Understanding the Rural Community: A Context for Rural Health

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Community Development Pillar

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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
Session Objectives

• Understanding rural communities from the perspective of a rural context (economics, demographics, poverty, policy)

• Understanding the differences between rural and urban

• Understanding the importance of values and beliefs

• Understanding that rural communities are essential to building stronger rural health systems.

An Englishman’s Perspective

Americans can always be relied upon to do the right thing...after they have exhausted all the other possibilities.

Sir Winston Churchill
A Guiding Principle for Understanding “Rural”

Vision is the art of seeing things Invisible

Jonathan Swift

Definitions

• Census Bureau and Urban Areas and Urban Clusters
  o “Under the system of the U.S. Census Bureau, we define urban very carefully and precisely and designate as rural that which is not urban.” –Andrew Isserman, U. of Ill.
  o Urbanized areas – nucleus of 50,000 or more with a core having a density of 1,000 persons per square mile and adjoining territory with at least 500 persons per square mile.
  o 486 urbanized areas – about 71% of the U.S. population
  o Urban clusters – population of 2,500 and less than 50,000
  o 3,087 urban clusters and about 9.5% of the U.S. population
  o If use 20,000 as a base, 76% of what is called urban is actually a small town

• U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Metro and Non-Metro
  o Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) –central or “core” counties with one or more urbanized areas (50,000) and outlying counties that are economically tied to the core counties as measured by work community (if 25% of the workers commute to the core city or if 25% of the employment in the county comprises workers coming from the central county).
  o So OMB uses Census Bureau but then blends in the economic relationship of outlying areas
Definitions

- Non-metropolitan – counties not classified as metropolitan are by default non-metro
  - Micropolitan – urban clusters of 10,000-49,999
  - Non-core – all remaining
- 251,335,000 million people in Metro (2007) (about 81% of all Americans)
- 30,401,000 million in Micropolitan (2007) (fastest growing is Williston; 2nd is Dickinson)
- 19,264,000 million in non-core (non-Micro) (2007)
- “We define metropolitan very carefully and precisely, beginning with an urban area at the core, but then we use the word rural indiscriminately as a widely adopted synonym for places both urban and rural, that are not within metropolitan areas. In short rural is used in two different overlapping and often contradictory ways, always defined by what it is not – not urban, not metropolitan.” Andre Isserman
- More than half (51%) of all “rural” residents or about 30 million people live in a metropolitan county.
- About 41% of the non-metro population (over 20 million) is urban.

• US Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service and RUCA’s
  - Use Census Bureau urbanized area and urban cluster definitions combined with work community information to create 10 categories of rural and urban tracts.
2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes, number of counties and population

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Number of counties</th>
<th>2010 population</th>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>U.S. total</td>
<td>3,143</td>
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</table>

Comparative Rural and Urban Strengths and Weaknesses

**Strengths:**
- Strong informal support network
- More stable and diversified economy
- Availability of resources
- Availability of professionals
- Growing and diverse population
- Change is natural

**Weaknesses:**
- Skewed population demographics
- Lack of cohesiveness
- Limited informal support
- Competition among providers
- Competition for fundraising
- More contentious-fractions

Implications of strengths and weaknesses on rural health systems, community development, leadership development, and community engagement.

Source: Center for Rural Health, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences
So Why Is Rural Different?

- Geography/Distance/Terrain
- Community and Individual Values*
- Rewards in Rural Life*
- Efficiency of Urban, Suburban Life*
- Urban and Rural is a Matter of Degree*

*Source: Val Farmer, Ph.D. clinical psychologist, author and speaker (various sources)

The Rural Context

- Diversity of the Rural Economy
- Rural Competitive Disadvantages
- Changing Demographics
- Rural Poverty
- Rural Health and Human Services Challenges
- Rural Policy
Diversity of the Rural Economy

• **Stereotype** – All rural people are farmers or live on farms/ranches
  - Only 1% of the U.S. population reside on a farm and less than 2% of employment is farm related
  - In 1900 41% of U.S. population was engaged in agriculture
  - In 1950 about 4 out of 10 in agriculture

• **Majority of farms rely heavily on off-farm income**

• **Agriculture is more dependent on the rural economy than the rural economy is dependent on agriculture**
  - Farming accounts for 6% of non-metro employment
  - Health care/social services – 9%
  - Manufacturing – 12%
  - Retail – 12%
  - Local govt. – 11%
  - Accomodations and food services – 7%

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USDA Economic Dependency Types include:

• **Farming-dependent**—(403 non-metro counties) Farming contributes a weighted annual average of 35 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income.

• **Mining-dependent**—(113 non-metro) Mining contributes a weighted annual average of 25 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income.

• **Manufacturing-dependent**—(585 non-metro) Manufacturing contributes a weighted annual average of 35 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income.

• **Government-dependent**—(222 non-metro) Government contributes a weighted annual average of 25 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income.

• **Services-dependent**—(114) Service activities (private and personal services, agricultural services, wholesale and retail trade, finance and insurance, transportation and public utilities) contribute a weighted annual average of 50 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income.

• **Non-specialized**—(615) Not classified as a specialized economic type. Do not meet the dependence threshold for any one of the above industries.
Diversity of the Rural Economy

Four Rural Americas (Carsey Institute)

• **Amenity Rich** – landscape (Mts., lakes, forests); good services; retirement; younger professionals; safe areas; high quality of life; good education; family-friendly; rising property values – what happens to the old timers?

• **Declining Resource** – Ag., manufacturing, timber, and mining but now resources are depleted; boom and bust, blue collar middle class, globalization casualty, in economic decline, population loss, but see some increase in immigrants in lower paying jobs, some people cannot afford to leave

• **Chronically Poor** – inadequate infrastructure, resource depletion, underinvestment, limited leadership, inadequate education, largely ignored and forgotten, persistent poverty

• **Amenity Decline** – transitional, similarities to both amenity rich and declining resource, resource based economy in decline but still present, aging population, but show some signs for amenity based growth.

*Carsey Institute, “Place Matters Challenges and Opportunities In Four Rural Americas, 2008*

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Rural Competitive Disadvantages

• Lower incomes and higher poverty
• Lower percentage of population is in working age bracket
• Higher percentage of population with disabilities
• Lower educational levels
• Higher percentage of older persons and an overall declining population
• Hit hard by the recession
  - Uninsured – U.S (8.9%); Metro (8.7%); Non-Metro (9.8%) (Feb. ’09)
  - Feb. ’09, 21 states had rural unemployment over 10%
• Globalization
Rural Competitive Disadvantages

- Percent of population with a bachelor degree
  - 27% in metro (ND urban – 34%)
  - 15% in non-metro (ND rural – 21%)
- Federal spending per capita (metro vs. non-metro)
  - $550 less in non-metro in 2003
  - $683 less in non-metro in 2010 (most recent year) (USDA – ERS)
  - Overall less even though spending more in rural for income security (Social Security) as rural is older and poorer
  - A loss of $28 B not spent in rural
- Globalization
  - Education levels, lower number of eligible workers, limited technology, shortage of venture capital

Changing Demographics

General Population and Trends

- Between 15-19% of population is rural (depends on definitions)
- About 49-65 million people (U.S. in 2013 about 316 million)
- 1st decade of 21st Century U.S. pop. grew by 7.2%, but Micropolitan grew by 3.6% and non core by 0.2%%
- 2012-2013 non core actually lost 35,000 people (1st time)
- The roughly 19 million people in Micropolitan experienced a growth of only 50,000 in 2012-2013. (Metropolitan grew by 2.3 million)
- 1 in 7 American live in the Metro areas of NY, LA, and Chicago
- 1 in 3 Americans live in the top 10 metros.
- Over 1,300 counties lost population -85% were non-metro
- Definitions are important – 2013, 113 non-metro counties reclassified as metro; 36 metro reclassified as non-metro.
Changing Demographics

Race and Ethnicity

- Hispanic as part of Caucasian (U.S.) – white pop. is 80%
- Non-Hispanic white population in U.S. is about 64%
- White population rate is higher in Micro and noncore areas than Metro (Micro and noncore, 78% white; U.S. as a whole, 64%)
- African American population is about 8.2% of non-metro (9 out of 10 live in the South)
- Hispanic population growing quickly in non-metro – 3.1% in 1980, but 9.3% in 2012.
- Hispanic population in rural increased by 46% from 2000-2010. (1.9 million people)
- Hispanic workforce reached 36% of non-metro workforce.
- Asian pop. in rural increased by 37% in rural; AI/NA increased by 7.5%; white (Non-Hispanic increased by 1.8%)
- In 150 non-metro areas, Hispanic growth offset population loss of non-Hispanic from 2000-2007
- AI/NA less than 2% of population in non-metro/noncore but over half of all AI/NA reside in rural (53%)
- Minorities accounted for 8 out of 10 new rural persons from 2000-2010
- Over half the people in the U.S. five years of age and younger are not white.

Changing Demographics

Age

- Median age – Metro – 36.1 years; median age, Micropolitan, 37.8; non-core, 40.1 years
- People 65 and older – Metro – 11.9%; Micropolitan, 14.6%; and non-core, 16.3%
- People 85 and older fastest growing cohort – rural areas have higher %
- Growing issue of chronic disease associated with aging in rural
- High amenity rural areas attractive areas for relocation – services and scenery
- Rural elderly becoming more ethnically and racially diversified
Rural Poverty

- In 2012, 17.7% of non-metro was poor (8.5 million); 14.5% of metro was poor
- Gap between rural and urban poverty grew from 2011-2012 (difference of 2.4% in 2011 and 3.2% in 2012) – recession, people who can leave do, globalization
- Rural poverty rate dropped in 1990’s -17.2% in 1993, 13.4% in 2000
- Persistent Poverty Counties (>20% poverty in 4 census periods)
  - 353 counties (11.2% of all counties)
  - 301 counties (85/3%) are non-metro or 15% of all non-metro counties (5 in ND)
  - 84% of the Persistent Poverty Counties are in the South
  - 26% of people in rural counties live in Persistent Poverty Counties (4% of metro population live in a persistent poverty county)
- High levels of poverty in the rural South
  - Non-metro South poverty rate average about 5% more than urban over the last 20 years (22% vs 15% in 2012); Midwest was 13.6% non-metro vs 13.3% metro; west 16.2% vs 14.9%
- 81% of counties with persistent child poverty are rural (571 counties)
- 26% of rural children live in poverty; 12% of urban children

Rural Health and Human Services Challenges

- Access to services (locational access, economic access, number and type of services)
- Viability of rural health organizations
- Health workforce
- Network development – trust between organizations, perceived benefits
- Access to capital and technology
- Viability of the rural community
  - Economically a community needs a stable health system to attract families and businesses, and a health system needs a viable community to purchase services, provide a workforce, provide community support
Rural Policy

- **1935** – New Deal – (Ex. Order) Rural Electrification Administration (Dept. of Ag.)
  - 1949 REA started rural telephone programs
- **1935** – New Deal (Ex. Order) Resettlement Administration
- **1946** – Farmers Home Administration
- **1972** Rural Development Act
  - Authorizing statute for most USDA rural development lending and grant programs
  - Sec. of Ag. to coordinate a nationwide rural development program and to coordinate with states
  - Created the Community Facility Loan Program, Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program
- **1994** Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Ag. Reorganization Act
  - Created USDA Rural Development

- **2003** New Homestead Act (Senator Dorgan)
  - Incentives to individuals and businesses to move to these areas (repayment of college loans, housing tax credits, tax free accounts for savings and to increase access to credit; businesses would get investment tax credits, micro-enterprise tax credits, and venture capital fund)
  - Targeted non-metro counties that lost more than 10% of population from outmigration during the past 20 years. 698 counties qualified.
  - Never made it out of committee

- **Agricultural Act of 2014** (new farm law)
  - Consolidates several business loan and grant programs
  - Allows prioritization of rural development projects that support strategic economic and com. dev.
  - $150 million mandatory spending for backlogged rural development loans and grants
  - Access to Broadband Telecommunication Services in Rural Areas Program was reauthorized
  - New Rural Energy Savings Program

- **More than 88 programs administered by 16 different federal agencies target rural economic development**
Rural Policy

“Culture eventually trumps everything.” The ‘rural’ aura which once blessed American Agriculture has dimmed. We are in dire need of the engaging new rural metaphor, which should be centered within the following realities: “

- Growth
- Prosperity
- Security
- Resilience and Risk Management
- Equity

Chuck Fluharty, President and CEO of RURPI (May 2013)

Getting Our Story Straight: Rural Facts in Search of the ‘Grand Narrative’

New Focus for Rural Policy

- Acknowledge current agriculture policy has many goals, but has failed to adequately assure broad-based rural economic growth
- Build innovative new regional approaches for global competition
- Support necessary institutional innovation

Source: Chuck Fulharty
Rural Community Change Model

Environmental Conditions
- Demographics
- Economics
- Policy
- Health Status
- Workforce
- Finance
- Technology
- Health System Change
- Rural Community Culture & Dynamics

Community Action and Engagement
- What do people think, want, or need?
  - Assessments
  - Forums-Discussions
  - Interviews
- Community Ownership (not health system ownership)
  - Collaboration
  - Inclusion
  - Participation
  - Interdependence
- Community Capacity
  - Skills and knowledge
  - Leadership development
  - Planning and advocacy
  - Manage change – non-reactive

Impact on Community or Health Organization
- Threat to survival
- Growth/Decline
- Identity
- Perception toward change
- Perception toward opportunity
- How we respond

Source: Brad Gibbens, Deputy Director
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Contact us for more information!