



The Texas Real Estate Advocacy & Defense (TREAD) Coalition

Rural Texas

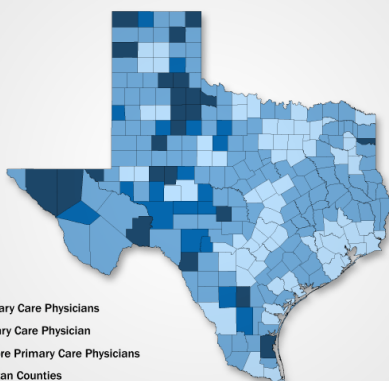
RURAL HEALTH

In the last decade, access to healthcare in rural areas has been rapidly declining. Texas leads the nation in rural hospital closures, and when hospitals close it not only leaves residents without health care but results in the slow decay of local communities. Nationally, rural communities have higher rates of disease, yet access to healthcare is lower than non-rural communities. Every Texan should be able to access quality healthcare services regardless of location.

FAST FACTS ON RURAL HEALTH:

- The average age of adults in rural areas is older than non-rural areas.
- A greater percentage of our nation's veterans live in rural areas.
- Texas rural hospitals declined from 300 in the 1960s to 158 rural hospitals.
- Typically, a rural hospital closure costs 170 jobs and an annual payroll of \$22 million.
- Rural hospital closures reduce sales tax revenue to local governments, reduces enrollment in schools leading to less funding, and harms local businesses.

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS IN RURAL COUNTIES



Zero Primary Care Physicians
One Primary Care Physician
Two Or More Primary Care Physicians
Metropolitan Counties

SOURCE: TEXAS OFFICE OF RURAL COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TELEMEDICINE

Access to healthcare in rural communities has been on the decline in the last decade. Now more than ever, rural communities are looking to services like telehealth to make up for that decline. Telehealth services offer access to healthcare professionals, who are often drawn away from rural communities due to hospital closures and poor funding. Telehealth services would eliminate long drives that rural residents currently face to reach adequate healthcare, and could provide rural physicians with educational resources when completing difficult procedures. Expanding telehealth services in rural communities is needed to supply rural communities with the healthcare they need.

BROADBAND

TREAD supports expanding broadband access to rural communities in Texas. Over 2 million Texas homes don't have high-speed internet. Additionally, only 69 percent of Texans in rural areas have access to broadband. Access to high-speed internet is not a luxury in today's world but rather a necessity for rural communities. Rural communities rely on broadband access for telemedicine, agriculture, education, business and tourism. Expanding broadband access is a bipartisan issue and has received widespread support from the Texas Legislature.

ONLINE OUTREACH

Visit our website: www.treadcoalition.org.