# Meeting Mental Health Needs of Rural Persons during the Global Health Pandemic

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Center *for* Rural Health
University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

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- Established in 1980, at The University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND

- One of the country's most experienced state rural health offices

- UND Center of Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

- Home to seven national programs

- Recipient of the UND Award for Departmental Excellence in Research

**Focus on**
- Educating and Informing
- Policy
- Research and Evaluation
- Working with Communities
- American Indians
- Health Workforce
- Hospitals and Facilities
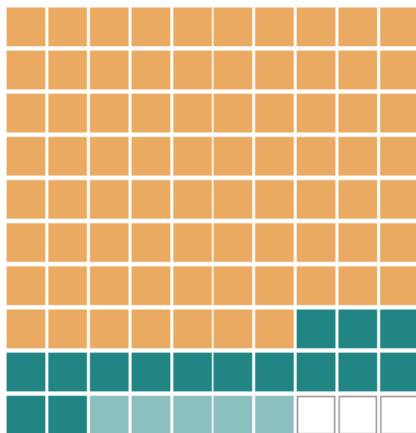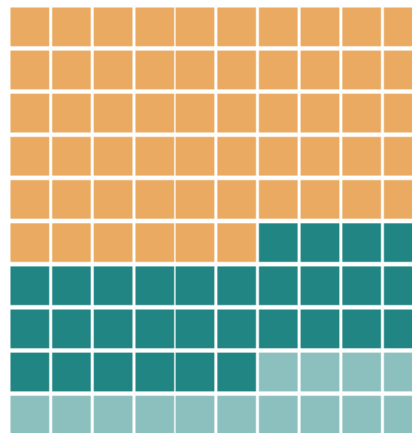
**ruralhealth.und.edu**

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Each square represents 1,000 people who died from COVID-19.

Large Cities  Medium Cities  Small/Rural Towns  Unknown

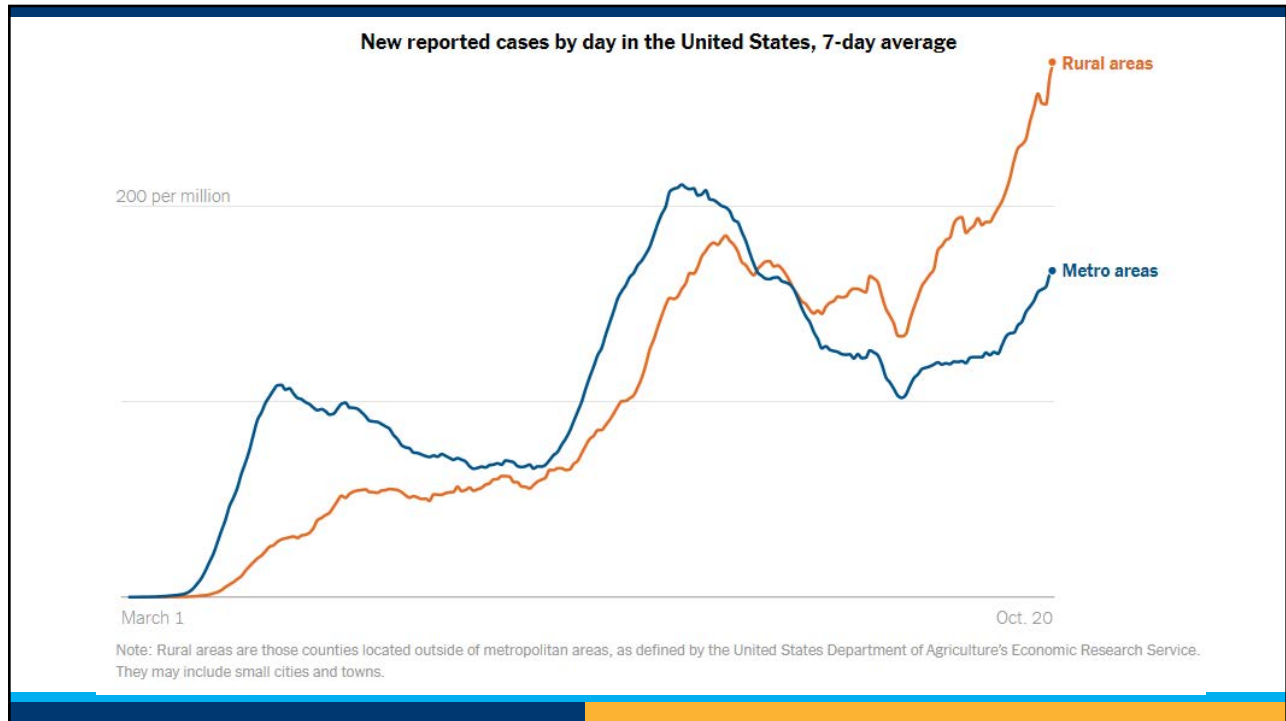FIRST 100,00 DEATHS          SECOND 100,00 DEATHS

**Notes**
Deaths marked as unknown were uncategorized as of the time the U.S. crossed 100,000 deaths.
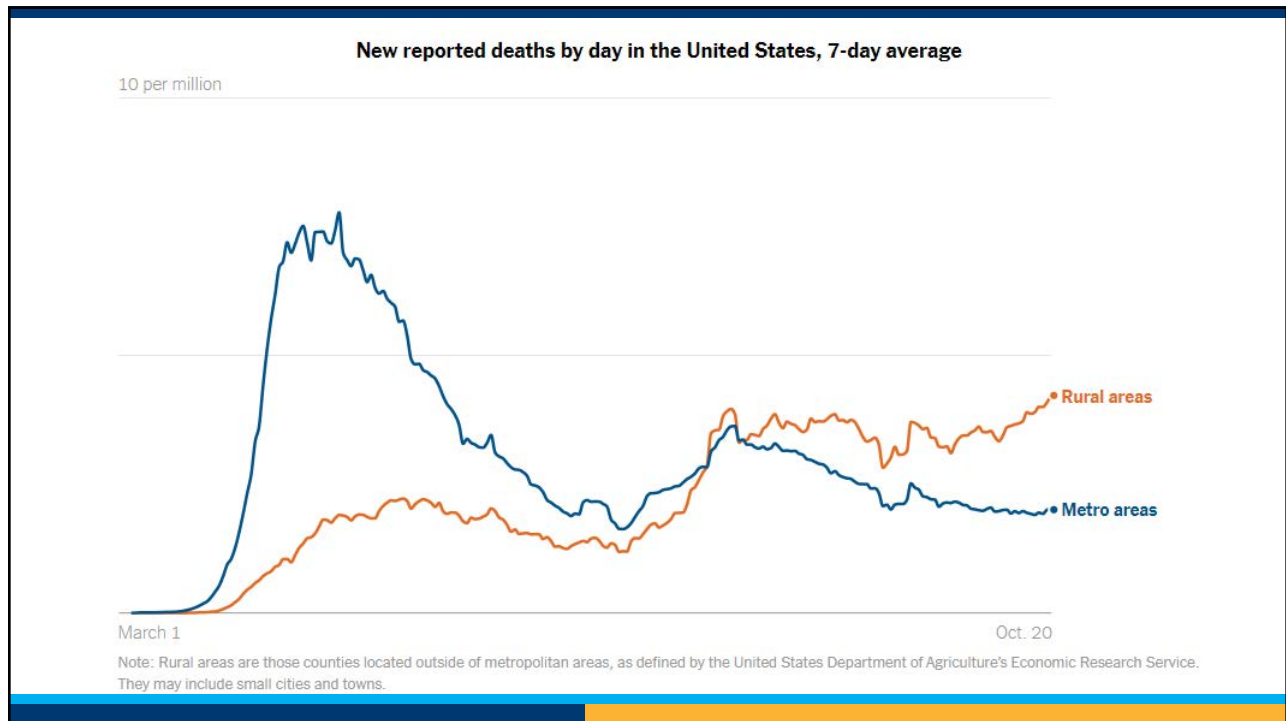
*Source: Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
*Credit: Sean McMinn/NPR*

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**New reported cases by day in the United States, 7-day average**

● **Rural areas**

200 per million

● **Metro areas**

March 1                                                                  Oct. 20

Note: Rural areas are those counties located outside of metropolitan areas, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. They may include small cities and towns.

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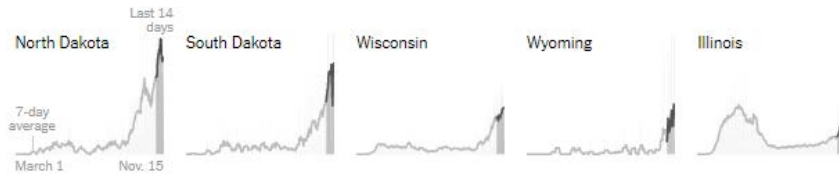
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## Where new deaths are increasing

Charts show daily deaths per capita and are on the same scale. States are sorted by deaths per capita for the most recent day. Tap a state to see detailed map page.

Last 14 days

North Dakota    South Dakota    Wisconsin    Wyoming    Illinois

7-day average

March 1    Nov. 15

## Where new cases are higher and staying high

States where new cases are higher had a daily average of at least 15 new cases per 100,000 people over the past week. Charts show daily cases per capita and are on the same scale. Tap a state to see detailed map page.

Last 14 days

North Dakota    South Dakota    Iowa    Wyoming    Wisconsin

7-day average

March 1    Nov. 15

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GF Grand Forks Herald

### Rural schools stressed; teachers 'starting to drown' across North Dakota

Severe staffing shortages due to quarantines and community spread of COVID-19 threaten to force schools, both rural and urban, away from ...

Valley News Live

### Nurses say ND's response to COVID-19 'is a dumpster fire'

North Dakota nurses are hitting their breaking points as COVID-19 continues to surge through the state.

USA TODAY

### The Dakotas are 'as bad as it gets anywhere in the world' for COVID-19

North and South Dakota face a tragic reality in coronavirus cases that health experts say could have been largely prevented with earlier action.

NPR

### In North And South Dakota, Hospitals Are Overloaded : Shots - Health News

Faced with overloaded hospitals, doctors in South Dakota and North Dakota struggle to deal with uncontained community spread of COVID-19 ...

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# Mental Health Care BEFORE the Pandemic

- Already in a place of crisis (depression, anxiety, illicit drug use, and suicide rates increasing).
- Opioid pandemic.
- Provider shortages (for all licenses mental health professionals).
- Stigma among providers, self-stigma, community stigma.
- Growing inequities by geography, race, age, sexual orientation, gender, and insurance status.
- Low utilization (provider and consumer) of virtual visits (tele-mental health) and low reimbursements rates (if any at all) for virtual care.

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# Mental Health Care NOW

- Fewer providers working, or working fewer hours.
- Increased need and demand for services which impacts availability.
- CDC guidelines influencing how in-person visits need to occur and time spent with patient(s) virtually which impacts availability.
- Not recognize symptoms as a mental health concern, but result of quarantine or physical distancing.
- May downplay feelings and concerns.

# NEED is Evident

## The Washington Post

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

Health

### The coronavirus pandemic is pushing America into a mental health crisis

Anxiety and depression are rising. The U.S. is ill-prepared, with some clinics already on the brink of collapse.

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International Journal of Mental Health Systems

**COMMENTARY**                    **Open Access**

# Mental health and psychosocial well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: the invisible elephant in the room

Check for updates

Akaninyene Otu[1,2], Carlo Handy Charles[3,4] and Sanni Yaya[5,6*]

## AJPH

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

### COVID-19 Exposes the Cracks in Our Already Fragile Mental Health System

John Auerbach MBA, and Benjamin F. Miller PsyD

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| RISKS OF PANDEMIC | TARGET PROBLEMS |
| --- | --- |
| Economic Recovery | Drug use |
| Unemployment | Alcohol abuse |
| Isolation | Suicide |

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## Opportunities

Increased attention around mental health (and tele-mental health care) need among new groups, including:

- Media
- Schools
- Primary care
- Parents
- Funding agencies
- Not-for-profits
- Long-term care

- Payers
- Federal government
- Policy makers
- Clergy
- Primary care
- Agricultural groups
- Public health

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# Local and Statewide Response: North Dakota

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# Next Stage of the Behavioral Health Bridge

- Access to self-administered, interactive, mental health screening tools (evidence-based)
  - Depression
  - Alcohol use
  - Illicit drug use
  - Anxiety
  - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Connection to tele-mental health
- Q&A with a behavioral health clinician

# Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers

- Years of research and knowledge of evidence-based practices show that well-designed mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery support efforts are effective and can have multiple benefits for individuals with mental disorders.

- The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

- Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

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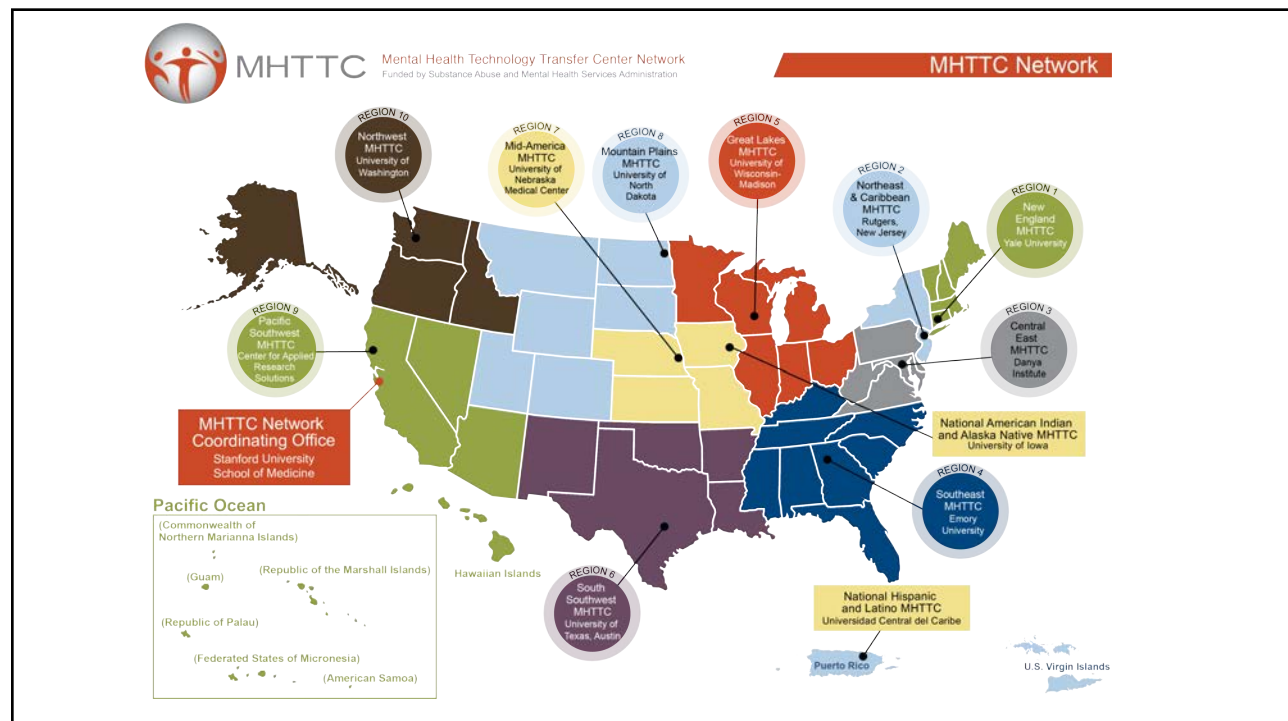


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# Collaborative COVID-19 Response

- Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)
    - **Building Telehealth Capacity:** mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/telehealth-resources
- Mid-America MHTTC and Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC)
    - **TLC Tuesdays:** mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/telehealth-resources
- MHTTC National Coordinating Office
    - **Responding to COVID-19:** mhttcnetwork.org/centers/global-mhttc/responding-covid-19

**Mountain Plains** (HHS Region 8)
**MHTTC**
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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# Sample: MHTTC COVID-19 Resources

- Mental Health Resources for College and University Faculty and Staff to Support Student Mental Health During COVID-19
- Mental Health Resources for K-12 Educators During COVID-19
- Mental Health Resources for Parents and Caregivers During COVID-19
- Telehealth Learning and Consultation (TLC) Tuesdays
- Session one: Changing the Conversation about Mental Health to Support College Students During a Pandemic
- Session two: Campus Mental Health: How do we Come Back to the New Normal?
- Tips for Educators: Supporting Parents During this Pandemic
- Psychosocial Impacts of Disasters: Assisting Community Leaders

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## Sample: MHTTC COVID-19 Resources

- [Farm Stress: Facts, Impact of COVID-19, and Resource and Training Needs of Mental Health Care Providers](#)
- [Student Mental Health During COVID-19: How to Prepare as Schools Reopen](#)
- [Self-Care Through the Summer](#)
- [Resources for Primary Care Providers Experiencing Stress Related to COVID-19 or Other Health Care Crises](#)
- [Telehealth Learning and Consultation (TLC) Tuesdays Webinar Series](#)
- [Telehealth Toolbox for School Personnel](#)
- [HHS Region 7 COVID-19 Resources](#)

## Sample: MHTTC COVID-19 Resources

- [Responding to COVID-19 | Grief, Loss, and Bereavement](#)
- [Responding to COVID-19 | Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Child Abuse](#)
- [Responding to COVID-19 | Mental Health Disparities](#)
- [Responding to COVID-19 | School Mental Health](#)
- [Responding to COVID-19 | Telehealth](#)

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- [Responding to COVID-19 | Telehealth](#)

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## Summary

- Mental health care access was a concern prior to the pandemic for all demographic groups.
- Mental health inequities have been exasperated by the pandemic.
- Providers and community groups are in need of additional training on how to address growing mental health needs through collaboration.
- New community groups are eager to learn more about how they can collaborate to address mental health concerns:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Media | • Payers | • Funding agencies |
| • Schools | • Federal government | • Not-for-profits |
| • Primary care | • Policy makers | • Long-term care |
| • Parents | • Clergy | • Public health |
| • Primary care | • Agricultural groups | |

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*My pronouns are she, her, and hers*

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BRIDGE

behavioralhealthbridge.org

Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)
**MHTTC**
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/home

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## Center *for* Rural Health

# Contact us for more information!

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