. The Health Resources and Services Administration's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program in rural areas of the United States: Geographic distribution, provider characteristics, and clinical outcomes. *PLOS ONE*. 2020;15(3): e0230121.

<sup>b</sup> HRSA. Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. <https://www.hrsa.gov/ending-hiv-epidemic>.

<sup>c</sup> "RWHAP providers" refers to provider organizations that deliver direct care and support services to RWHAP clients.



Among RWHAP providers in rural areas<sup>1</sup> in 2022—

- **51.7%** served more than 100 RWHAP clients.
- **40.9%** were health departments.
- **37.5%** were located in the South.

### The Top 10 Most Common Services<sup>2</sup> Delivered by RWHAP Providers in Rural Areas in 2022

1. Medical case management	48.3%
2. Medical transportation	40.9%
3. Outpatient ambulatory health services	35.8%
4. Non-medical case management	33.5%
5. Emergency financial assistance	33.0%
6. Oral health care	30.1%
7. Food bank/home-delivered meals	24.4%
8. Mental health services	23.3%
9. Housing	18.8%
10. Medical nutrition therapy	16.5%

### RWHAP Clients Who Visited Rural Providers in 2022

**90.7%**

of RWHAP clients who received HIV medical services from rural providers were virally suppressed, which is slightly higher than the national average (89.6%)



**50.7%**

were aged 50 years and older



**58.7%**

were from racial and ethnic minority groups



**54.6%**

were living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level



**91.9%**

had stable housing



### Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.

The [Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. \(EHE\)](#) initiative is an ongoing federal effort to reduce the number of new HIV infections in the United States to less than 3,000 per year through four implementation pillars: diagnose, treat, prevent, and respond. EHE provides priority jurisdictions with additional resources, technology, and expertise to expand HIV treatment and prevention activities. Funded jurisdictions include seven states with a disproportionate rural proportion of HIV—Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leads the governmentwide effort, and HRSA has a leading role in the implementation of EHE.

## **Rural Health and HIV Resources**

The following resources describe promising practices, address training and technology needs, and review research and policy recommendations that are relevant to rural health and HIV.

### **RWHAP Part F AIDS Education and Training Center**

**(AETC) Program**. The RWHAP AETC Program is a network of HIV experts who provide education, training, and technical assistance on HIV care and prevention to health care team members and health care organizations serving people with or at risk of HIV.

**RWHAP Best Practices Compilation**. This resource gathers and disseminates models of care in RWHAP-funded settings, including those in rural areas, to improve outcomes for people with HIV and support replication by other RWHAP service providers.

**TargetHIV**. This website is the one-stop shop for technical assistance and training resources for the RWHAP community. Resources include webinars, tools, training materials, implementation manuals, and additional technical assistance resources, including resources dedicated to several key populations (e.g., [rural populations](#)).

**AIDSVu**. This interactive mapping tool visualizes HIV data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National HIV Surveillance System and other data sources, including data from rural counties. AIDSVu also provides tools and resources on HIV testing, pre-exposure prophylaxis, and other HIV service locations.

**HIV Prevention and Treatment Challenges in Rural America: Policy Brief and Recommendations to the Secretary**. The National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services provides recommendations to the HHS Secretary on addressing HIV prevention and treatment challenges in rural communities.

**Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Fact Sheet: Challenges in Rural Areas**. This resource provides HOPWA program guidance and information about service area requirements. Additionally, it identifies challenges, suggests best practices to enhance housing operations, and provides program planning guidance.

**National Rural Health Association (NRHA): Rural Health Resources and Best Practices**. The NRHA provides free resources for rural communities and rural health.

**Prevention and Treatment of HIV Among People with Substance Use and/or Mental Disorders**. This HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration publication reviews interventions aligned with the EHE goals for people with risk behaviors for or with HIV who have substance use and/or mental or behavioral health disorders.

**Rural HIV/AIDS Planning Program Grantee Directories and Sourcebooks**. This resource provides detailed descriptions of Rural HIV/AIDS Planning Program grant projects, including key EHE strategies, priority populations served, network development and planning activities, initial project planning outcomes, and sustainability strategies.

**Rural HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Toolkit**. This toolkit contains modules that describe resources and provide information focused on developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining rural HIV programs.

**Rural Residency Planning and Development Program**. This program, a partnership between HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and its Bureau of Health Workforce, provides funding to create new rural medical residency programs. The purpose is to improve access to health care by funding programs to train more physicians in rural communities.

**Rural Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs)**. This resource, developed by HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, lists regional and national TRCs that provide technical assistance to states and territories concerning technology assessment and telehealth policy.

## **References**

- <sup>1</sup> HRSA. Defining Rural Population. <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/about-us/what-is-rural>.
- <sup>2</sup> HRSA. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals and Allowable Uses of Funds. PCN 16-02. <https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/ryanwhite/grants/service-category-pcn-16-02-final.pdf>.

