



2019 Rural Health Issues

MRHA is “The Voice of Rural Health” for Minnesota

Mission: MRHA is a non-profit, membership organization missioned to strengthen the health, health care and well-being of rural Minnesotans through leadership, education, advocacy, and collaboration.

Vision: MRHA is the leading coordinating and advocacy organization to strengthen health and health care for rural Minnesota.

Rural Health Issues: As rural communities in Minnesota pursue the triple aim of greater access to high quality, cost effective health care that provides improved health and wellness, many challenges exists that are unique in comparison with urban areas. In our efforts to be “The Voice of Rural Health” we understand these challenges and are committed to a successful rural Minnesota. To do so the following issues need attention and support of local, state and federal policymakers.

Access

- ◆ Access to health care services
 - ◆ Primary care
 - ◆ Mental and behavioral health
 - ◆ Addiction treatment
 - ◆ Dental
 - ◆ Transportation

Workforce

- ◆ Aging health care workforce
- ◆ Shortage of healthcare workers in the rural areas across all skill levels.
- ◆ Recruitment Issues
 - ◆ Misconceptions about rural life keeping healthcare workers from moving out of the city
 - ◆ Competitive pay and benefits in rural areas not as attractive as in urban communities
 - ◆ Perception of little opportunity for professional growth
- ◆ Increasing costs and requirements of education

Finance

- ◆ Payor mix disparities
- ◆ Reduction in Medicaid and Medicare Reimbursements
- ◆ Increases in the number of uninsured and underinsured
- ◆ Threats on safety net programs such as CAH and 340b
- ◆ Increase in cost of overhead (services and supplies)
- ◆ Low volume of patient encounters with a limited market to draw from

Innovation

- ◆ Telehealth / telemedicine
- ◆ Care coordination / health care homes
- ◆ Health information exchange and management
- ◆ Community Health Workers / Community Paramedicine
- ◆ Quality Improvement and analytics

Regulation

- ◆ Opioids / Substance Abuse Treatment
- ◆ Rural broadband accessibility
- ◆ Staffing levels
- ◆ Medicaid expansion / high-risk pools
- ◆ Farm Bill provisions for nutrition programs, rural economic development, and mental health treatment.