

Rural Behavioral Health & SUDs

NRHA Supported Legislation

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Authorization Act (H.R. 6407)

Reps. Miller (R-WV), Tonko (D-NY), Carter (R-GA), & Sewell (D-AL)

Amends the Public Health Service Act, which ensures the continued operation of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP).

TREATS Act (H.R. 1627)

Reps. Norcross (D-NJ) & Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Makes prescribing buprenorphine for opioid use disorder via telehealth permanent, including the use of audio-only.

Farmers First Act (S. 2282/H.R.4400)

Sens. Baldwin (D-WI), Ernst (R-IA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Collins (R-ME), Boozman (R-AR) & Reps. Craig (D-MN) & Feenstra (R-IA)

Reauthorizes the Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network to provide increased funding for farmer behavioral health resources and allows grant recipients to establish referral relationships with key rural behavioral health providers, including RHC and CAHs.

Better Mental Health Care for Americans Act

(S. 923 in 118th Congress)

Sens. Bennet (D-CO) & Wyden (D-OR)

Reforms and improves mental health and substance use care under the Medicare and Medicaid programs to ensure full parity and integration of these services.

Telemental Health Care Access Act (S.2011/H.R.3884)

Sens. Cassidy (R-LA) and Tina Smith (D-MN), Reps. Matsui (D-CA) & Balderson (R-OH)

Removes the statutory requirement that Medicare beneficiaries be seen in-person within six months of being treated for mental and behavioral health services through telehealth.

Factors contributing to greater behavioral health challenges in rural America:

- Lack of access to treatment options
- Behavioral health workforce shortages
- Greater sense of stigma
- Longer distances and fewer transportation options
- Higher rates of under- or uninsurance

In 2023, **22.7% of nonmetropolitan** adults reported having any mental illness and **4.8%** reported having serious thoughts of suicide.

Rural areas have just **15.8** **psychologists per 100,000** people.

7.2 million adults misused prescription opioids at least once in the previous year, with approximately **1.2 million** of those adults in a **nonmetropolitan** area.

62% of the US counties with the highest rates of OUD are located in rural areas.