



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Rural Public Health



What is Rural Public Health?

Rural public health is the **science and practice of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health and well-being** in rural communities. Rural public health seeks to protect the health of communities and works with rural healthcare systems to improve the overall quality of life for every individual.



CDC science contributes to the **evidence base** of what works to prevent disease in rural communities.



CDC develops and promotes **public health best practices and interventions** for rural communities.



In Rural America, residents are at greater risk of death from:



Heart Disease



Cancer



Unintentional Injury



Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease



Stroke

CDC's Office of Rural Health (ORH)

In 2023, CDC established ORH in its National Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce. ORH's directive from Congress is to work across the agency to coordinate and improve rural public health efforts. In service of this goal, ORH collaborates with external partners to ensure that rural public health needs and strategies are integrated into CDC's public health programs at the outset.



ORH's ROLE

Lead CDC's rural public health strategy and coordinate across agency programs and with partners to improve the health and well-being of rural communities throughout the U.S.



ORH's VISION

A more robust and capable public health system that offers improved opportunity for better health in rural America.



CDC's Rural Health Work

Many rural communities apply innovative approaches to address their own health needs. To build on these approaches, CDC partners with numerous rural-serving organizations, state and local health departments, and federal agencies to implement various programs and activities that address rural public health needs, promote health and wellness in rural communities across the nation, and strengthen the rural public health workforce.

CDC-Funded Rural Health Interventions

CDC-funded interventions addressing the leading causes of death in rural America have increased cancer screening for women, improved child safety seat use, and promoted physical education in schools. Examples of interventions include:

- **Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative** - works in partnership with community health workers, pharmacists, community organizations, local leaders and businesses, and faith-based groups to improve screening and care for heart disease and stroke and to identify and address medication challenges; and
- **Overdose Data to Action Program** - addresses the epidemiology of the drug overdose crisis and closes identified gaps in prevention activities by building state and local capacity to prevent drug overdose and related harms.



Rural Strategic Plan

Purpose

To improve the health of rural communities by advancing the best rural public health science and practices through a coordinated, transparent, and strategic approach.

Values



Leadership



Collaboration



Scientific Curiosity



Innovation



Empowered Decision Making

Priorities



Advance Engagement with Partners and Communities



Strengthen Rural Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce



Advance Rural Public Health Science



Improve Rural Public Health Preparedness and Response Capacity