

Healthy Rural Aging

The rural population is aging more rapidly than in urban areas: **17.5% of rural adults are age 65+**, compared to 13.8% of urban adults. The number of rural residents aged 65+ grew from 7.4 million in 2010 to **9.7 million in 2023**.

Risk factors contributing to poor health for older adults:

- Injury
- Food insecurity
- Lack of social and emotional support
- Limited access to health care and transportation

29.6% of rural older adults report experiencing **at least one** of the selected risk factors contributing to poor health.

Older adults living in rural areas face elevated rates of morbidity due to:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- Falls and mortality from falls
- Cancer
- COVID-19

NRHA Rural Age-Friendly Priorities:

- Promote the “Choosing Rural” concept to facilitate older adults aging in their rural communities.
- Align system-level, multi-sector, state and federal frameworks and resources on aging for the rural end user.
- Address state and federal regulatory barriers that limit rural aging in place.
- Build a robust long-term care workforce to support rural aging in place, including use of Community Health Workers.

NRHA Supported Legislation

S. 2120: Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

Sens. Cassidy (R-LA) & Sanders (I-VT)

Programs under the Older Americans Act (OAA) support transportation, recreation, in-home assistance, disease prevention and more. OAA reauthorization efforts would expand access to nutrition programs, strengthen caregiver support, prioritize elder justice initiatives, and improve mental health services for older adults, all with the goal of promoting their well-being and independence.

Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act

(S.1298 in the 118th Congress)

Sen. Kaine (D-VA)

Requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to set up a national technical assistance center and grant program to support the direct care workforce and family caregivers.

S. 1816/H.R. 3514: Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act

Sen. Marshall (R-KS) & Rep. Kelly (R-PA)

Establishes requirements with respect to the use of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage plans.

H.R. 5055: Increasing Nutrition Access for Seniors Act of 2025

Reps. Riley (D-NY) and Lawler (R-NY)

Amends the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to simplify supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) access for elderly and disabled individuals.

S. 2084/H.R. 2045: Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act of 2025

Sen. Alsobrooks (D-MD) & Rep. Doggett (D-TX)

Provides for Medicare coverage of dental and oral health services, including routine diagnostic and preventive services, basic and major dental services, emergency care, and dental prostheses.