



Rural & Underserved Health Research Center

Sept. 1, 2020

Rural & Underserved Health Research Center Receives Funding Renewal

The Rural & Underserved Health Research Center (RUHRC) received a \$2.8 million, 4-year funding renewal from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to continue important research on health and health care challenges unique to rural communities. The RUHRC is the only new center in the past 20 years to receive renewal funding. It brings together faculty and staff from the University of Kentucky's College of Nursing, Institute for Biomedical Informatics, Institute for Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy, and Institute for Rural Journalism and partners with researchers at the Lexington-headquartered American Board of Family Medicine. To date, the RUHRC has produced 22 research products, including policy briefs and peer-reviewed publications, as well as more than a dozen related publications.

RUHRC projects focus on the burden of substance use and mental health disorders, access to cancer prevention and treatment services, and access to primary care in rural communities. Researchers affiliated with the RUHRC have also published works on the impacts of Medicaid expansion for rural residents and the prevalence of lung diseases among rural residents.

"As 1 of only 7 federally funded rural health research centers, we produce research reports and policy briefs that inform federal and state decision-makers about how to better organize, finance, and deliver health care services to maximize rural population health," said Ty Borders, PhD, Director of the RUHRC and Professor in the University of Kentucky College of Nursing. "We have assembled an excellent multidisciplinary team tackling timely and understudied problems in rural areas of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Nation as a whole."

RUHRC projects and publications have generated interest in the rural health research community and beyond. In 2019, Dr. Borders spoke to [multiple media](#) outlets about a RUHRC project examining rates of suicide deaths and suicidal thoughts and plans among rural residents. This work is incredibly important in light of the fact that suicide is 1 of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).¹

"The renewed funding will allow us to build upon the work we've already done, particularly in the areas of access to substance use and mental health treatment, cancer prevention and treatment, and the barriers to primary care for rural residents," said Borders.

The funding announcement from the Department of Health & Human Services can be found [here](#). The RUHRC was first funded \$2.8 million for 4 years in September 2016. The Deputy Director of the RUHRC is

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>

Jeffery Talbert, PhD. For more information about the RUHRC and to read its published works, visit its [website](#) and subscribe to its [e-newsletter](#) featuring its newest works.