

# THE FUTURE OF RURAL HEALTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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RUPRI Rural Health Panel

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# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*The RUPRI Health Panel envisions rural health care that is affordable and accessible for rural residents through a sustainable health system that delivers high quality, high value services. A high performance rural health care system informed by the needs of each unique rural community will lead to greater community health and well-being.*

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL HEALTH CARE

- Disproportionate elderly and un/under-insured
- Reliance on primary care, and on mid-level practitioners
- Patient-centeredness occurs more naturally because care is personal
- Small patient volumes make measurement challenging and need alternative approaches
- Unique opportunity and need for community-oriented approaches (rather than setting/silo based approaches)

# FOUNDATIONS TO REALIZE A HIGH PERFORMING RURAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Community health
- High quality care
- Patient-centeredness

# PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- Payer-provider contracts for “accountable care”
- Patient-centered teams (including health workers)
- Evolving systems combining types of providers (e.g., large and small hospitals, physicians, long term care)
- Use of telehealth
- Optimum use of trained workforce

# EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC POLICIES THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT OF BETTER RURAL SYSTEMS

- Various types of accountable care organizations (ACOs)
- Patient-centered medical homes (VA example, use in Medicaid programs)
- Community transformation grants for public health services

# EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC POLICIES THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT OF BETTER RURAL SYSTEMS

- Value-based purchasing for providers and systems
- Market changes through use of health insurance (benefits) exchanges
- Training and payment for workforce

# POLICIES SHOULD FACILITATE FOLLOWING (NOT INHIBIT)

- Using health information to manage care, within clinical care setting, home setting, community-wide
- Paying for value, shifting out of fee-for-service
- Integrating services through collaboration
- Health people in healthy communities

# CHALLENGES IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: ISSUES SURFACING IN PROPOSED FINAL RULES

- Access standards and customary patterns of health care utilization with local providers
- Network adequacy
- Measurement issues due to small volume
- Definitions of rural markets
- Treatment of rural providers, e.g., CAHs, RHCs, SCHs, MDHs, FQHCs

# RUPRI AND RURAL HEALTH RESEARCH CAN HELP YOU

- [www.rupri.org](http://www.rupri.org): comments on proposed final rules, policy briefs and papers, including the one underpinning these remarks
- [www.public-health.uiowa.edu](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu): RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis
- [www.ruralhealthresearch.org](http://www.ruralhealthresearch.org): Access to the work of the ORHP-supported rural health research centers and contact information

# FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/rupri>

The RUPRI Health Panel

<http://www.rupri.org>



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