

Southwest

Rural Health Research Center

Policy Brief: Nursing Homes in Rural America

The Southwest Rural Health Research Center, under a cooperative agreement with the federal Office of Rural Health (ORHP) has just completed the first part of a study of nursing homes in rural America. One product of that study is a "chartbook" that provides data comparing key characteristics of nursing homes found in rural areas with those located in metropolitan areas for all 50 states, and for the District of Columbia.

The data reported cover 17,253 nursing homes that were certified to participate in the Medicare or Medicaid program during 2000. These data were taken from the Online Survey and Certification Reports (OSCAR) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The main findings reported in *Nursing Homes in Rural and Urban Areas, 2000* (Phillips, Hawes & Leyk Williams, 2003) are:

- 40% of the nation's nursing homes are located in non-metropolitan areas.
- Rural nursing homes tended to be smaller than facilities in metropolitan areas.
- Rural facilities were more likely to be not-for-profit and government-owned.
- Rural nursing homes were less likely to be certified to participate in Medicare.
- Residents in rural nursing homes were more likely to depend on Medicaid to pay for care.

Copies of the report may be accessed on the Southwest Rural Health Research Center's Website at: <http://www.srph.tamushsc.edu/srhc> or you may order one from Ms. Becky Ray at the address shown below.

The Elderly in Rural America

- **One-fifth (23%) of the elderly live in rural areas; 26% of those aged 75 and older live in rural areas.**

Compared to the elderly in metropolitan areas, rural elderly...

- **On average are older.**
- **Rate their health as worse.**
- **Tend to have more limitations in physical functioning.**
- **After age 75 - are more likely to live alone.**
- **Are more likely to be poor.**
- **Have higher use of nursing home care.**

A recent report by CMS for Congress identified a staffing of 4.1 total nursing hours per resident day as the level below which residents were at risk of poorer outcomes.

- Relatively few nursing homes nationwide met this standard; however, rural nursing homes were less likely to be staffed at this level.
- Rural residents were more likely to have some type of dementia. However, residents in nursing homes in isolated rural areas were the least likely to have access to Alzheimer's Special Care Units.

Overview of the Center

The Southwest Rural Health Research Center is one of six rural health research centers funded by the federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The Center is part of the only school of public health with a specific focus on rural issues. Building on Texas A&M's long history of research, education and service in rural areas, the Center was founded in 2000 and serves as a focal point for uniting various components of Texas A&M to conduct and disseminate policy-relevant research on critical rural health issues. The Center draws its senior investigators from across the University and the Health Science Center, including the School of Rural Public Health, the Colleges of Medicine and Scott & White Hospital, the Program in Health Services Research, the Center for Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Rural Sociology, and the Public Policy Research Institute.

The Center's investigators conduct policy-relevant research in many areas. However, the Center has three main focus areas:

- Meeting the needs of special populations, particularly those with chronic diseases and disabilities;
- Understanding the special health needs of minority populations and reducing health disparities; and
- Maintaining and building the capacity of rural health systems.

Center Projects Funded by ORHP

- **Rural Healthy People 2010: A Companion Document for Healthy People 2010.** *PI: Larry Gamm, Ph.D.*
- **Management of Chronic Disease in Rural Areas.** *Y1-PI: Miguel Zuniga, M.D., Dr.P.H.T.M.; Y2-PI: Jane Bolin, Ph.D., R.N.*
- **A Comparative Study of Community Health Worker (Promotora) Organizations in Colonias on the U.S. Mexico Border.** *PI: Marlynn L. May, Ph.D.; Project Director: Ricardo Contreras, M.A., University of South Florida*
- **Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening: Are They Reaching Rural & Minority Women.** *PI: Sue Carozza, Ph.D.*
- **Comparison of Assisted Living in Rural and Non-Rural Areas.** *PI: Catherine Hawes, Ph.D.*
- **The State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medical Transportation.** *PI: Craig Blakely, Ph.D.*
- **The Community Health Worker/Promotora Certification Study.** *PI: Marlynn May, Ph.D.*
- **The Potential for Expanding the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) to Rural Areas.** *PI: Catherine Hawes, Ph.D.*

For more information about our projects, please visit our Website at:

<http://www.srph.tamushsc.edu/srhrc>

You may also visit our Website for the Rural Healthy People 2010 project at:

<http://www.srph.tamushsc.edu/rhp2010>

OTHER RECENT PROJECTS & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AT THE SCHOOL OF RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH

- Assistance to Critical Access Hospitals
 - Rural AIDS Education & Training Center
 - Rural Public Health Workforce Training
 - Ingestion of Pesticides by Children in Agricultural Areas
 - Asthma in Migrant Farm Workers' Children
 - Evaluation of Medical Transportation Services
 - Rural Health Infrastructure
 - South Texas Telehealth Project
 - Program for Reduction of Rural Family Violence
 - Smoking Cessation & Hispanic Youth
 - Community Health Assessments
- Border Health***
- Creating An Integrated Health Outreach System to Isolated Colonia Residents. (HRSA and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
 - Texas Border Health Survey (TDH)

Aging and Long-Term Care

- Quality Measurement in Assisted Living (AHRQ)
- Delivery of Care to Multiple Sclerosis Patients (MS Society)
- Use of Medicare-covered Services by Assisted Living Residents (AHRQ)
- Improving the Nursing Home Complaint Investigation Process (CMS)
- Elder Mistreatment Deaths in Nursing Homes (NIJ/DOJ)
- Preventing Abuse and Neglect in Nursing Homes: The Role of the Nurse Aide Registries (CMS)
- Evaluation of the Wellspring Initiative in Nursing Homes (The Commonwealth Fund)
- Quality Assurance in Nursing Homes: The Role of Enforcement (Retirement Research Foundation)
- Improving Nursing Home Enforcement (CMS)