

New Study Shows Health Differences Between Rural and Urban Dwellers

/EINPresswire.com/ Universal Service Fund - The Great Equalizer between Rural and Urban Healthcare Quality

Just bring up the phrase “healthcare in America” and it may can start a major debate. Change that to “healthcare in rural America,” and it might not stir anyone’s imagination, but it should.

A recent study by UnitedHealth Group points out that as many as 50 million people live in the country’s rural communities. While that is a very “healthy” number, the report warns that those rural citizens are not as physically healthy as their city-dwelling neighbors, nor do they have access to the same level of healthcare as those who live in cities. Here are just a few of the more troublesome truths included UnitedHealth’s findings.

Nearly 20 percent rural citizens report being in “fair” or “poor” health, as compared to about 15 percent living in urban areas.

Over the next 20 years, the U.S. population is expected to grow 18 percent, with the most active growth in areas with higher numbers of rural population. There are fewer than half the number of primary care physicians per 100,000 population in rural areas than in urban centers. Rural physicians were significantly more likely than urban ones to view chronic diseases such as diabetes as major health challenges. Half of rural patients drive 20 miles or more for specialty care. The average drive is 60 miles.

"Those are some sobering healthcare facts, but the study also states that advances in telemedicine have the potential to transform rural healthcare in both quality and affordability," said Tim Koxlien, [Rural Health Telecom](#) CEO. "One of things heard in the rural healthcare community is that telecommunications technology is very expensive, especially in remote locations. That can be true in certain instances, but the good news is that there are hundreds of millions of federal dollars available to rural healthcare providers specifically for telecommunications upgrades."

Funding is provided through the Universal Service Fund (USF) which is overseen by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). While many hospitals and clinics in rural areas around the country have received funds and upgraded their telecom services, several thousand providers have either not applied or dropped out of the system.

Beginning this coming Monday, April 8th, a new USF filing window will open for Funding Year 2013. The funding year runs from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. The paperwork is only two pages long and very simple to complete. The funding is readily available to applicants and healthcare facilities can begin upgrading their telecommunications capabilities very quickly.

"I have seen these funds provide rural doctors with some amazing new tools to care for their patients," Koxlien noted. "I have also seen thousands of facilities pass up these funding opportunities. In fact, we have a list of nearly 2,500 facilities around the country that have never applied and another 5,000 or so that have dropped out of the system.

"Given this experience, we always urge rural healthcare providers to avail themselves of the USF potential. We even suggest that elected officials in counties, states and the U.S. Congress call their rural healthcare constituents to make sure they sign up. With the quality of healthcare for 50 million rural Americans at stake, the wellness of rural healthcare telecommunications systems needs to be a priority."

TeleQuality is the parent company of Rural Health Telecom. Founded in 1999, Rural Health Telecom is a national leader in providing telecommunications services to rural healthcare facilities throughout the U.S. Both companies are based in San Antonio, Texas. Learn more at www.RuralHealthTelecom.com.

John Boggess
210-4149753
<http://www.RuralHealthTelecom.com>

PR Courtesy of Online PR Media

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/148317463>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.