

ADVANCING
CARE DELIVERY
**ACROSS THE
RURAL HEALTH
LANDSCAPE**

PENNSYLVANIA'S RURAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE

Our Commitment to Rural Health

UPMC is dedicated to advancing whole-person health in Pennsylvania's rural communities by implementing innovative care models, forging strategic collaborations, and engaging civic stakeholders to support policy solutions that expand access, strengthen the health care workforce, and promote sustainable funding for rural health initiatives.

Our rural health care models strongly align with Pennsylvania's Rural Health Transformation Plan by expanding access through telehealth, home-based care, and community programs, while addressing critical gaps in maternal health, behavioral health, and workforce development. These efforts reflect the plan's priorities of technology-enabled care, regional collaboration, and training pipelines to ensure sustainable, high-quality health services for rural communities. Together, UPMC and the state's strategy aim to create healthier, more resilient rural populations by combining innovation with local partnerships.

Why Rural Health Matters

- 26% of Pennsylvanians live in rural areas
- Challenges include:
 - > Fewer health care providers
 - > Hospital closures
 - > Telehealth barriers
 - > Maternity care deserts

MAP KEY

UPMC Hospitals Not in Rural Counties

UPMC Hospitals in Rural Counties

UPMC | Community Care Behavioral Health Organizations in Rural Counties

NORTHWEST

- 1 UPMC Hamot
- 2 UPMC Horizon - Greenville
- 3 UPMC Horizon - Shenango
- 4 UPMC Jameson
- 5 UPMC Northwest

SOUTHWEST

- 6 UPMC Passavant - Cranberry
- 7 UPMC Passavant
- 8 UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
- 9 UPMC Mercy
- 10 UPMC Montefiore
- 11 UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital
- 12 UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital
- 13 UPMC St. Margaret
- 14 UPMC McKeesport
- 15 UPMC East
- 16 UPMC Greene
- 17 UPMC Washington
- 18 UPMC Presbyterian
- 19 UPMC Shadyside

NORTH CENTRAL

- 20 UPMC Kane
- 21 UPMC Cole
- 37 UPMC | Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (DuBois)

NORTHERN TIER

- 22 UPMC Wellsboro

NORTHEAST

- 38 UPMC | Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (Tobyhanna)

CENTRAL

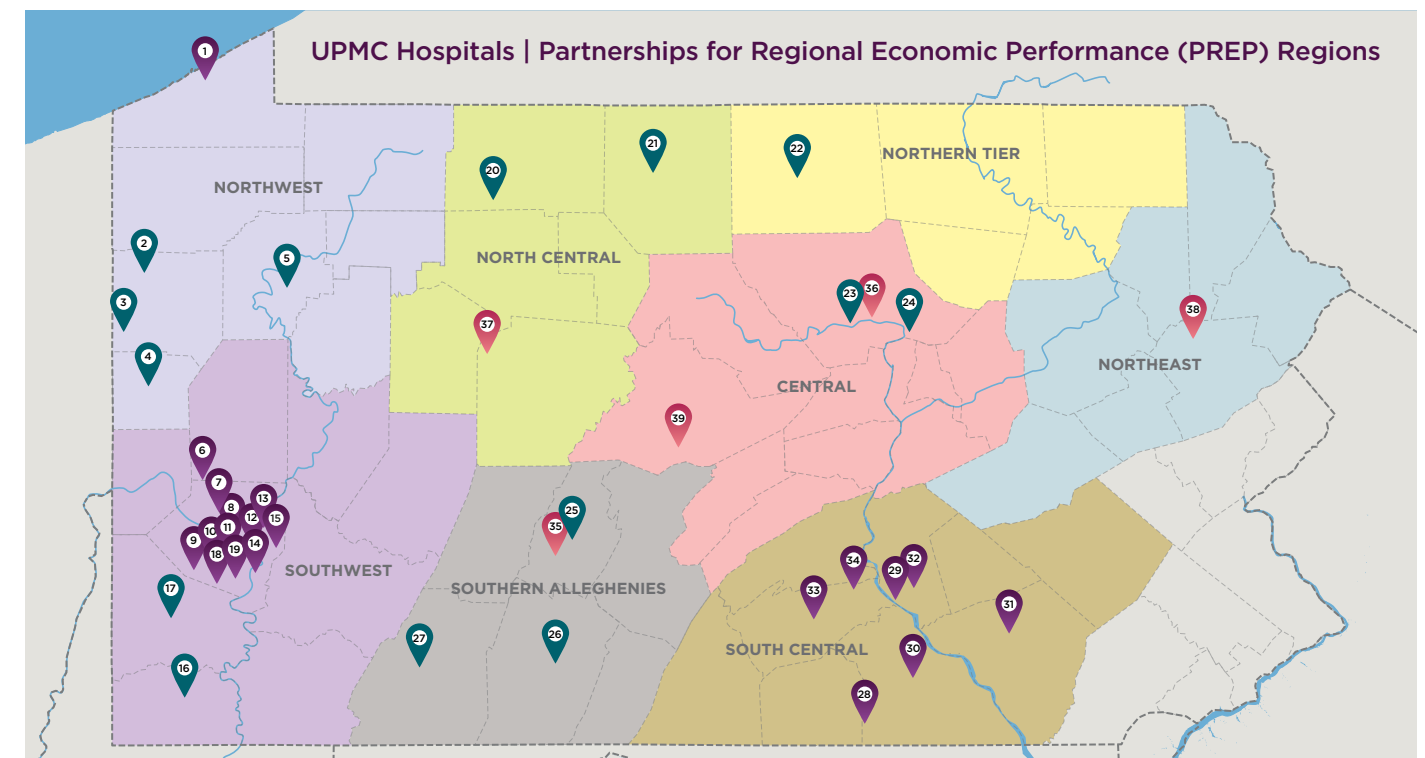
- 23 UPMC Williamsport
- 24 UPMC Muncy
- 36 UPMC | Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (Lycoming/Clinton)

SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES

- 25 UPMC Altoona
- 26 UPMC Bedford
- 27 UPMC Somerset
- 35 UPMC | Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (Blair)

SOUTH CENTRAL

- 28 UPMC Hanover
- 29 UPMC Harrisburg
- 30 UPMC Memorial
- 31 UPMC Lititz
- 32 UPMC Community Osteopathic
- 33 UPMC Carlisle
- 34 UPMC West Shore



Key Rural Health Care Facts and Figures

Examples of Rural vs. Urban Provider Access

Provider Type	Rural Access	Urban Access
Primary Care Physicians	1 per 522	1 per 222
Dentists	1 per 2,001	1 per 1,267

Examples of Critical Rural Health Gaps

Sector	Urgent Issue
OB/GYN	Of the 67 counties in the Commonwealth, seven are defined as maternity care deserts.
Behavioral Health	Pennsylvania is expected to face a shortage of more than 6,300 mental health professionals by 2026.
Hospital Systems	In the past 20 years, more than 30 rural hospitals in Pennsylvania have reduced services, with some closing entirely.

Our goal: Serve rural communities with access to whole-person care that supports health and well-being.

Our approach:

Strategy Area	Action Steps	Impact
Policy Advocacy	Champion state and federal programs tailored to addressing rural health challenges.	Strengthen funding, infrastructure, and policy support.
Community Collaboration	Collaborate with local stakeholders to deliver evidence-based care and workforce development.	Meet people where they are with trusted services.
Data-Driven Planning	Use Community Health Needs Assessments to guide regional interventions and identify hospital needs.	Target resources to areas of greatest need.
Resource Optimization	Combine and redirect funding to high-impact, sustainable health care initiatives.	Maximize ROI for individuals and communities.

By working together, health care integrated delivery and finance systems like UPMC, community-based organizations, and state and local government can help develop programming that empowers individuals and families to optimize their health and well-being and strengthens the rural health care workforce.

WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH CARE | UPMC'S TECH-ENABLED AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SOLUTIONS

The expansion of virtual care capabilities and community focused solutions offered by UPMC helps bridge systemic gaps, ensuring that traditional rural health barriers no longer dictate the quality or timeliness of care.

Meeting Patients Where They Are

UPMC delivers care through both in-person and virtual services like these:

Rural Telehealth Innovations

- 24/7 tele-hospitalist coverage via UPMC Center for Community Hospitalist Medicine (CCHM).
- UPMC Northwest Outpatient Telemedicine Center brings specialty physicians close to home using state-of-the-art video conference technology.
- Tele-ED at UPMC Kane (Pennsylvania's first tele-emergency department).
- Virtual stroke consultation services at UPMC Cole
- 24/7 access to resources and video visits via the UPMC Health Plan app, including:
 - > Mental health support
 - > Ask a Pharmacist
 - > Personalized health coaching and navigation
 - > UPMC MyHealth 24/7 Nurse Line
 - > Tech Guides to help members with digital health care tools

UPMC at Home

Committed to meeting patients where they are, delivering care directly in their homes, especially in rural and underserved communities.

- **14,000+** patients served statewide through Home Health, Hospice, and Your Care programs.
- **13,000+** virtual visits annually to help ensure rural patients have timely access to essential care.
- **6M+** miles traveled annually by staff bringing high-quality, cost-effective health care to patients who face barriers to care.

- **524K+** annual Home Health visits supporting recovery and chronic condition management in patients' homes.
- **212K+** annual hospice visits addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.
- **9,000+** annual Your Care visits with UPMC primary care providers to support UPMC for Life Medicare Advantage members.
- **350+** monthly remote patient monitoring for high-risk patients, helping prevent avoidable hospitalizations and emergency visits through proactive, tech-enabled care.

Supporting Families & Children

UPMC at Home includes several community-based programs that provide appropriate in-home support to children and families. Programs focus on healthy development, educational growth, and access to vital resources, ensuring that people in even the most remote communities have access to compassionate, comprehensive care. The ability to scale statewide helps to ensure patients receive high-quality, coordinated care no matter where they live.



The Nurse-Family Partnership® team is pictured at the NFP State Conference in Harrisburg.

- **Nurse-Family Partnership®: Supports 1,000+ families in 16 counties**
The Nurse-Family Partnership® pairs lower-income pregnant women with registered nurses who provide home visits through their child's second birthday, helping to improve maternal and child health outcomes.
- **Healing Patch, WIC, and Early Intervention Programs**
These programs provide in-home support for children and families, promoting emotional healing, nutritional health, and developmental growth in rural communities.

Mobile Health Units: Screenings Across 8 Counties

UPMC Insurance Services Division's Mobile Health Units—"Barney" and "Elektra"—are being redeployed across Allegheny, Bedford, Cambria, Erie, Indiana, Jefferson, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties. Available screenings include blood pressure, bone density, height and weight, body mass index, blood glucose, and cholesterol.

Dental Hygiene Outreach: Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioners (PHDHPs)



UPMC for You Dental Care Manager Crystal Siebka provided dental supplies and mobile dental care referrals to attendees at a recent community "Grab & Go" event sponsored by Venango County Health and Human Services.

A team of PHDHPs from UPMC Insurance Services Division connects UPMC for You and UPMC for Kids members and non-members across rural Pennsylvania with access to dental care and dental hygiene education. The PHDHPs live in the communities they serve and collaborate with HHS agencies, school districts, and mobile dental providers to meet people where they are with dental health services.

MEETING WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH NEEDS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (Community Care), part of UPMC Insurance Services Division, is the only UPMC ISD entity supporting Pennsylvania's Behavioral HealthChoices program and holds the largest market share across the Commonwealth. Deeply committed to rural communities, Community Care led 533 outreach events in 2024, reaching nearly 20,000 individuals and spearheading a Rural Behavioral Health Workgroup across nine counties.

Together, the UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care (CHVHC), with the support of external funding, Community Care, and other collaborators help providers and professionals deliver trauma-informed care and evidence-based programming for children and families, including:

- Collaboratively building trauma-informed systems of care across North Central Pennsylvania as well as in Blair County, where efforts are funded by a PCCD grant.
- Advancing the Growing Resilience in Adolescents and Children (GRACE) Project, which is implemented in collaboration with the Behavioral Health Alliance of Rural Pennsylvania (BHARP®), and other SAMHSA-supported initiatives across six rural counties to expand access to comprehensive, family-centered care.
- Statewide implementation of the Collaborative Care Model in 13 counties through a five-year SAMHSA grant, integrating behavioral health into primary care addressing depression, anxiety, and substance use to improve outcomes, empower patients, and reduce health care costs.
- Recent research titled "Leveraging Integrated Models of Care to Improve Patient-Centered Outcomes for Publicly-Insured Adults with Complex Health Care Needs," highlights how telephonic and remote patient monitoring are promising strategies to expand access to care for individuals with chronic conditions in rural areas.

UPMC Supporting Youth, Nutrition, and Mental Health Initiatives Across Rural Areas

UPMC Hosts Artistic Community Outreach Events

During Mental Health Awareness Month in May 2025, UPMC CHVHC, Community Care, BHARP, Schuylkill County partners, and the "I'm fine" organization hosted art events to help students express emotions and reduce stigma. A window display featuring student-designed masks and mental health resources was installed in August 2025 at the county's Children and Youth building.



Masks designed by students who participated in "I'm fine" events on display in Schuylkill County.



Erica DeLullo, CCHW, leader of one of KRHC's Community Health Workers program.

UPMC for You Supports KRHC's Community Health Worker Program

Keystone Rural Health Consortia (KRHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center in rural North Central Pennsylvania, provides comprehensive health services to UPMC for You members across Elk, Cameron, and McKean counties. In 2025, UPMC for You began funding one of KRHC's Community Health Workers program. Erica DeLullo, CCHW, leads the program, coordinates health-related social needs, and connects members to vital and appropriate onsite resources and specialty care.

UPMC's Rural Health Leaders Cultivate Nutrition and Food Security in North Central Pa.

UPMC Wellsboro's Dr. Jeffery Gilbert and nurse Sonya Solomon started a low-salt food pantry that offers patients with chronic conditions healthy foods, recipes, and education to improve heart and lung health.

Led by Dr. Taylor Rider, the UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residency team installed a drip irrigation system at the Salvation Army Community Garden. They also launched Vital Roots, a teaching kitchen series that empowers Lycoming County residents with tools to fight food insecurity and improve community health.

UPMC Cole's Pediatric Wellness Programs Support Rural Families

UPMC Cole offers a range of pediatric wellness programs that promote nutrition, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle habits for children and families across North Central Pennsylvania.

- UPMC Cole's Healthy Habits for Life curriculum
- Prescription for Wellness coaching program
- Free summer wellness camps

ADDRESSING RURAL MATERNAL HEALTH ISSUES

Expanding Access Through Embedded Services & Telemedicine

UPMC's innovative and collaborative care models support rural mothers so that they can have healthy pregnancies, deliveries, and family adjustments during the postpartum period. UPMC Magee-Womens Specialty Services brings comprehensive reproductive and maternal care—including telemedicine consultations and virtual visits—to rural communities across Pennsylvania, helping to improve access for high-risk patients.



UPMC Northwest Birth Circle Doula staff Jaden Wagner, Sierra Lynn, Christine Huth, and Megan Orris with their program manager Hannah Keith and director Melissa Young.

Doula Care & Community-Based Support

- Doula Care to Support Maternal Care: Helping ensure there are adequately trained birthing support clinicians in efforts to promote safe and compassionate maternal care in underserved regions.
- Monthly listening sessions with Certified Nurse Midwives and doulas help improve care pathways for rural and Plain communities.
- Birth Circle Doula at UPMC Northwest provide physical, emotional, and educational support to pregnant and postpartum patients in Franklin, Clarion, and Venango counties.

Behavioral Health for the Perinatal Period

UPMC Western Behavioral Health offers nearly 60 community-based programs, including free mental and behavioral health services tailored to pregnant and postpartum individuals. Services are available statewide to UPMC Health Plan members and non-members.

Substance Use Recovery & Support

Through HRSA's Rural Communities Opioid Response Program, UPMC and collaborators offer peer-led recovery services in Erie, Crawford, Clarion, and Venango counties. Available services include counseling, nursing care, and medication management. These services are available regardless of the person's ability to pay.

Innovative Research & Pilot Projects

CHVHC collaborates with UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, and rural community and government stakeholders to pilot and evaluate maternal health care models.

- **Research Roadmap:** A PCORI® Engagement Award supported the creation of a Rural Maternal Health Research Roadmap, which identified key gaps and priorities in rural maternal care including but not limited to:
 - > Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy (HDP):
 - Perinatal Research Collective: Evaluates the impact of patient incentives on adherence to guideline-based HDP care in UPMC's diverse geographic footprint, including rural, urban, and suburban regions of Pennsylvania.
 - Postpartum HEART: Uses electronic consultations to help improve transitions from obstetric to primary care and long-term cardiovascular monitoring in Mercer, Venango, and other nearby rural counties.
 - > Behavioral Health via Telehealth: TE-PCoCM: A telehealth-enabled care model connecting rural New York patients to behavioral health managers and Pittsburgh-based UPMC telepsychiatrists specializing in perinatal care.
- **Pilot Project:** In early 2025, UPMC partnered with Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen and Clinton County organizations to launch a pilot project in Lock Haven, aimed at expanding whole-person maternal care for women with limited access to pregnancy services.

Community Engagement & Outreach

UPMC Health Plan's maternity care management team supports rural families through virtual visits and local events. At a recent Clearfield County Baby & Toddler Expo, 200 attendees accessed resources from 40 vendors, including Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, and UPMC Health Plan's Dental Care Management Program.

SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

UPMC collaborates and innovates to address the challenges rural communities face with emergency medical service (EMS) and transportation.



Strengthening Rural EMS & Transportation

- In 2021, UPMC Williamsport and Susquehanna Regional EMS (SREMS) received a grant to launch a Special Response Vehicle.
 - > Supports mass casualty response, mobile clinics, vaccine drives, and large events.
 - > Transports up to 15 non-ambulatory or 10 wheelchair patients.
- In 2022, UPMC and SREMS partnered with Pennsylvania College of Technology to launch an EMS Internship Program.
 - > Funded by PAsmart and WEDnetPA.
 - > Offers paid EMT (3-4 months) and Paramedic (12 months) internships.
 - > 40% of full-time EMS staff are program alumni.
 - > SREMS advocates statewide and nationally for EMS workforce development.
- In 2025, UPMC Williamsport Regional EMS received a 2025 National EMS Award of Excellence.



In both rural and urban community settings across Pennsylvania, Karen Kovalik-Dacko, Kaitlyn Karr, and Ashley Gorman meet job candidates where they are with pathways to training and career-building opportunities at UPMC and beyond.

Training the Next Generation of Care Providers

Building the Rural Health Care Workforce

- **UPMC Pathways to Work**
 - > Personalized support for job seekers across Pennsylvania.
 - > Over 2,000 referrals through 200+ community organizations.
 - > Connects rural candidates with apprenticeships and health care careers.
- **Freedom House 2.0**
 - > Inspired by the 1960s ambulance service model.
 - > Six-week training for medical assistants, patient care techs, and community health workers.
 - > Expanded to Erie, Westmoreland, and Dauphin counties.
 - > 200+ graduates since 2021.

- **Regional Dental Training Center – Titusville**
 - > Launches in 2026 by the University of Pittsburgh.
 - > Will train dental residents, hygienists, and assistants.
 - > Expands access to dental care in underserved communities.
- **UPMC Rural Family Medicine Residency**
 - > Training at UPMC Cole, Muncy, Wellsboro, and Williamsport.
 - > Prepares doctors to serve rural communities with full-spectrum care.
 - > Residents lead community health initiatives like food security and garden projects.
 - > Program Director Dr. John Boll emphasizes joy and relationship-based care.
- **UPMC Jameson School of Nursing – New Castle**
 - > Over 100 years of nursing education.
 - > More than 2,493 graduates serve communities across Pennsylvania.
 - > 49 anticipated graduates in 2025.
 - > Fall 2025 enrollment included 109 new students.
 - > To date, 20 new enrollees will begin the program in spring 2026.



Spotlight Story: Recruiting, Training, and Retaining the Future Health Care Workforce in Rural Pennsylvania

John Boll, DO, Program Director of the UPMC Rural Family Medicine Residency, trains physicians to thrive in underserved communities. After a decade of full-spectrum care in rural Tennessee, Dr. Boll returned to Pennsylvania to mentor residents in providing compassionate, relationship-based care, including home visits and outreach to the Amish community.

UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residents are deeply involved in community health efforts, including food security initiatives like the Salvation Army Community Garden and Vital Roots education program. Residents **Maura Sheehan, MD**, and **Kyle Otto, MD**, embrace their rural setting and connect with the community through service and local events like the Little League World Series.

ADVANCING CARE DELIVERY ACROSS THE RURAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE

UPMC's commitment to rural health changes lives and communities and is unwavering, collaborative, and evolving.

UPMC's efforts across rural Pennsylvania reflects a long-term commitment to expanding access, modernizing care delivery, and strengthening the rural health workforce.

The programs highlighted in this booklet demonstrate scalable models that address behavioral health needs, maternal health disparities, EMS capacity challenges, and whole-person care gaps. Continued progress will require aligned state and federal support including sustained investment in the Rural Health Transformation Fund, permanent telehealth flexibilities, targeted workforce development strategies, and stable funding for rural hospitals and EMS agencies.

Together, these policy priorities will ensure that rural communities have the resources, infrastructure, and care models necessary to thrive.



Subscribe to our Policy Matters
e-newsletter for monthly updates
from UPMC Government Affairs.

