

# Rural Behavioral Health

## NRHA Supported Legislation

### **S. 5207/H.R. 6407: Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Authorization Act**

*Sens. Capito (R-WV) and Welch (D-VT) & Reps. Miller (R-WV), Tonko (D-NY), Carter (R-GA), & Sewell (D-AL)*

Reauthorizes the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program.

### **S. 3048/ H.R. 1627: TREATS Act**

*Sens. Murkowski (R-AK), Whitehouse (D-RI), & Reps. Norcross (D-NJ), Fitzpatrick (R-PA)*

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

### **S. 2282/H.R.4400: Farmers First Act**

*Sens. Baldwin (D-WI), Ernst (R-IA), & Reps. Feenstra (R-IA), Craig (D-MN)*

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.

### **S. 2011/H.R. 3884: Telemental Health Care Access Act**

*Sens. Cassidy (R-LA), 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.

### **S.683/H.R. 7324: More Behavioral Health Providers Act**

*Sens. Peters (D-MI), Daines (R-MT) & Reps. Budzinski (D-IL), Mann (R-KS)*  
Expands eligibility for bonus incentives under Medicare's Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Bonus Program to practitioners, including NPs and PAs, who provide mental health or substance use disorder services in a mental health HPSA.

## 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 un-insurance**

Nearly **a quarter of nonmetropolitan** adults reported having mental illness in 2023.

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.