Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19: Lessons Learned from Rural Health Providers

SORH Regional Partnership Meeting / Region A

June 23, 2022

Alana Knudson, PhD

NORC WalshCenter FOR RURAL HEALTH ANALYSIS

RURAL HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH CENTER

WHY SHOULD RURAL AREAS MATTER TO YOU?

Rural areas are not only the source of much of our food, drinking water, energy production, and outdoor recreation, one in five Americans—including a disproportionate number of veterans and active-duty service members—live there, making the study of the health needs and challenges of rural Americans essential to us all.

NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis

Where to begin…

Meet people where they are!

NORC WalshCenter FOR RURAL HEALTH ANALYSIS

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

https://www.thoughtco.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4582571

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

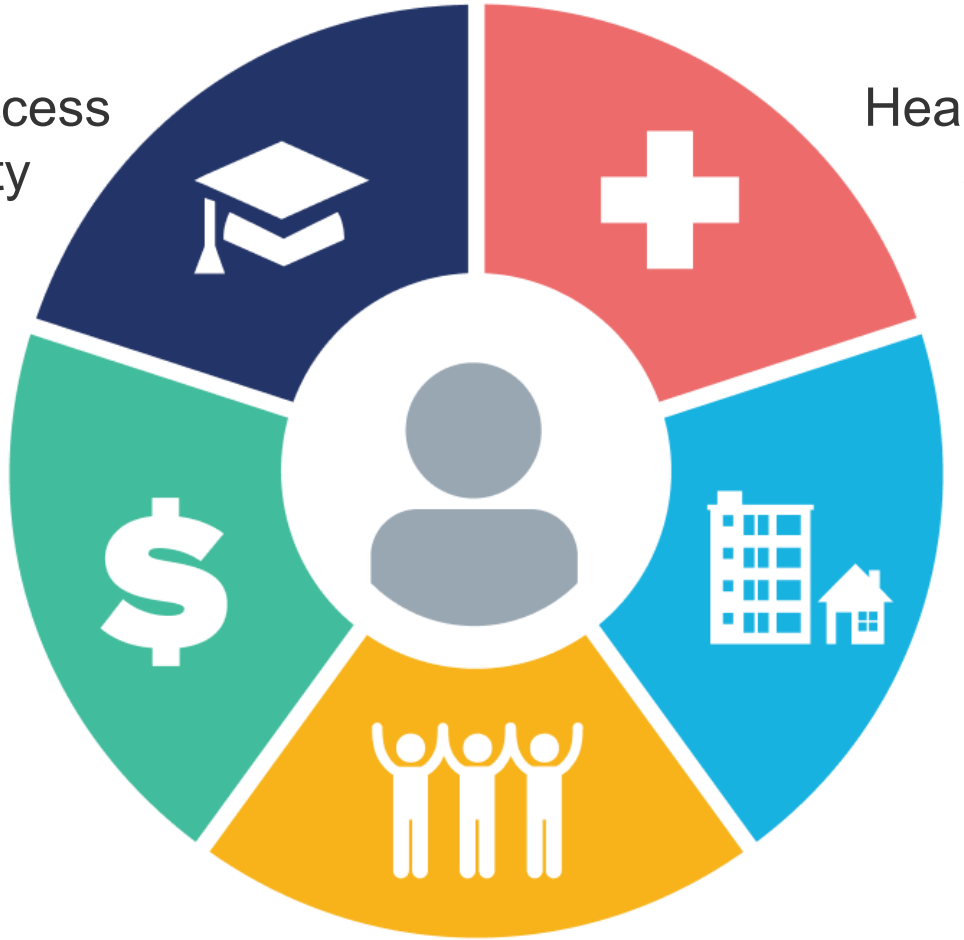
Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

- Healthy People 2030

Good health begins in the places where we live, learn, work and play. Although medical care is critically important, things like the quality of our schools, affordability and stability of our housing, access to good jobs with fair pay, and the safety of our neighborhoods can keep us healthy in the first place.

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

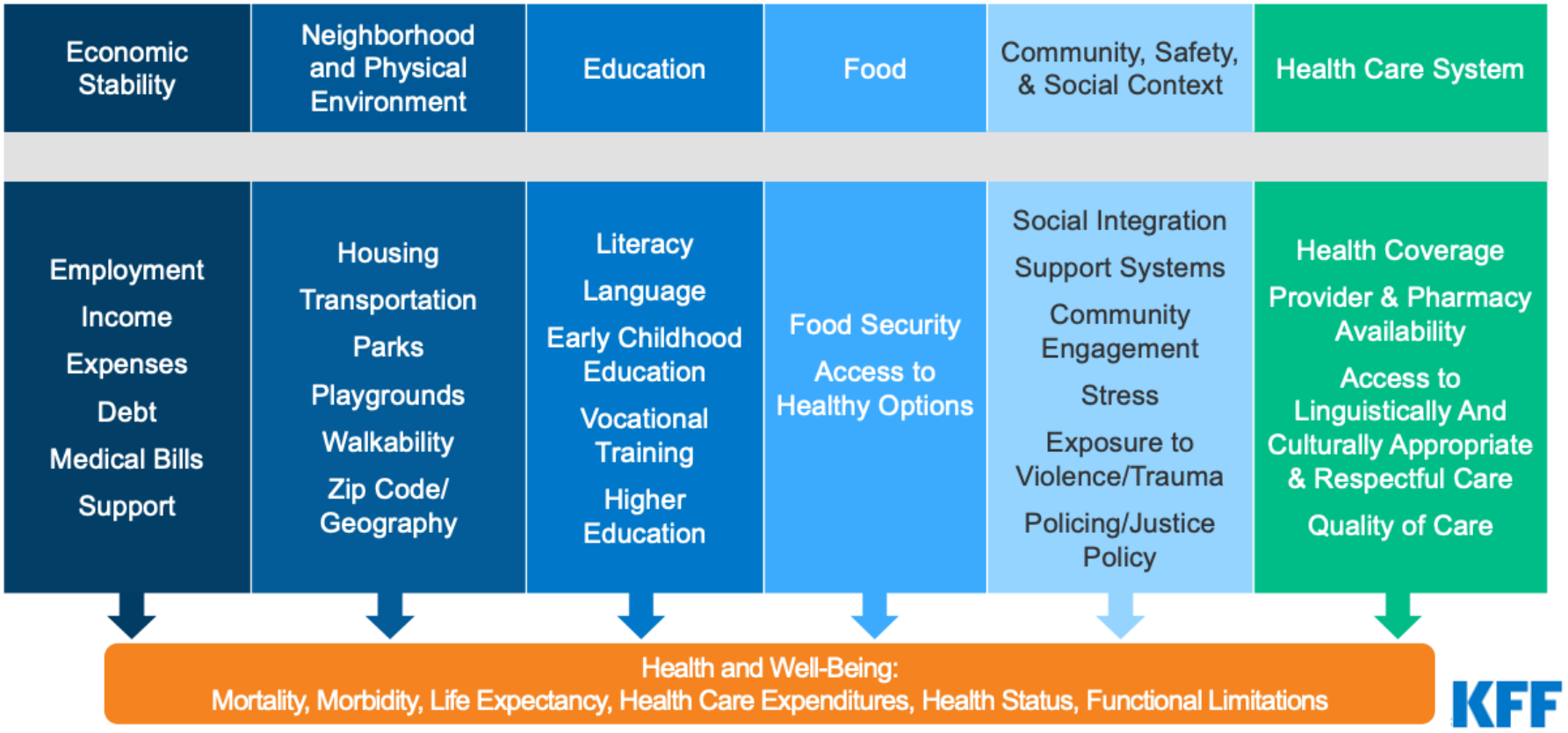
Social Determinants of Health



https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health

Figure 1

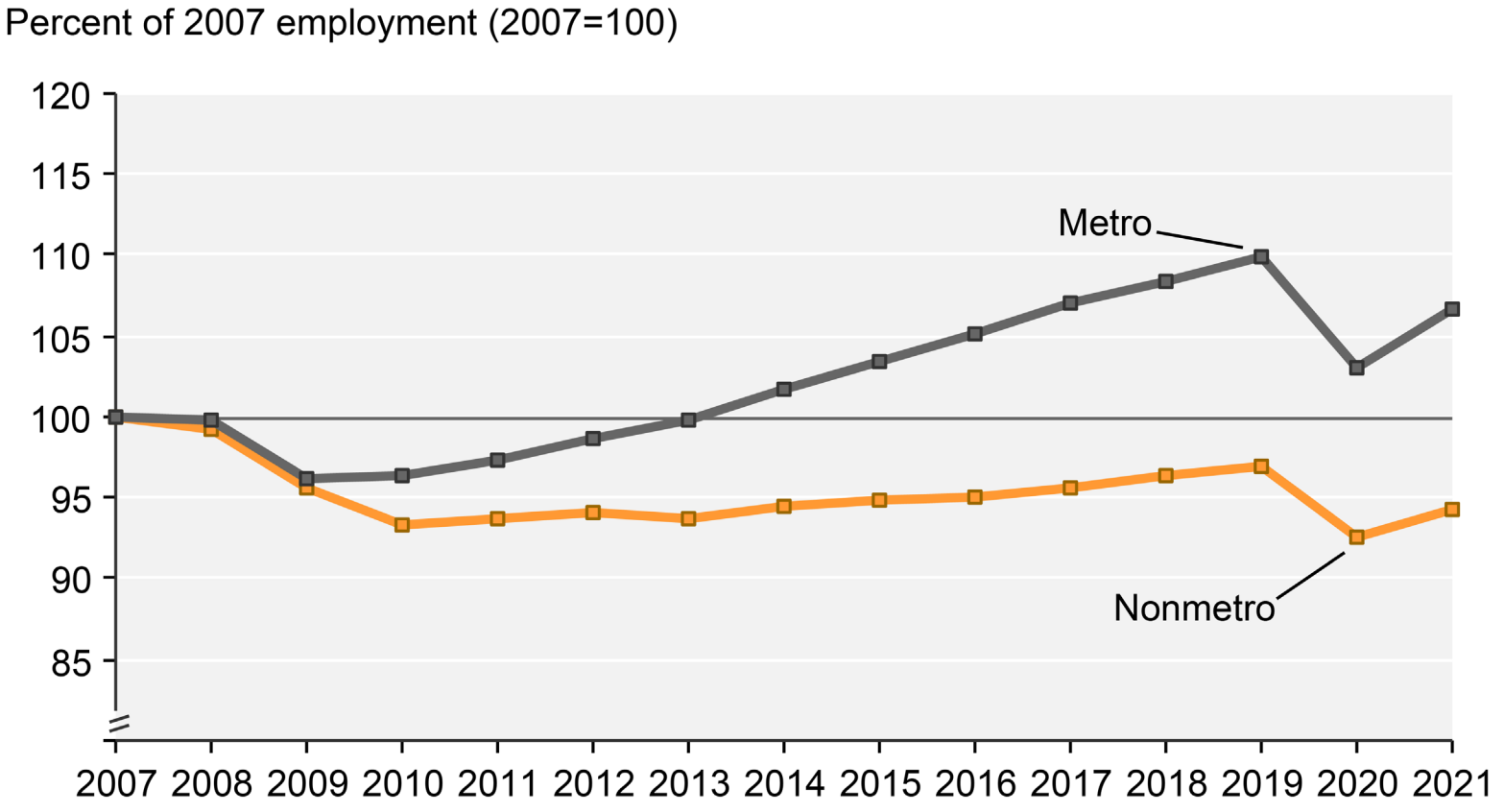
Social Determinants of Health



https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/implications-of-covid-19-for-social-determinants-of-health/

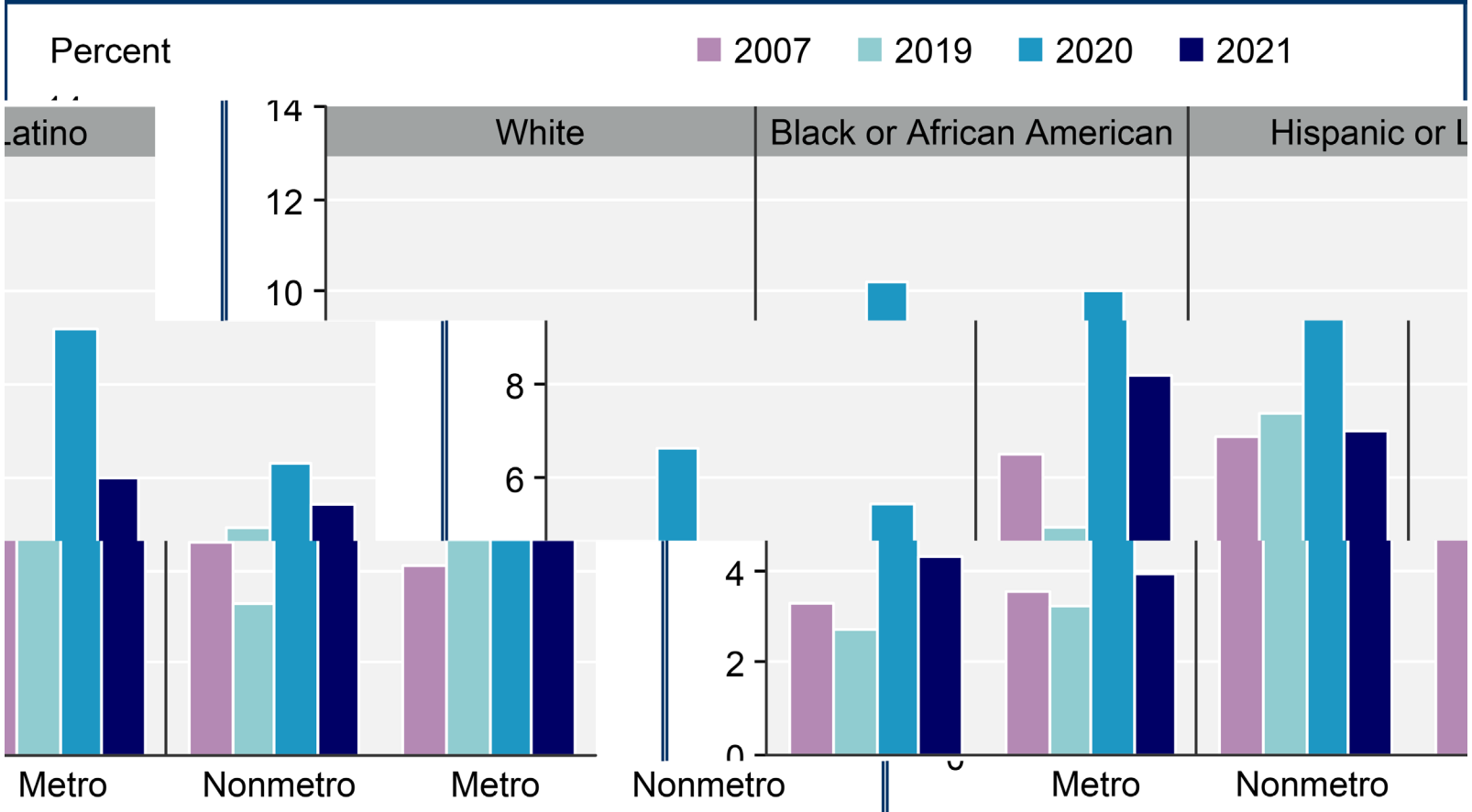
Health =
Wealth

U.S. employment in metro and nonmetro areas, 2007–21



Note: Annual average total employment estimates for 2021 are calculated using preliminary December 2021 data. Metro and nonmetro designations are based on the 2013 definition of metropolitan counties, as determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program (March 2, 2022 release).

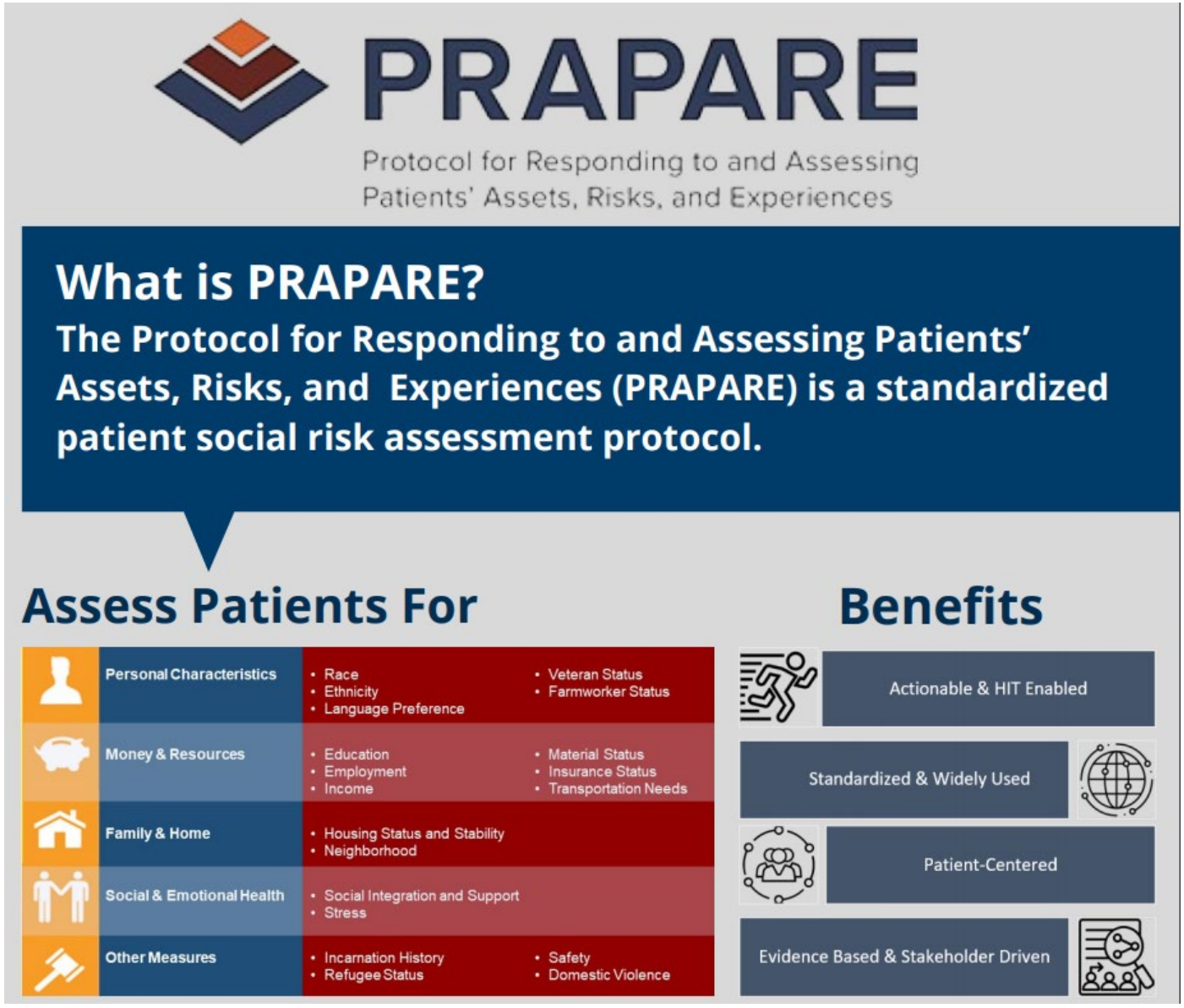
U.S. unemployment rates for the prime-working-age population (ages 25 to 54) in metro and nonmetro areas by race/ethnicity, 2007–21



ons for 2007 are based on the 2003 definition of
for 2019, 2020, and 2021 are based on the 2013
Office of Management and Budget.

Note: Metro and nonmetro designati
metropolitan counties; designations f
definition, as determined by the U.S.

mic Research Service using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor [illegible] Source: USDA, Econo
ulation Survey. Statistics, Current Pop



https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/What-is-PRAPARE_2.1.21.pdf

PRAPARE

Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks, and Experiences

PRAPARE®: Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patient Assets, Risks, and Experiences

Paper Version of PRAPARE® for Implementation as of September 2, 2016

Personal Characteristics

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	I choose not to answer this question

2. Which race(s) are you? Check all that apply

☐	Asian	☐	Native Hawaiian
☐	Pacific Islander	☐	Black/African American
☐	White	☐	American Indian/Alaskan Native
☐	Other (please write):		
☐	I choose not to answer this question		

3. At any point in the past 2 years, has season or migrant farm work been your or your family's main source of income?

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	I choose not to answer this question

4. Have you been discharged from the armed forces of the United States?

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	I choose not to answer this question

5. What language are you most comfortable speaking?

8. Are you worried about losing your housing?

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	I choose not to answer this question

9. What address do you live at?
   Street: _____
   City, State, Zip code: _____

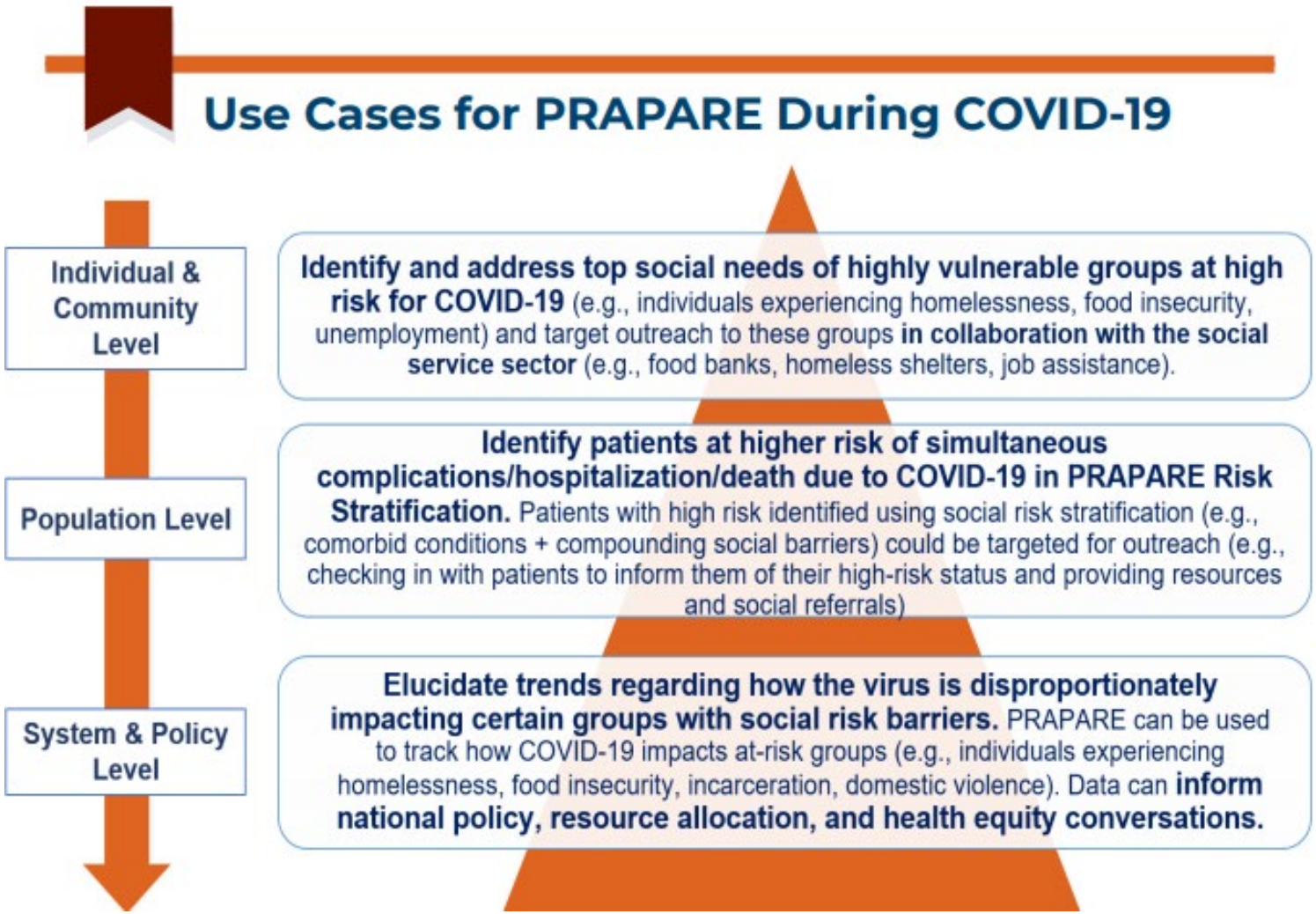
Money & Resources

10. What is the highest level of school that you have finished?

☐	Less than high school degree	☐	High school diploma or GED
☐	More than high school	☐	I choose not to answer this question

11. What is your current work situation?

☐	Unemployed	☐	Part-time or temporary work	☐	Full-time work
☐	Otherwise unemployed but not seeking work (ex: student, retired, disabled, unpaid primary care giver) Please write:				
☐	I choose not to answer this question				



https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Printer-Friendly-PRAPARE-COVID-FS.pdf

Rural Food Insecurity

- 2.1 million households in rural communities face hunger
- Rural communities make up 63% of U.S. counties and 91% of counties with the highest rates of overall food insecurity
- 86% of the counties with the highest percentage of children at risk for food insecurity are rural
- Rural Black people were 2.5 times more likely to be at risk of hunger compared to rural White, non-Hispanic individuals.
- Rural Native Americans had the highest rates of food insecurity of any racial or ethnic group.

https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/rural-hunger-facts

Rural Providers Responded to Food Insecurity

- Coordinated with local food pantries
  - COVID testing days
- Offered vouchers for food pantries at patient visits
- Worked with harvesters to coordinate commodity drops
- Helped enroll patients in WIC and SNAP
- Asked if patients had any unmet needs (e.g., food) when making appointments
- Identified resources for families when children did not receive school lunch

Mobilized for Health
And Wellness!
Contact Chris Carney to schedule an appointment.
816.249.1538.
HCC Rides
health care collaborative of Rural Missouri

Rural Transportation Considerations

- Busses were converted into vaccination and mobile clinics
- Many rural transit agencies stopped collecting fares
- Rural transit provided transportation for essential workers
- Rural transit providers expanded deliveries
  - Meals (including school lunches to quarantined students), prescriptions, groceries, supplies
- Rural Road Safety
  - Rural traffic fatalities are 2.5 times greater than urban traffic fatalities
  - The number and percentage of vehicles traveling greater than 15 MPH over the posted speed limit increased in 2020.

https://intrans.iastate.edu/research/in-progress/covid-19-impacts-on-speed-and-safety-for-rural-roads-and-work-zones/
https://aashtojournal.org/2020/12/23/rural-transit-a-critical-lifeline-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/
https://www.esri.com/en-us/industries/blog/articles/transportation-in-the-us-after-covid-19-part-three-rural-transportation/

Rural Homelessness

- 17% of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness were in rural areas
  - 4.1% decrease from 2020 to 2021
- 16% of families experiencing sheltered homelessness were in rural areas
  - 10% decline from 2020 – 2021
- 20.7% of sheltered unaccompanied homeless youth were in rural areas

https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2021-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

Rural Providers Responded to Homelessness

- Changed PREPARE question wording
  - Are you homeless?
  - Do you have a safe place to live?
    - Probe: Tell me about your situation

- Engaged community partners and leveraged resources to assist locating safe accommodations
- Community health workers (CHWs) and care coordinators identified needs and linked patients to resources

Future Directions

- **Medicaid and CHIP Flexibility to Address SDOH**
  - State plan and waiver authorities - add non-clinical services to benefit packages (e.g., care management, housing supports, employment supports)
  - NC – Healthy Opportunities Pilots
    - https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/healthy-opportunities/healthy-opportunities-pilots
- **Medicare Advantage**
  - CHRONIC Care Act
- **Greater alignment between health care VBP models and community-based organizations**
  - Housing and food

Rebooting Rural Health – What Makes a Rural Community Healthy?

- **Healthy food and clean drinking water**
- **Safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, clean surroundings**
- **Good economy, multi-sector engagement**
- **Different activities going on. People don't just stay home and not go anywhere. People need to be out.**
  - Recreational opportunities
  - Options for physical activity
- **Health care access**
  - Emergency services
  - Coordinated care across all services
  - Prevention
- **Youth engagement**
- **Strong local leadership**
- **Everyone working together for good**

Source: Rural community focus group responses – Spring 2022

Rebooting Rural Health – Opportunities for improvement

- **Address Mental Health Issues**
  - Depression, anxiety, SUD, and domestic violence
  - Anger issues, belligerent youth and adults
  - Social isolation
- **Improve access to health services**
  - Prevention
  - Urgent care
  - Emergency medical services
  - Health plan networks
- **Support aging in place**
  - Home and community-based services
  - Home health
- **Transportation**
- **Create more affordable housing**

- **Foster new ways to connect and communicate**

Source: Rural community focus group responses – Spring 2022

Best Advice

https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Be-Kind-Posters-FREEBIE-3713365

Take Care of Rural Health Rock Stars

- Establish an organizational culture that reflects its mission
- Take care of your own needs before assisting others
- Convey how much staff are valued and appreciated
- Offer generous paid time off (PTO)
  - Take a health day if you need it!
- Implement flexible work schedules
  - Extend lunch hours so staff can go to the gym
  - Implement a summer schedule
- Remind staff about EAP

Source: Toniann Richard, CEO of Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri and Lisa Clute, CEO, First District Health - ND

RHIhub
Rural Health Information Hub

Updates & Alerts | About

Search

Online Library | Topics & States | Rural Data Visualizations | Case Studies & Conversations | Tools for Success

IN THIS TOOLKIT

Modules

1: Introduction
2: Program Models
3: Program Clearinghouse
4: Implementation
5: Evaluation
6: Sustainability
7: Dissemination
About This Toolkit

Social Determinants of Health in Rural Communities Toolkit

IN THIS TOOLKIT

Modules

1: Introduction

2: Program Models

3: Program Clearinghouse

4: Implementation

5: Evaluation

6: Sustainability

7: Dissemination

About This Toolkit

- Improving Economic Stability
- Improving Education
- Improving the Social and Community Context
- Improving Health and Healthcare
- Improving Neighborhoods and the Built Environment

Rural Community Health Toolkit

Start here for a guide to building rural community health programs to address any type of health issue. Learn how to identify community needs, find evidence-based models, plan and implement your program, evaluate results, and much more.

Aging in Place Toolkit

Explore program models and approaches to support rural aging in place.

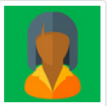
Care Coordination Toolkit

Find models and program examples for delivering high-quality care across different rural healthcare settings.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Toolkit

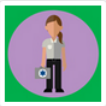
Learn how to develop programs to address COPD in rural communities.

Community Health Workers Toolkit



Learn about roles community health workers (CHWs) fill, as well as CHW training approaches.

Community Paramedicine Toolkit



Discover models and resources for developing community paramedicine programs in rural areas.

Diabetes Prevention and Management Toolkit

Find resources and best practices to develop diabetes prevention and management programs in rural areas.

Early Childhood Health Promotion Toolkit

Learn how to develop early childhood health promotion programs in rural communities.

Health Networks and Coalitions Toolkit

Find resources and strategies to help create or expand a rural health network or coalition.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Toolkit

Learn about strategies and models for rural health promotion and disease prevention in the community, clinic, and workplace.

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Toolkit

Explore models and resources for implementing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs in rural communities.

Maternal Health Toolkit

Find resources and models for developing programs to address rural maternal health issues.

Mental Health Toolkit

Discover resources and models to develop rural mental health programs, with a primary focus on adult mental health.

Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Toolkit

NEW

Learn about models and resources for implementing medication for opioid use disorder programs in rural communities.

Obesity Prevention Toolkit

Find out how rural communities, schools, and healthcare providers can develop programs to help address obesity.

Oral Health Toolkit

Discover rural oral health approaches that focus on workforce, access, outreach, schools, and more.

Philanthropy Toolkit

Find emerging practices and resources for building successful relationships with philanthropies.

Prevention and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders Toolkit

Learn about models and resources for developing substance use disorder prevention and treatment programs in rural communities.

Services Integration Toolkit

Learn how rural communities can integrate health and human services to increase care coordination, improve health outcomes, and reduce healthcare costs.

Social Determinants of Health Toolkit

Discover evidence-based models and resources to address social determinants of health in rural communities.

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Find evidence-based models and resources for implementing a suicide prevention program in rural areas.

Telehealth Toolkit

Discover program examples and resources for developing a telehealth program to address access issues in rural America.

Tobacco Control and Prevention Toolkit

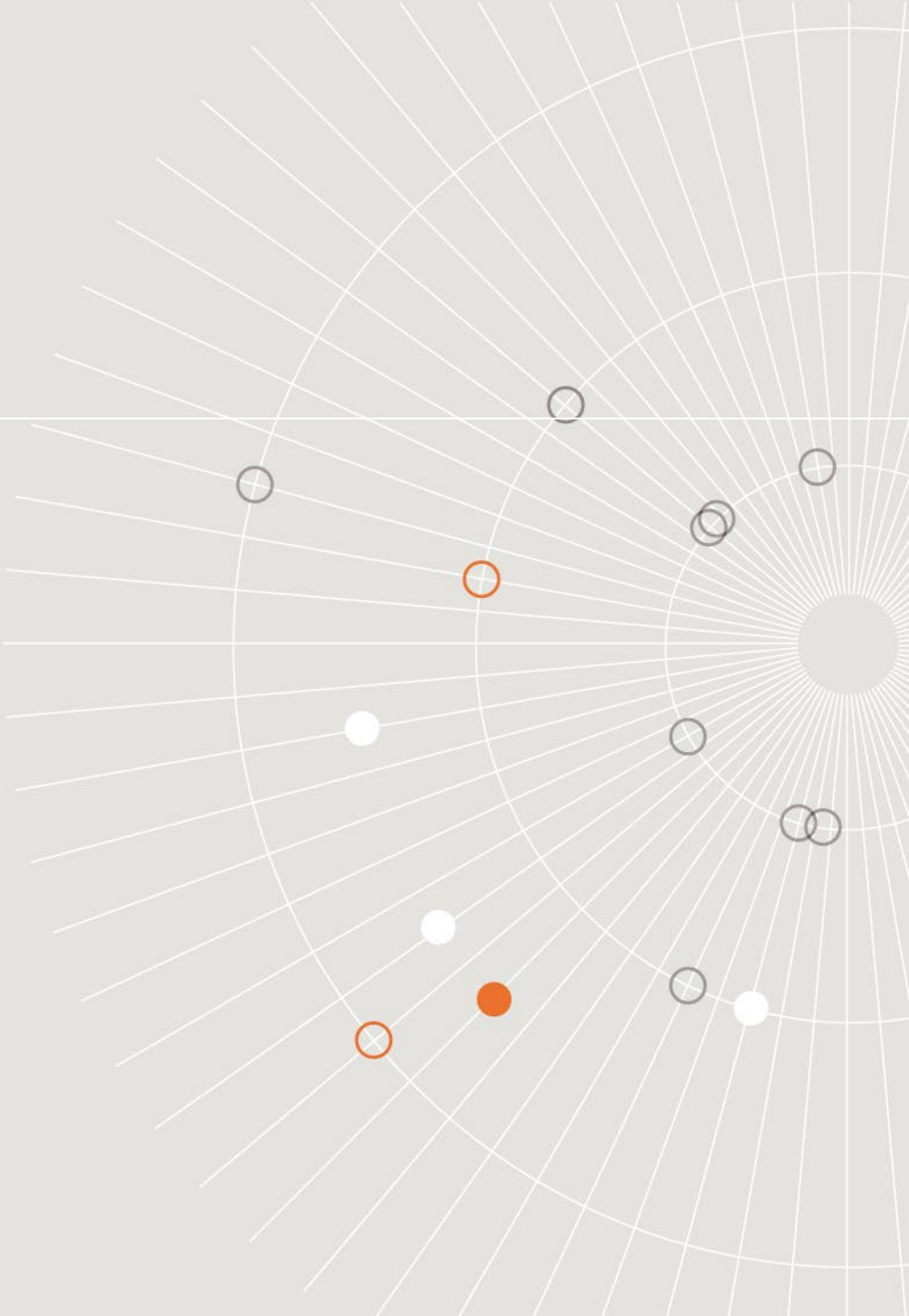
Explore program examples and resources for implementing tobacco control and prevention programs in rural areas.

Transportation Toolkit

Explore how communities can provide transportation services to help rural residents maintain their health and well-being.

RURAL HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH CENTER

Questions?



Thank you!

Alana Knudson, PhD
Knudson-Alana@norc.org
(301)-908-0835

Research You Can Trust™

RURAL HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH CENTER

NORC WalshCenter FOR RURAL HEALTH ANALYSIS