

# Key Facts in Rural Health

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## HIV/AIDS in Rural America

With the availability of effective anti-retroviral therapies and advances in treatment options, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) disease has become a chronic disease. Such transformation, however, has brought a focus on HIV-care utilization. For the estimated 1.2 million Americans living with HIV/AIDS, adherence to not only antiretroviral medications, but also regular HIV care, is crucial to HIV management and overall health maintenance. Many persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) face challenges in accessing needed health care. Lack of providers who accept and treat PLWHA is one important contributor to inconsistent utilization of health care services among PLWHA. Ryan White medical providers are the safety-net providers who offer primary care and referral services to PLWHA irrespective of their insurance status or ability to pay.

### Key findings:

#### HIV/AIDS Prevalence (28 states)

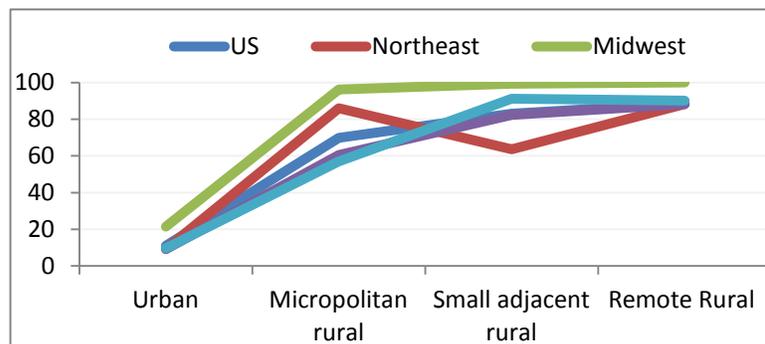
- The proportion of the population affected by HIV/AIDS is greatest in the South. In 2008, the overall prevalence of PLWHA was 247.8 per 100,000 among the 28 states that provided county-level data, with the South having the highest rate (307.2 per 100,000).
- New York ranked first for overall prevalence of PLWHA (609.6 per 100,000) while South Carolina ranked first for *rural* prevalence of PLWHA (320.0 per 100,000) among the 28 states that provided county-level information. In South Carolina, rural PLWHA prevalence was greater than the overall state prevalence (320.0 versus 317.0 per 100,000 residents).

#### Ryan White Medical Providers (all 50 states)

- A higher proportion of rural counties (95%) lacked a Ryan White medical provider compared to urban counties (69%).

#### PLWHA Living in Counties Lacking a Ryan White Medical Provider (28 states)

- Across Census regions, the Midwest had the highest proportion of rural PLWHA living in counties without a Ryan White provider (97.4%) followed by the Northeast (80.6%), South (68.4%), and West (66.1%).



Proportion of PLWHA living in a county with no Ryan White medical provider, by region and level of rurality, 28 states, 2008.