White Paper

Enhancing Rural Healthcare Access through Remote Patient Monitoring



In collaboration with:

ARKANSAS RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

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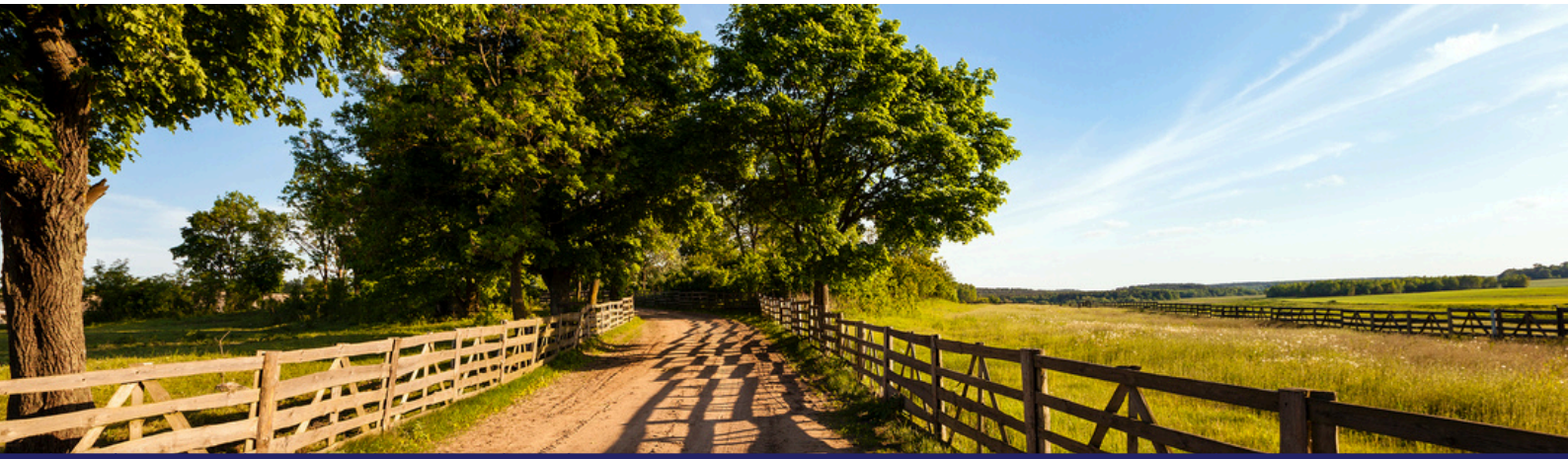
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Overview of rural healthcare challenges in the United States

One in five Americans live in rural areas, facing significant challenges in accessing healthcare due to limited resources and geographical barriers. Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) often struggle with shortages of healthcare providers and specialty doctors, leaving residents underserved and vulnerable. In the age of innovation, providers and health systems alike are strategizing ways to decrease inequities in these areas to improve patient care. Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is emerging as a transformative solution, bridging the healthcare gap for rural communities.

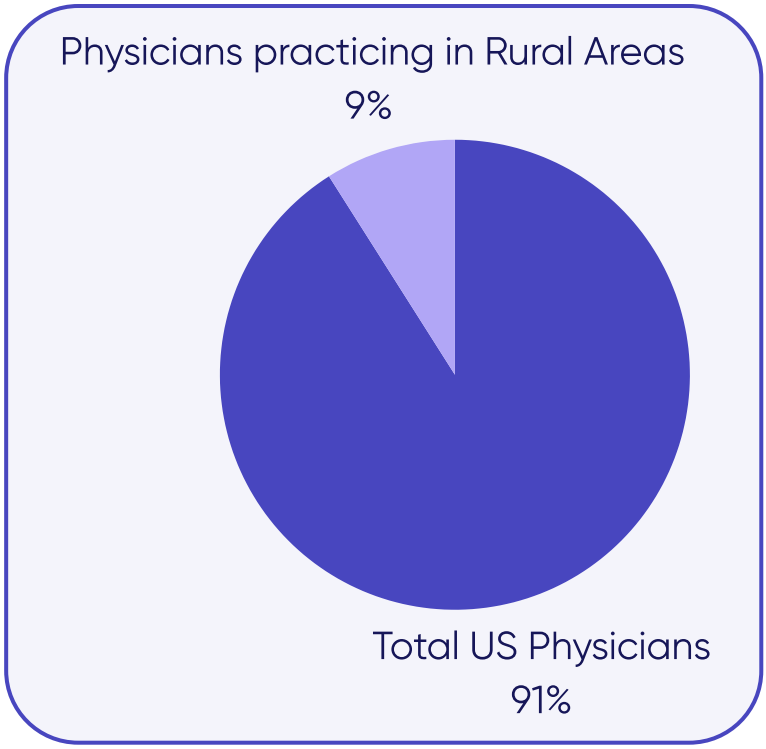


1 in 5 Americans live in rural areas



Shortage of healthcare providers and its impact

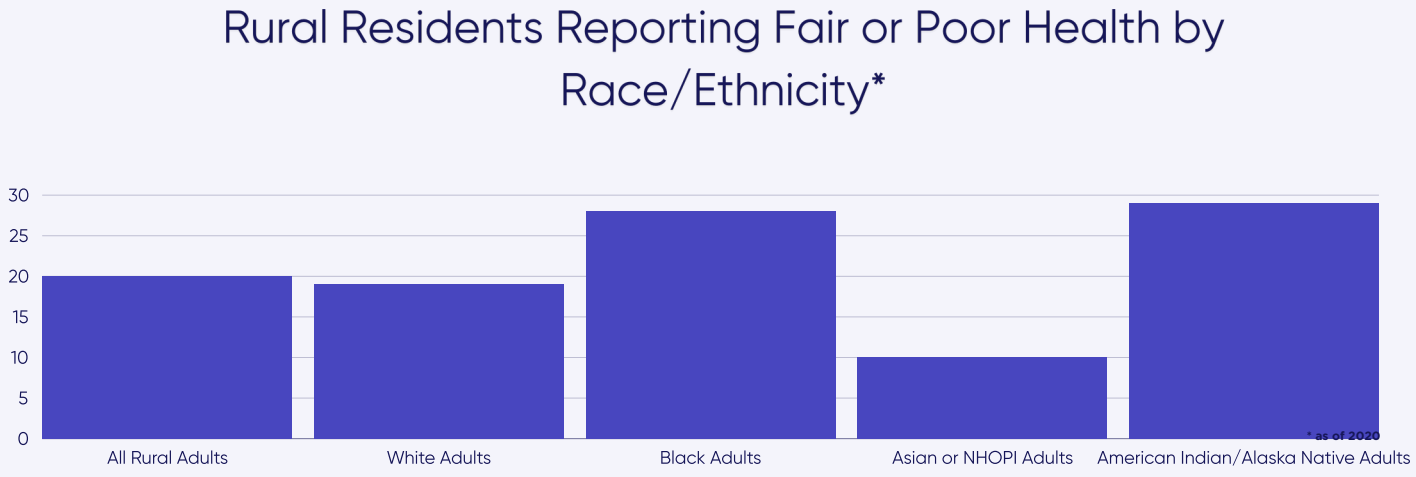
The population of individuals that reside in rural areas of the United States face unique healthcare challenges that create barriers for individuals to access care. The shortage of healthcare providers in rural areas is significant, with only 9% of the nation's physicians practicing in rural communities despite 20% of the population residing there. This shortage leads to delays in care, poorer health outcomes, and increased mortality rates for chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and COPD. Access to specialty, providers is also limited causing a geographical disconnect between providers and patients, leading to additional financial and healthcare-related burdens for patients and their families.



Benefits of RPM in rural healthcare



Advancements in healthcare technology, particularly RPM, are changing the narrative for rural healthcare. RPM allows patients to monitor their health from home, reducing the need for frequent trips to healthcare facilities. This technology offers a cost-effective solution for monitoring patients with chronic conditions, reducing hospital readmissions, and improving overall patient outcomes.





Overview of Arkansas Rural Health Partnership

Founded in 2008, ARHP is a nonprofit healthcare network of 18 rural hospital members, 3 medical teaching institutions, and 2 FQHCs throughout rural Arkansas. The Arkansas Rural Health partnership was launched to advance the health and wellness of rural residents, providers, and healthcare organizations through dynamic collaboration, forward-thinking, and the strategic leveraging of resources. To support the vision of pioneering a new rural health reality, ARHP has

implemented RPM programs, including their Good Food Rx initiative, to address healthcare challenges in rural Arkansas. The health equity statistics within rural communities are bleak. Nearly 1 in 4 Arkansans do not have access to quality food to meet their basic needs. Additionally, 1 in 5 residents live in poverty, while 29% of children within the region live in poverty. The majority of ARHP service areas are vulnerable to chronic conditions, over 40% of the population are children under 18 and seniors above 65. This area also has high adult obesity and diabetes rates. The program has received positive feedback, with both patients and clinics expressing satisfaction with the devices and platforms used. However, ARHP has identified areas for improvement, including the need to provide more meals and collect additional data to enhance the program's effectiveness.

The Good Food Rx Initiative

The Good Food Rx initiative, funded by the USDA Delta Healthcare Services grant, aims to improve health. outcomes by providing healthy food options to seniors with chronic diseases experiencing food insecurity. A common issue that was observed prior to the program's implementation was that the geriatric population within

Arkansas rural communities had little to no access to transportation and healthy foods. In fact, 14% of the service area had limited access to healthy food due to lack of transportation or local grocery stores. In 2022 key stakeholders within ARHP came together to formulate a two-year pilot project to test the innovative concept that food choices impact health outcomes. Eligibility for the program was determined to include: Seniors aged 65+ that live with chronic disease, and experience some level of food insecurity. Through the Good Food Rx initiative the pilot population is provided with healthy food, which can Include groceries or pre-prepared meals depending on care site, nutritious recipes and cooking classes, and one-on-one opportunities for patient education and coaching from local nursing students.

14%

Percentage of service area that had limited access to healthy food



Health outcomes and patient engagement

At the program's fruition, two primary care practices were identified in Southeast Arkansas to serve as preliminary pilot sites. Chronic care management teams within these practices conducted social determinants of health screenings with existing patients to establish a pilot population of 120 eligible individuals ARHP's RPM program currently serves 55 patients, with 90% of patients active over a two week period. The program has shown promise in improving health outcomes for senior patients with chronic diseases, such as heart diseases and diabetes. However, ARHP recognizes the need to expand more patients and collect additional data to better measure health outcomes.





Benefits of virtual care programs for rural communities

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) offers a dynamic solution for improving access to quality healthcare in rural communities. It provides a convenient and cost-effective means for patients to manage their health remotely, reducing the need for long-distance travel to healthcare facilities. Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) offers a dynamic solution for improving access to quality healthcare in rural communities. It provides a convenient and cost-effective means for patients to manage their health remotely, reducing the need for long-distance travel to healthcare facilities. This convenience empowers patients to take a more proactive role in their healthcare, leading to better health outcomes.

RPM also helps alleviate the burden on hospitals, especially in rural areas with limited healthcare facilities, by allowing for remote monitoring and timely interventions, which can reduce hospital overcrowding and ensure that resources are allocated efficiently. Additionally, virtual care enables healthcare providers to monitor patients' vital signs and symptoms in real-time, facilitating better management of chronic conditions and allowing for timely interventions when needed. Programs similar to ARHPs are particularly beneficial for elderly patients, as it protects them from unnecessary exposure to diseases in hospitals, enabling them to receive care in the safety and comfort of their homes. As seen with the Good Food Rx initiative, these programs are allowing the gap in healthcare access to slowly close, challenging the historical norm of traditional healthcare delivery.

Benefits of Virtual Care for Rural Health Clinics



Looking forward: RPM's continuous impact on rural healthcare

Remote Patient Monitoring is revolutionizing rural healthcare by bridging the gap between patients and providers. By providing a convenient and cost-effective way to monitor patients with chronic conditions, virtual care programs are improving access to quality healthcare in rural communities. With continued support and investment, RPM has the potential to champion providers and patients in rural healthcare, ensuring that no community is left behind in the journey to better health. By incorporating virtual care into their healthcare delivery model, rural health clinics can enhance patient care, reduce costs, and improve health outcomes for their communities.



Bringing healthcare home

Impilo enables virtual care organizations to bring healthcare into the home through connected device operations.

Our plug-and-play solution enables the use of remote monitoring devices, supplies, and sensors in the home by providing logistics, tech-enabled support services, and API infrastructure to enhance virtual care offerings. The Impilo Platform integrates within your current systems, allowing you to continue working seamlessly from ordering to managing device data, accelerates patient activation in RPM programs and boosts engagement for enrolled patients. Our infrastructure embeds within provider workflows, ensuring operationalization without the overhead of creating a device management and maintenance program.

Request a demo: Interested in learning how to optimize your virtual care program?

Schedule a demo with us today →

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