RAC
Rural Assistance Center

www.raconline.org

Kristine Sande
RAC Program Director

National Rural Health Day Webinar Series

November 21, 2013

Rural 101: The Basics of Rural Health

The goal:

To ensure that everyone can access the resources, services, and treatments necessary to promote and maintain their definition of good health

What is Rural?

- Rurality occupies a spectrum
- Definitions are crucial for:
  - Government agencies awarding rural grant funds
  - Policymakers creating rural-specific programs & laws
  - Researchers studying rural issues require consistent data over time
- Definitions vary among federal agencies

Learn more on RAC's "What is Rural?" topic guide (http://www.raconline.org/topics/what-is-rural)

Why Rural America & Rural Health Matter

- 59 million people live in rural areas
- The vitality of rural America is essential to the vitality of the U.S. economy
- Healthcare is a critical component of rural infrastructure

Rural Health is Different

- Population density and demographics
- Cultural differences
- Geographic barriers
- Resources and infrastructure

Social determinants of health

Healthcare Access

Health Disparities

Rural Social Determinants of Health

Selected Determinants:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Income & poverty
- Education
- Culture
- Environmental and occupational health and safety
- Community infrastructure

Rural Healthcare Access

Barriers to access include:

- Availability of Services
- Distance and transportation
- Ability to pay – including health insurance coverage
- Health literacy and language barriers
- Social stigma

To learn more, see RAC's Healthcare Access topic guide
http://www.raconline.org/topics/healthcare-access

Rural Health Disparities

On average, rural Americans have:

- Poorer health status
- Lower life expectancy
- Higher mortality rates
- Rural minority populations may experience additional disparities

See RAC's Rural Health Disparities topic guide,
http://www.raconline.org/topics/rural-health-disparities

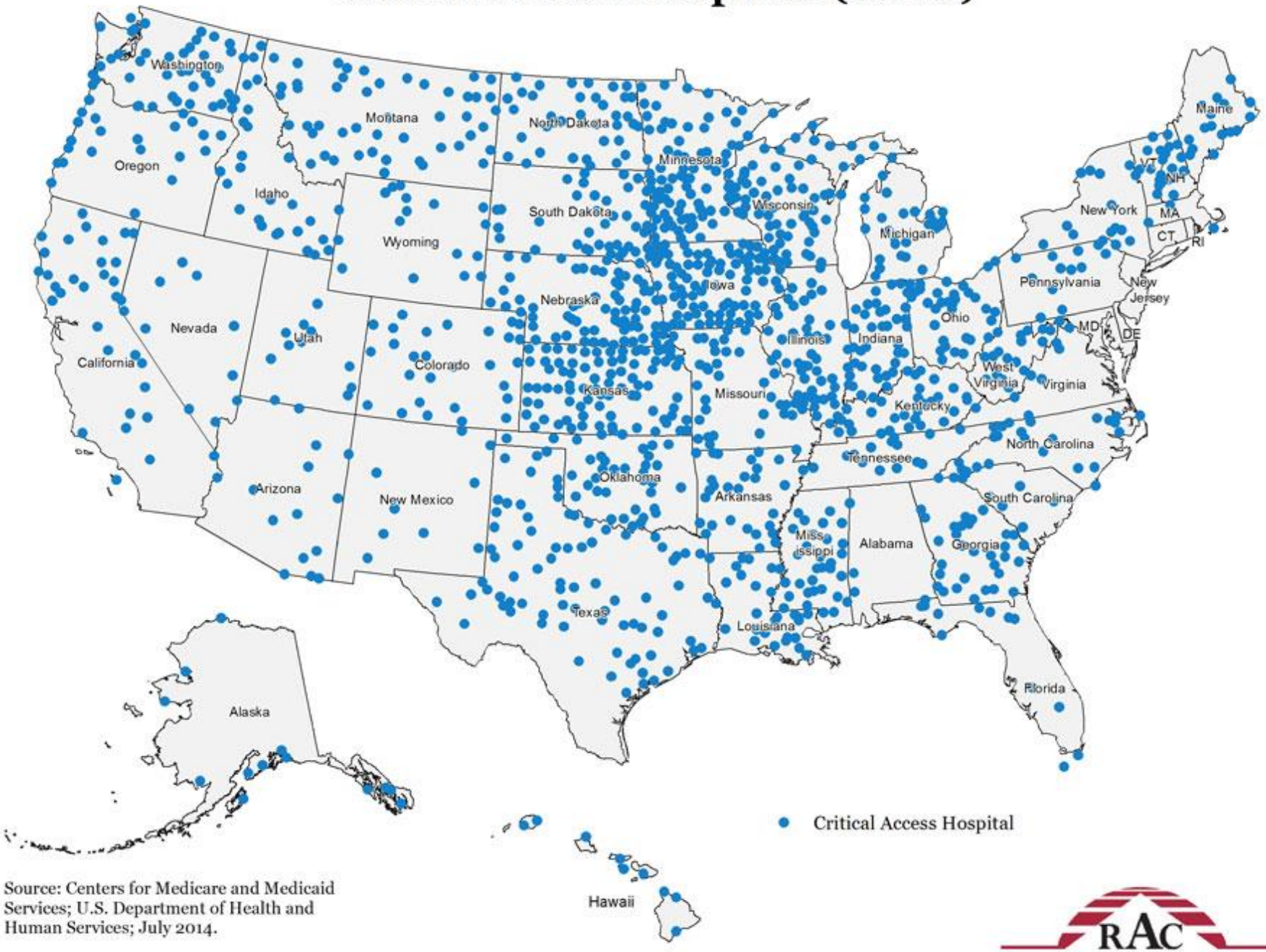
Strengths of Rural Communities

- Social capital
  - Strong relationships
  - Commitment to place, community, and fellow community members
  - Volunteerism
- Ability to adapt and innovate
  - Models and Innovations Hub, http://www.raconline.org/success/project-examples

Rural Providers are Different

- Lower volume and different case/service mix
- Special rural facility designations:
  - Critical Access Hospitals
  - Rural Health Clinics

Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; July 2014.

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale

RAC
Rural Assistance Center

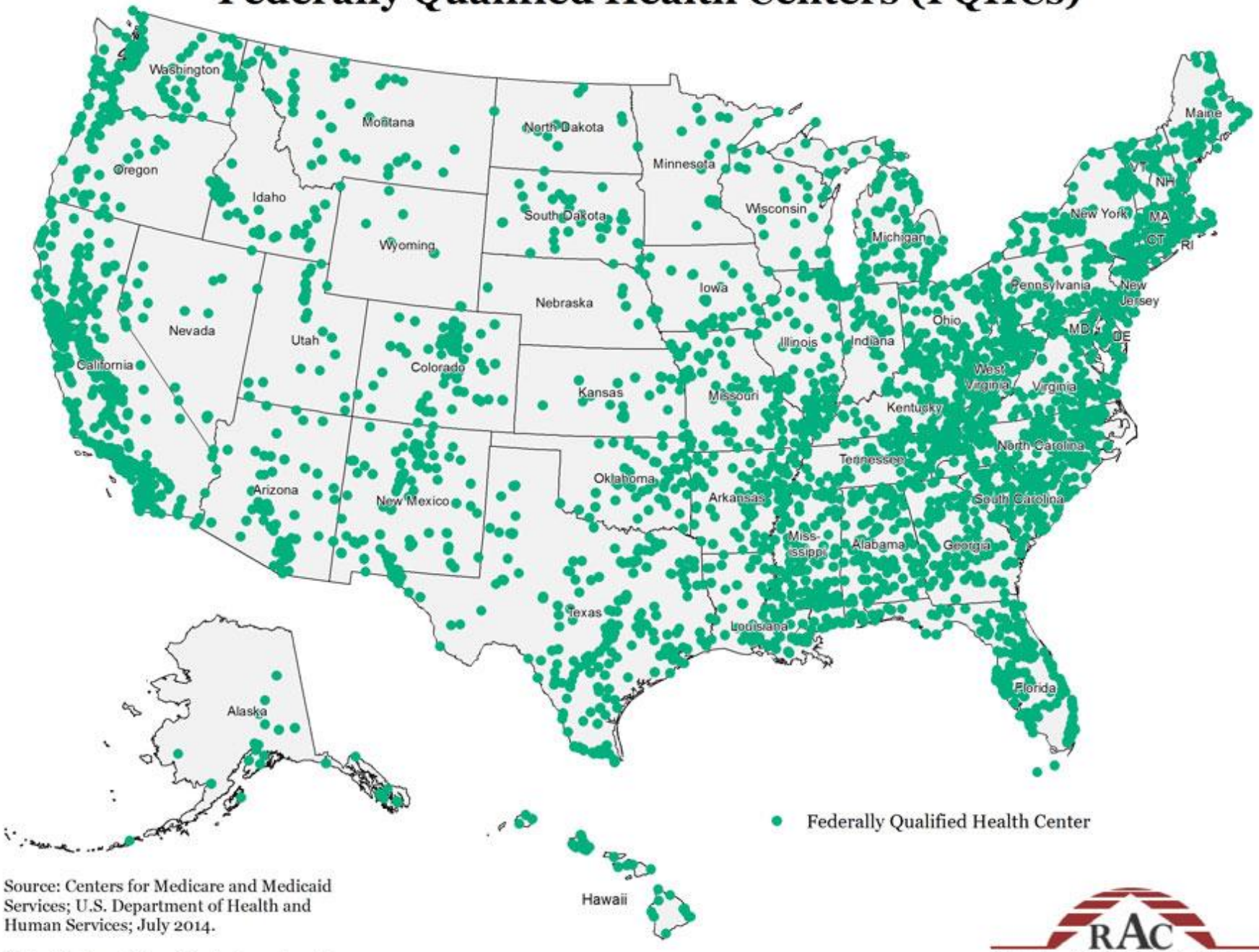
Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)

Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; July 2014.

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale

RAC
Rural Assistance Center

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; July 2014.

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale

RAC
Rural Assistance Center

Rural EMS

- Distance is a major factor
- Reliance on volunteers
- Emergence of community paramedicine

The Rural Health Workforce

- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Shortages/Maldistribution
- Aging workforce
- Creative solutions needed to address challenges
- Advantage: Broad scope of practice and personal relationships

National Rural Health Infrastructure

- Senate Rural Health Caucus and House Rural Health Care Coalition
- National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services
- Office of Rural Health Policy
  - Rural Health Research Centers
  - State Offices of Rural Health
  - Rural Assistance Center (RAC)
- National Rural Health Association

RAC
Rural Assistance Center

www.raconline.org

The Rural Assistance Center

RAC Services

- **Web-Based Services**

  http://www.raconline.org

- **Electronic Updates**

  Subscribe on our website

- **Customized Assistance**

  Phone: 1.800.270.1898

  E-mail: info@raconline.org

- **Facebook and Twitter Updates**

Contact RAC

Phone	1-800-270-1898
Fax	1-800-270-1913
Email	info@raconline.org
Hours:	Monday-Friday
	8AM-5PM Central

Web site: http://www.raconline.org