Rural Health Care Challenges
Rural Health Care Challenges

- Provider shortagess
- Geographic & distance barriers
- Social determinants of health:
  - Housing
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Transportation
- Limited broadband coverage
Roughly one-in-four rural residents say access to high-speed internet is a major problem in their area.

Rural adults are less likely than those in other areas to have high-speed internet at home, own a smartphone.

## Rural Veteran Internet Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rural Veterans</th>
<th>Urban Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA Enrollees who use the internet</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to the overall general population who use the internet</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollee internet users who access internet at home</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollee internet users who access internet via cell phones</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled veteran internet users who use MyHealthVet</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FY 2019 VHA Survey of Enrollees
ORH History & Programmatic Highlights
Rural Health Legislative Mandate

In cooperation with the medical, rehabilitation, health services and cooperative studies research programs of the Veterans Health Administration, assist the VA Under Secretary for Health to conduct, coordinate, promote and disseminate research into issues affecting Veterans who reside in rural communities.

Develop, refine and promulgate policies, best practices, lessons learned, and innovative and successful programs to increase access to care for rural Veterans.

38 US CODE § 7308

RURAL HEALTH LEGISLATIVE MANDATE
Rural Health Resource Centers Legislative Mandate

38 US CODE § 7308

VETERANS RURAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTERS

- Improve understanding of the challenges rural Veterans face
- Identify disparities in the availability of health care to rural Veterans
- Formulate practices and programs to deliver health care to rural Veterans
- Develop special practices and products for the benefit of rural Veterans system-wide
ORH Rural Promising Practices

Rural Resource Center

- Increased Access
- Strong Partnerships
- Clinical Impact
- Return on Investment
- Operational Feasibility
- Customer Satisfaction

VHA

Office of Rural Health

United States Map with Hospitals and People Icons
$300M total annual budget

FY 2021 portfolio includes 40+ Enterprise-Wide Initiatives adopted at 99% of VA medical centers across the country and U.S. territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORH Enterprise-Wide Initiatives</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2017</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2018</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2019</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Served</td>
<td>1.5M</td>
<td>2.5M</td>
<td>2.85M</td>
<td>4.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHA Sites Served</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FY21 Proposed Rural Health Initiative Budget

- Primary care services ($28M)
- Mental health services ($24M)
- Specialty care services ($51M)
- Workforce training and education ($4M)
- Transportation services ($15M)
- Innovation ($12M)
- Care coordination ($2M)
- Research ($1M)
- Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers ($54M)
- Clinical Resource Hubs ($110M)

Rural Health Initiative Budget Total: $300 Million
Enterprise-Wide Initiatives

NATIONAL VA HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

- Primary Care
- Specialty Care
- Mental Health
- Workforce Training and Education
- Care Coordination
- Clinical Resource Hubs
- Research
- Innovation
- Transportation

VHA
OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
Enterprise-Wide Initiative Highlights

• **Telehealth Clinical Resource Hubs**
  – Clinical Resource Hubs are Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) level resources that provide primary care, mental health, and specialty services to Veterans in underserved areas that are experiencing staffing gaps

• **Tele Critical Care (formerly Tele ICU)**
  – connects VA facilities that do not have intensivists on staff with VA intensivists nationwide via telehealth to increase access to ICU services and specialty inpatient care for rural Veterans

• **Telerehabilitation Services**
  – expands an integrated network of specialists who are specifically trained in delivering physical and rehabilitative therapy to rural Veterans using telehealth technology

• **National Telestroke ED Program**
  – provides emergent telehealth care by qualified stroke neurologists in a timely manner to Veterans presenting symptoms of stroke at rural-serving VAMCs that do not have stroke neurologists on site
2021 New Program Highlights

- **National Mental Health (MH) and Suicide Prevention (SP) Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO)**
  - Connects rural providers to national MH and SP specialists for regular discussion of clinical cases and targeted skill-building training on suicide prevention and substance use disorder treatment.

- **Mobile Prosthetic and Orthotic Care (MoPOC)**
  - Helps to restore function, mobility and independence for rural Veterans with limb loss and movement disorders by bringing artificial limb and bracing care to their communities

- **Centralized Anticoagulation Services Hub (CASH)**
  - Provides anticoagulation clinical pharmacy services via highly efficient infrastructure that standardizes clinical processes, employs innovative data tools, and delivers virtual care modalities.
Questions
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