

Voices from the Field

Results from USAging's Rural Health Care Contracting Environmental Scan

October 8, 2026

CENTER OF
Excellence

to Align Health and Social Care

USAging



Aging and Disability
BUSINESS INSTITUTE

Today's Agenda



**Defining Rural & Poll
Questions**



**Environmental Scan
& Key Informant
Interview Results**

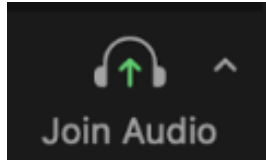


**Forthcoming
Resources and Next
Steps**



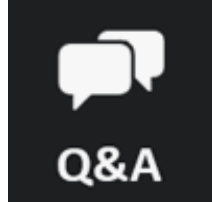
Closing

Webinar Instructions for Zoom



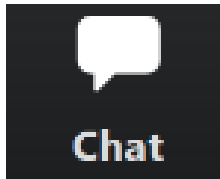
Audio Options

- Use your computer speakers, **OR** dial in using the phone number in your registration email.
- All participants are muted.



Questions and Answers (Q&A)

- You can submit questions for the panelists at any time during this presentation. On the Zoom module on the bottom of your screen, click the Q&A icon, type your question in the box and submit.



Chat Feature

- The Chat feature allows webinar attendees to make comments during the webinar question and answer period.

Use of AI Notetakers & Recording Tools

- **Inform participants prior to using**
- **Must be in attendance during the meeting**
- **Only use AI produced notes/recording for personal use, not to be distributed outside your organization**
- **Review the [COE Policy on the Use of AI Meeting Assistants](#)**

The COE reserves the right to terminate use of any AI meeting assistant for any reason, either directly or via a request to the participant responsible at the COE's discretion. Participants who wish to use AI notetaker and recording tools accept this right as a condition of participation in the relevant session.

About USAging

Our Mission

USAging represents and supports the national network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and advocates for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs that help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

Our Vision

USAging believes that every person should be able to age with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities. To achieve this, we are committed to building a society that values and supports people as they age.

The Business Institute

The Aging and Disability Business Institute (Business Institute) and its Center of Excellence to Align Health and Social Care (COE) build and strengthen partnerships and contracting between health care entities and community care networks led by Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and community care hubs (CCHs).

Our work helps these organizations adapt to a changing health care environment and strengthen their organizational capacity to capitalize on emerging opportunities for sustainable funding.

The Business Institute's Funders



The
John A. Hartford
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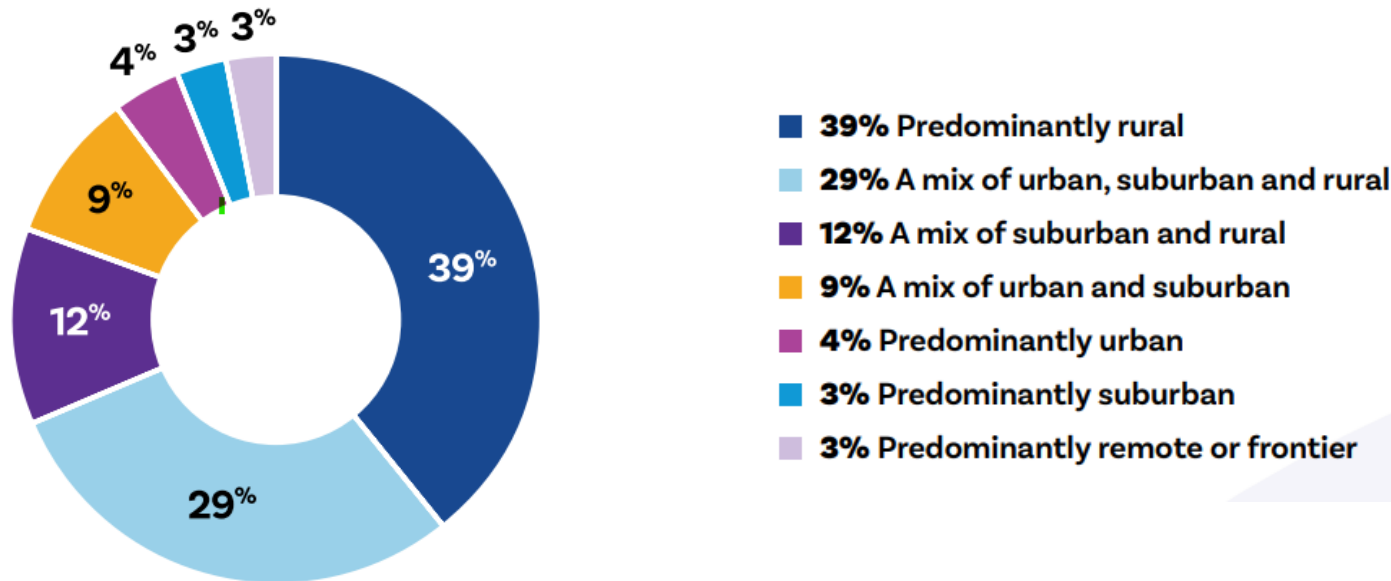


RRF | Foundation
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USAging | Aging and Disability
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The Majority of AAAs Serve Rural Areas



Source: [2025 USAgeing National AAA Survey](#)

Poll: How Rural Are You?

Defining Rural

- [Older Americans Act \(OAA\)](#) greatest economic and social need
- [OMB classification](#)
- USDA [Frontier and Remote \(FAR\)](#) & [Rural-Urban Commuting Area \(RUCA\)](#)
- [CMS Critical Access Hospital & Rural Health Clinic \(RHC\)](#) designation
- [HRSA Health Professional Shortage Areas \(HPSA\)](#)
- [HRSA Rural Grants Eligibility](#)



Reframing Rural



Deficit-based

Focus on limitations

Create solutions *on behalf of*

Take defeatist mindset

Label “underserved,” “hard-to-reach,”
“unable to contact”

Focus on factors outside of your control

Strengths-based & action-focused

Taking an Age-Friendly approach

Co-designing strategies

Boost existing supports

Reduce barriers

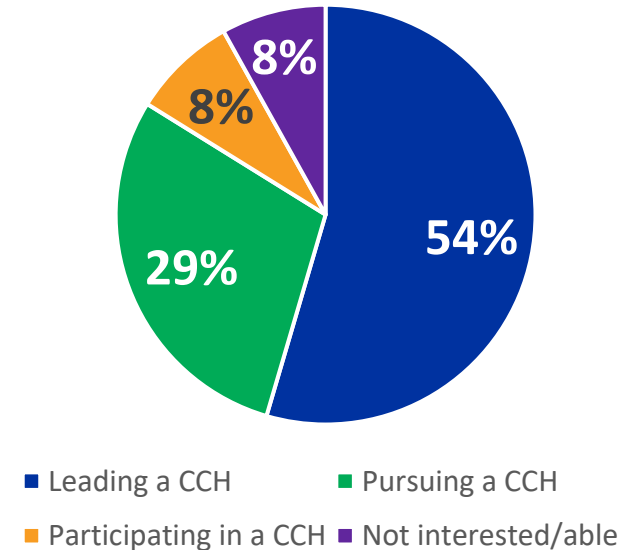
Incentivize leaders

Build capacity through empowerment

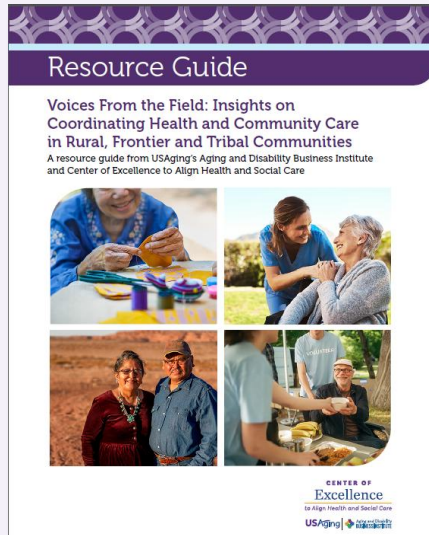
Environmental Scan and Key Informant Interview Results

Key Informant Interviews

- 2024 USAging Conference Kick-Off and Roundtable informed interview guide and process
- 24 interviews with 44 individuals across 20 states
- All have rural areas, but around 30% were *predominately* rural



Voices From the Field Findings



What's Inside the Guide

1. Rural Resiliency
2. Tribal Coordination
3. Benefits
4. Challenges
5. Needs
6. Resources
7. Next Steps
8. Sources

Rural Gaps in Care

“

It's not uncommon for someone to have to drive more than an hour one way to go to see their primary physician within our area. And that's just primary. That's not specialty. You're driving to the [city], if you're lucky.

”

Sense of Community and Respect

“

And they just seem more collaboration oriented, for whatever reason; I'm from a rural county, and I feel sometimes I'm like, yes, because we're just friendlier. But... that's a thing I've noticed...it seems like there's just a greater willingness to partner potentially because there's less resources. And they don't have any other choice.

”

Rural Resiliency

“

You know it because we live here and we serve here. What happens in our community is near and dear to our hearts. And so we've cultivated a department that doesn't take no for an answer. I mean, we're 'yes' people.

”

Rural Innovation

“

We're doing the work on a smaller scale here in our rural community. Just because it's the right thing to do, regardless of what it's called. And so I think for us, we're used to being nimble and flexible and taking time, like knowing that some of this progress just takes time.

”

Environmental Scan Challenges

Capacity, workforce & staffing

Billing/Coding

Technology and data sharing

Establishing and building a relationship

Federal, state, and local restrictions

Proving value



Environmental Scan Needs

Continued training and technical assistance

Implementation support

Funding

Technology infrastructure

Business acumen



What is a Health Care Contract?

- A **CONTRACT** is defined as a legally binding or otherwise valid agreement between two or more entities with the intent to exchange payment for services or programs.
- **HEALTH CARE ENTITIES** are defined as health plans, payers, and providers. Examples include:
 - ✓ Hospitals or health systems
 - ✓ Health plans (Medicaid, Medicare, Commercial, etc.)
 - ✓ Health clinics (FQHC/RHC)
 - ✓ Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs)
 - ✓ Primary Care Entities

Poll:

**Is your Agency Participating in
Health Care Contracting?**

Rural Health Care Contracting

- Many health care systems operate out of urban centers
- Rural CBOs must work very hard to get a seat at the table
- Rural areas typically receive lower payment/rates due to population and cost-of-living estimates
- Some rural health providers are using less sophisticated systems for referrals (fax)

Percentage of Rural vs. Non-Rural
AAAs Contracting



Source: [2023 USAging CBO-Health Care Contracting Survey](#)

Community Care Hubs

Community Care Hubs (CCH or hub) are nonprofit organizations that coordinate administrative services to support contracting efforts between health care organizations/managed care plans and a network of community support providers.*

CCHs deliver value by coordinating, centralizing, and scaling **administrative functions** and **operational infrastructure** to enhance **efficiency**, promote **standardization**, ensure **compliance**, elevate **performance** and drive **quality** to support whole person health.

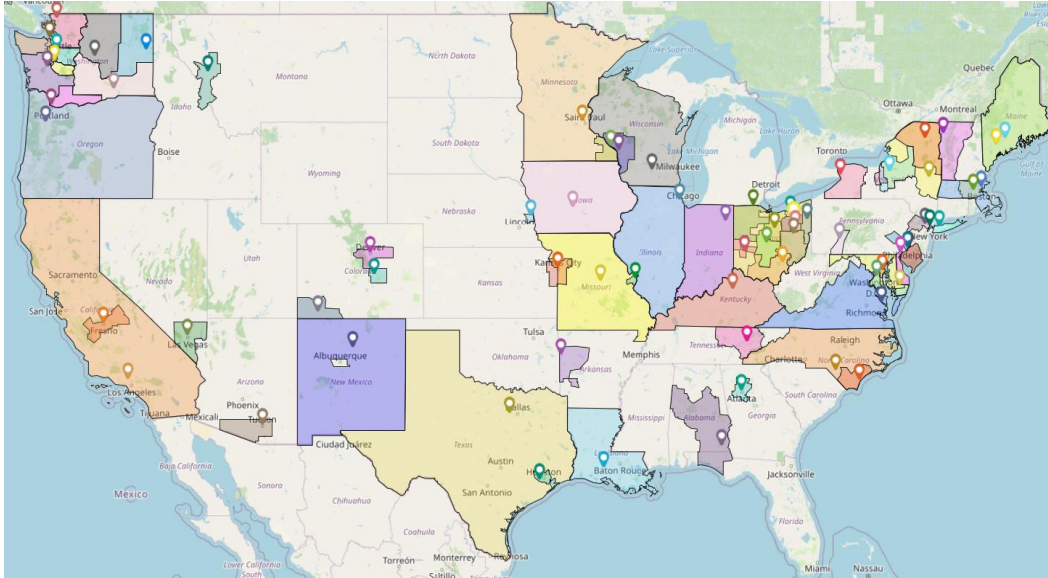
** Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other community-based organizations (CBOs).*

Community Care Hubs:

Improving health through efficient coordination of services and supports



National Map of Community Care Hubs



<https://coe.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/national-cch-map/>

Why Community Care Hubs?



Administrative efficiencies



Support local small businesses/non-profits



Responsiveness to health care



Support for individuals in their communities



Workforce development

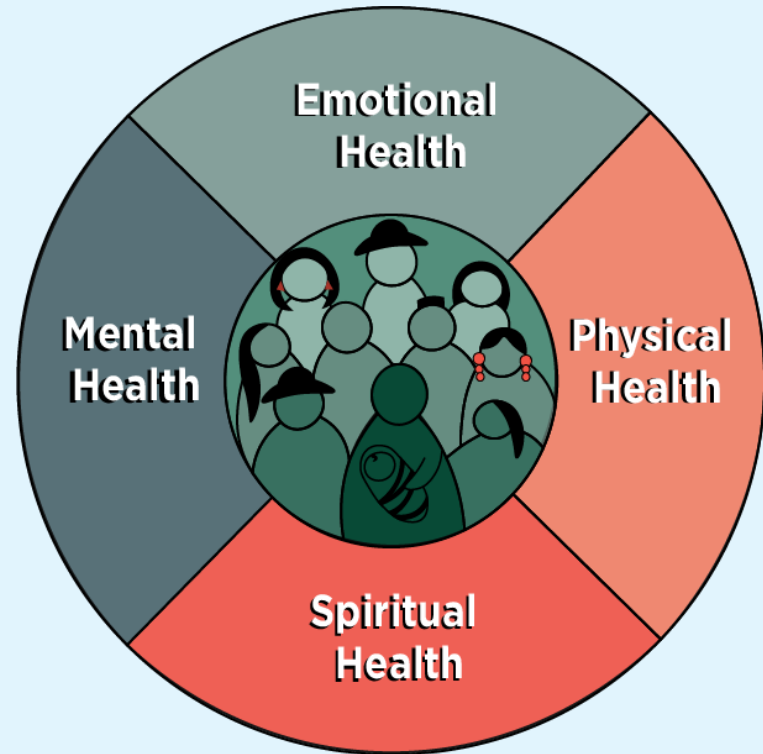
Spotlight: Tribal Coordination

- AI/AN elders face **layered barriers** rooted in societal stigma and institutional/policy barriers
- Tribal health clinics often deliver **uniquely integrated** health, social, behavioral and LTSS
- 13% of Title VI Programs are billing Medicaid, but Medicaid, IHS and other **public programs remain underused** due to trust, access, and availability
- **Data sovereignty and trust-building** are critical to stronger health and social care coordination



Understanding Indigenous Determinants of Health

Source: [The Raven Collective & National Indian Health Board](#)



Evolving, Future-Proof Model

- [Rural Health Transformation \(RHTP\)](#)
- [Medicare Physician Fee Schedule](#)
 - ✓ Community Health Integration/Principal Illness Navigation (CHI/PIN)
 - ✓ Chronic Care Management/Transitional Care Management (CCM/TCM)
 - ✓ Looking ahead to 2027: health coaching, evidence-based programming, etc.
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Innovation Models](#): DPP, ELEVATE, LEAD, ACCESS, GUIDE

Wrap-Up and Closing

Forthcoming USAging Resources

- ✓ Continuation of the RHTP Webinar Series
 - ✓ Voices from the Field Report One-Pagers
 - ✓ Operationalizing Contracts Checklist
 - ✓ Health Care Contracting Lexicon (Update)
 - ✓ Rural-Serving AAAs and CCHs Data Brief
- ... and more!!!

Introducing USAging's Rural Health Learning Community!

Now Available on the Higher Logic platform

What is it?



Discussion Threads

Peer-to-peer engagement



Rural Resource Library

New & archived *focused* resources for rural, frontier, and Tribal orgs



“Ask a SME” Section

Engage with experts in the field



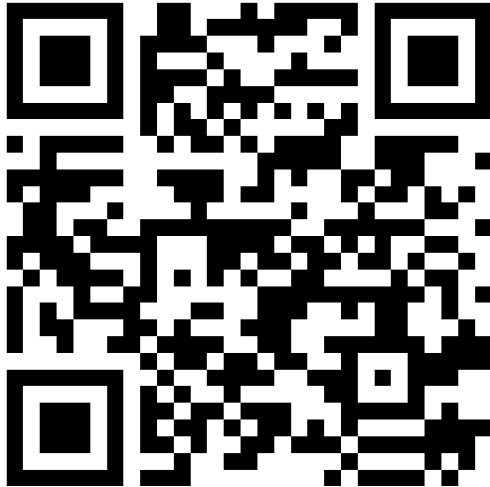
Monthly “Rural Compass” Email

News, updates, resources & more

Who Is It For?

- Area Agencies on Aging
- Title VI Native American Aging Programs
- Community Care Hubs
- Other Community-Based Organizations
- Rural Health Partners
- Subject Matter Experts
- External Partners

Join now!



[USAging Rural Health
Interest Form](#)

Scan this code to ensure that you gain access to:

- **USAging's Rural Health learning community** (powered by Higher Logic): an online engagement and resource platform
- **USAging's Rural Compass:** a monthly companion email

USAgging Rural Health Curriculum

What's Missing?

- Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP)
- Storytelling & Rural Value Proposition Development
- Rural Leadership and Workforce Development
- Rural Age Friendly Communities & Systems
- Rural Evidence-Based Program Implementation
- Tribal Care Coordination
- Rural Multi-Sector Plans for Aging
- Rural Partnership Building
- IT Systems, Interoperability, and Data Sharing

Share Your Feedback/Ideas!



[Rural Health Topics
Feedback Form](#)

Scan this code to share specific topics you would like to see covered in USAging's Rural Health:

- Webinars
- Resources/Materials
- Email Blasts
- Discussion Threads
- Audio Resources

Resources

- [Rural Key Informant Interview Report](#)
- [What is a CCH? Video](#)
- [Data Brief on Community Care Hubs and their Networks](#)
- [CCH Infographic \(Branding and Usage Guidelines\)](#)
- [National Map of CCHs](#)
- [Sign up for the Business Institute Mailing List](#)
- [CBO–Health Care Contracting Survey](#)
- [AAA National Survey](#)

THANK YOU!
