

## **Health Disparities and Access to Healthcare in Rural vs. Urban Areas**

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Individuals and families in rural areas face disparities in health as well as access to healthcare. Research has found that when compared to urban communities, rural areas have worse health outcomes including challenges with mental health, substance abuse, physical health, and sexual health. Relevant findings have also shown that in order to understand these challenges it is important to discuss access, including the different factors involved: availability, affordability, and acceptability. Along with defining access, there are several theories and frameworks that additionally help explain healthcare access in rural areas. Although availability, affordability, and acceptability are important variables when it comes to access, there are also several barriers that must be considered, including poverty, occupation, education, insurance, and lack of competence. Once all of these aspects are addressed, different strategies can be more easily implemented in order to improve health and access to care in rural areas. These different disparities in health and access to care can be seen throughout the North Country, and can be helpful in understanding the larger pattern of health in rural and urban areas. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2021 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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