

**COLORADO  
RURAL HEALTH  
CENTER**

*The State Office of Rural Health*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Colorado Rural Health Center Snapshot of Rural Health Explores Demographics,  
Population Health, and Opioid Use in Rural Colorado**

*The 2017 Edition Snapshot of Rural Health makes the argument for committing to the vibrancy of the healthcare industry in rural areas of the state.*

**Denver, Colo – January 13, 2017** – Today, the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) released the 2017 edition of its *Snapshot of Rural Health*. The report highlights rural health data such as demographic trends, economic impact analysis, health risk indicators, county-level health disparities and rural practice transformation initiatives.

According to Michelle Mills, CRHC's CEO, this annual publication provides insightful and easy-to-digest information about the state of rural healthcare in Colorado. "The Snapshot is a piece that we use year-round when advocating for our rural members around the state. The Snapshot is an indispensable glimpse into what's important in rural health amidst a changing healthcare system," explains Mills.

Michelle Mills, alongside other CRHC staff, will be attending the National Rural Health Association's [Rural Health Policy Institute](#) on February 7-9 in Washington DC. The event is an essential part of CRHC's advocacy work as staff meets with policymakers and stakeholders to discuss legislative priorities. The *Snapshot of Rural Health* is an essential tool in these discussions.

Examples of featured data include:

- 73% of Colorado is considered rural or frontier
- 40% of Coloradans over the age of 80 live in rural Colorado, and by 2018, almost 40% of rural Colorado residents will be 65 or older
- 38% of rural Colorado kids are on Free or Reduced Lunch
- 28% of rural Coloradans are enrolled with Medicaid, as opposed to 21% of urban Coloradans
- Between 2002 and 2014, rural Colorado saw a 140% increase in opioid overdose deaths, compared to a 96% increase in urban areas during the same time frame
- 12 Colorado counties do not have a mental health provider (licensed psychologist or licensed clinical social worker)
- 13 rural Colorado counties do not have a hospital
- Healthcare is often one of the top 3 industries in a rural community. One rural physician's employment creates approximately 23 additional jobs and \$889,000 in annual secondary revenue

As Colorado's State Office of Rural Health and member-based association for rural health facilities, CRHC is a clearinghouse for rural health information and resources, helping providers throughout Colorado enhance healthcare services available in rural communities, and helping elected officials make informed decisions about healthcare policy.

The Snapshot of Rural Health is available for download at

<http://coruralhealth.org/services/policy-and-advocacy> - For additional resources, visit the

CRHC resource center at <http://coruralhealth.org/resources>.

### **About The Colorado Rural Health Center**

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health and the State Rural Health Association. The organization's mission is to enhance healthcare services in the state by providing information, education, linkages, tools, and energy toward addressing rural health issues. CRHC's vision is to improve healthcare services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare. For more information visit [www.coruralhealth.org](http://www.coruralhealth.org), call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.

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