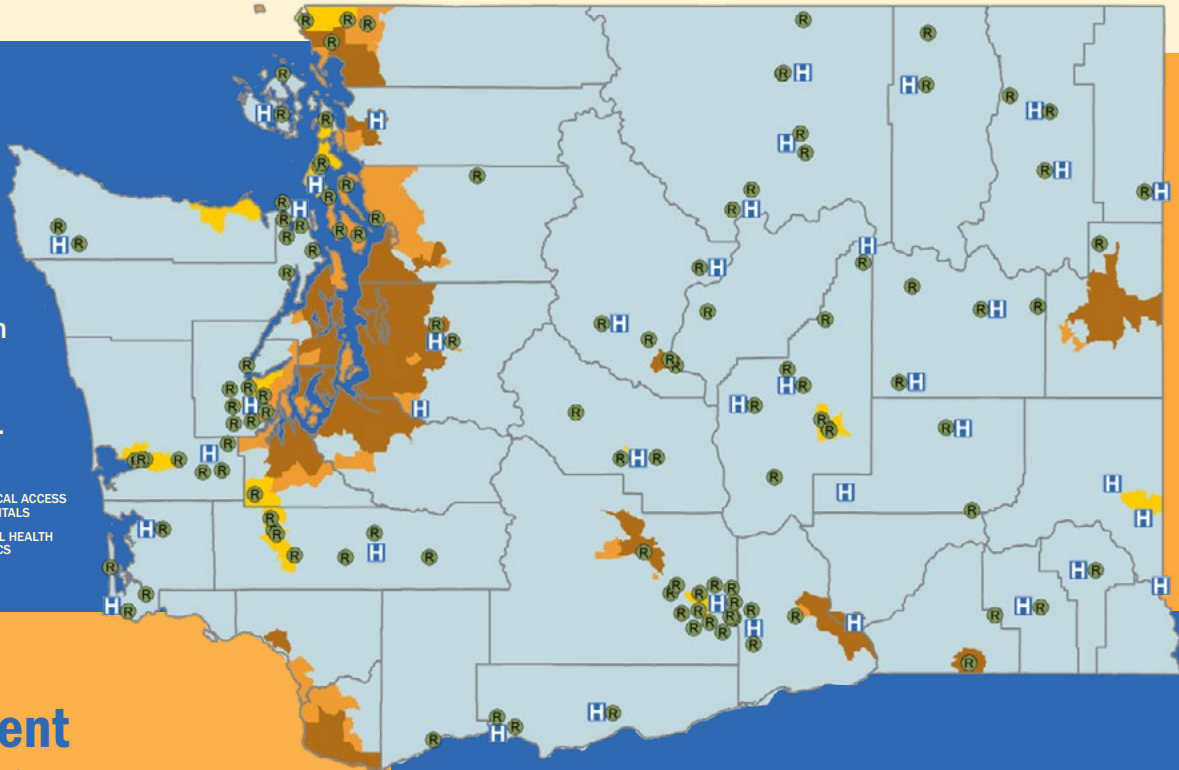




# Rural Health

## Rural Counties in Washington State

The DOH Rural-Urban Classification Scheme uses Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCA) codes to create a four-tier rural-urban classification at the sub-county level using census tracts and zip codes.



## Mission Statement

The Washington State Office of Rural Health and Primary Care Office support health systems planning and development in Washington’s rural and underserved communities to improve health and healthcare across the life span.

## Overarching Goal

Reduce rural and urban underserved health disparities and health inequities to achieve health justice.

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- Rural Health Equity
- Adverse Events Reporting

## State at a glance:

State Population	% of population considered rural:
<b>7,864,400</b>	<b>21%</b>

## Rural Health and Safety Net Service Sites:

<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>
Critical Access Hospitals	Rural Hospitals	Tribal Clinics
<b>123</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>218</b>
Rural Health Clinics	Free Clinics	Rural Federally Qualified Health Center Sites

# WORKFORCE Recruitment & Retention

Supporting Washington's rural and urban underserved workforce.

## 3RNET Direct Recruitment

We offer direct recruitment services for healthcare facilities in rural and underserved areas of Washington state.



“ I GOT THE JOB! I really enjoyed the town and the interview process! [...] It was EXACTLY what I was looking for! I just wanted to thank you again for all your hard work on my behalf.”

Candidate, Pharmacist - Placed in Morton, WA



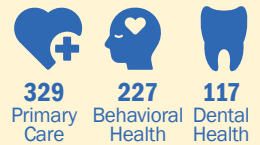
## Primary Care Office

The Primary Care Office (PCO) works to assess the need for primary care services, promote the recruitment and retention of providers, and improve access to care. Services include coordination for the NHSC and management of HPSAs.

## National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

The PCO provides outreach and technical assistance to clinicians and eligible sites to maximize participation in NHSC loan repayment programs.

673  
NHSC Providers



### Providers in Previous Years

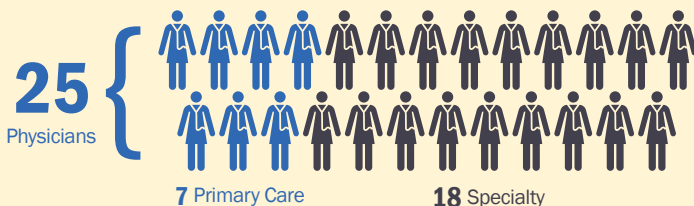
2021: 656 2020: 608  
2019: 546 2018: 463

45% INCREASE since 2018

## J-1 Visa Waiver Program

The J-1 Visa Waiver Program addresses physician shortages in underserved areas through waiving the visa requirements of J-1 international medical graduates (IMGs) following their U.S. based residencies or fellowships.

### J-1 Applications approved in 2022



### Technical Assistance (TA)

Over 200 TA Sessions  
TA to over 77 candidates



## Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations

HPSAs are federal designations that identify geographic areas, populations and facilities experiencing a shortage of primary, dental or behavioral healthcare providers.



Manages, maintains, and provides technical assistance to 400 HPSAs



### Maternal Care Target Areas (MCTA)

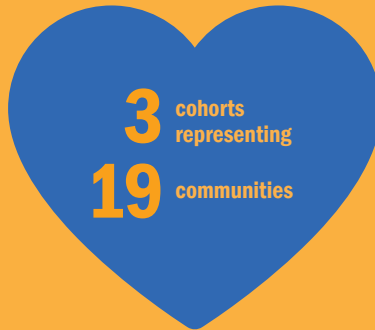
MCTAs are supplemental scores added to existing primary care HPSA designations to prioritize and direct maternal healthcare resources.

# STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

Improving access to quality healthcare for rural residents offering technical assistance, trainings and by bringing in federal resources and dispersing them.

## Palliative Care Initiative

Integration of Palliative Care into rural health systems and communities to decrease transfer of patients to urban tertiary services, target patients with serious illness earlier and develop funding models for sustainable services.



### Improved

Patient, family, and health care experience

Quality of life



### Decreased

Use of 911, emergency department and inpatient hospital

Total cost of care

## Adverse Events Reporting

Our team manages the Adverse Events Reporting program. Adverse Events are medical errors that healthcare facilities could and should have avoided.

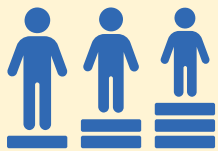
Oversees  
**325**  
reporting facilities



**29** events reported as errors that may result in patient death or serious injury

## Rural Health Equity

The Rural Health Equity Program mobilizes partners and funds programs which reduce COVID-19 related health disparities in rural areas.



**\$4.6m**  
distributed to vulnerable, rural communities.



Expanding or initiating collaboration with over

**200** rural serving organizations.

## Volunteer and Retired Providers

The Volunteer and Retired Providers program covers the malpractice insurance for volunteers providing non-invasive care to underserved patients and license renewal for volunteers who only use their license for unpaid work.



**2,606**  
volunteer providers enrolled



**157**  
sites enrolled



**109**  
hours per volunteer on average



**461,192**  
patient visits

# RURAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

Working with our rural communities to shape sustainable solutions.

## Rural Health Clinics

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) designate private and non-profit clinics meeting conditions for certification as Rural Health Clinics (RHCs).



Provided regulatory consultation support on federal regulations to

**16** Rural Health Clinics.



### Technical Assistance

Direct technical assistance hours to Rural Health Clinics for regulatory, operations, and quality support.

## Rural Hospitals

DOH has 2 programs that support rural hospitals and facilities.



## Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (FLEX)

Supports Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) by encouraging growth for:

- Sustainability
- Quality of care
- Financial improvement
- Operational efficiency
- Community collaboration

**58**

Quality improvement projects executed

**49**

Population health improvement projects executed

## Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP)

Assists rural and Critical Access Hospitals in ways such as:

- Meeting the costs of implement data system requirements
- Participation in Affordable Care Act (ACA) delivery system reforms

**43**

Rural and CAHs participating in SHIP

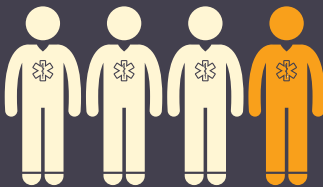
**6**

Hospitals utilizing funds for population health improvement activities

## Rural Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Washington State has **482** licensed EMS services.

There are **16,993** certified EMS providers in Washington State.



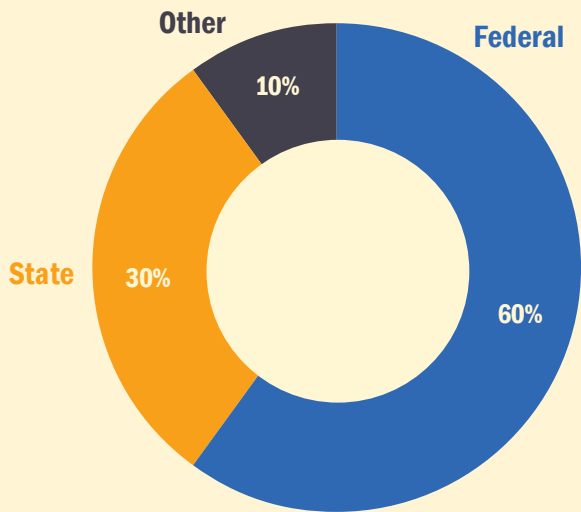
**25%** are volunteers predominantly used in rural communities.

Between 2015 and 2021, the number of volunteers decreased about **16%**.

**473** vouchers for rural EMS provider certification exam fees awarded.

### Improving Rural EMS Service Sustainability

- Assessed vulnerabilities and areas of improvement
- 12 rural EMS services participated in sustainability project
- Established a statewide Rural EMS Learning Action Network
- Provided 1:1 technical assistance to participating services and 80 hours of training to EMS leaders and physicians



## GRANT FUNDING

The Rural Health team at the Department of Health manages six different federal grants, as well as state and private foundation funding.

The federal grants focus on dissemination of funds and information to rural healthcare systems, rural hospital quality improvement, fiscal skills, operational excellence, innovations, and population health. Grants also focus on

- access to primary care
- rural and urban underserved workforce incentives
- recruitment and retention
- decreasing inequities related to the rural experience of Covid-19
- skills for serious illness conversations
- and facilitating rural emergency services quality improvement related to the time sensitive conditions of strokes, heart attacks or arrest, and traumatic injuries.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**147** Northwest Rural Health Conference Scholarships awarded in 2023



**390** Rural hospital and Rural EMS participants at the 2023 NWRHC



**17** Presentations to students and residents about loan repayment and recruitment assistance



Workforce Presentations reached over **272** students and residents

## Power of Rural

The Rural Health Team at the Washington State Department of Health sets aside the third Thursday of every November to celebrate the “Power of Rural” ([powerofrural.org](http://powerofrural.org)) on National Rural Health Day by showcasing the power of rural, and honoring the selfless, community-minded individuals that serve rural health.

## The annual Rural Health Heroes of Washington awards.

These awards recognize outstanding work by those who provide direct patient care, leadership, and teamwork within their rural health organizations.



## The 2022 Rural Health Heroes of Washington:

- Rick Eickmeyer – Leadership
- Guadalupe Cortez – Direct Patient Care
- Tulalip Health Clinic Staff - Teamwork

# POWER OF RURAL

The Rural Health Team at the Washington State Department of Health supports healthcare and health within rural communities. We celebrate the tenacity, resiliency, and “can do” spirit that prevails in rural Washington state.



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Rural Health

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