

Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers

Congress established the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Rural Health (ORH) Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers (VRHRCs) to achieve four primary goals:



Improve understanding of the challenges rural Veterans face



Formulate practices and programs to deliver health care to rural Veterans



Identify disparities in the availability of health care to rural Veterans



Develop special practices and products for the benefit of rural Veterans system-wide

VRHRCs are ORH's field-based satellite offices at VA medical centers in Iowa City, Iowa; Salt Lake City, Utah; White River Junction, Vermont; Gainesville, Florida; and Portland, Oregon. Through targeted research, the Centers identify challenges and gaps in the delivery of care and services to rural Veterans and create solutions for system-wide dissemination. Their functions include:

- ▶ **Research:** Create and execute a research portfolio targeted at identifying challenges and disparities in care and service delivery that affect rural Veterans
- ▶ **Innovations:** Act as field-based laboratories for pilot projects that develop and test innovative solutions for improving the delivery of care and services to rural Veterans
- ▶ **Dissemination:** Proliferate successful innovations to serve rural Veterans in every corner of the United States at VA facilities and community care facilities
- ▶ **Technical Assistance:** Provide mentored implementation of mature innovations, including technical assistance and program consultation, as well as consultation to VHA and community partners concerning policies and practices for rural Veterans

VRHRC Focus

Each Center has a specific rural focus that guides their research, innovation, and dissemination efforts.

VRHRC hosted by the Iowa City VA Health Care System:

- Improve care coordination for dual use Veterans, including purchased care and dual Medicare/ VA enrollees
- Use VA telemedicine and informatics tools to improve access to care
- Develop innovative interdisciplinary treatment models including collaborations with federally funded non-VA community providers
- Develop innovative mental health treatment delivery models for rural Veterans



Iowa City, Iowa

VRHRC hosted by the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System:

- Analyze data to identify patterns and characteristics of rural populations associated with suicide and suicide-related behavior
- Identify primary care provider recruitment and retention techniques to address rural provider shortages
- Study and innovate in rural geriatric care, complex care, and chronic conditions
- Create educational videos to support rural caregivers of Veterans with dementia



Salt Lake City, Utah

VRHRC hosted by the White River Junction VA Medical Center:

- Conduct research on health care disparities affecting rural Veterans
- Pilot and evaluate care coordination programs serving rural Veterans
- Develop training on evidence-based practices for rural VA providers
- Serve as a field resource for ORH program evaluation
- Use geospatial solutions to drive rural geographic database design, rural policy analysis, and strategic planning in support of rural Veteran health care



White River Junction, Vermont

VRHRC hosted by the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center

- Improve independent living for rural Veterans
- Strengthen rural workforce recruitment, retention, and education



Gainesville, Florida

VRHRC hosted by the Portland VA Medical Center

- Increase rural Veterans' access to care
- Find innovative ways to combat the pain or opioid epidemic
- Prevent Veteran suicide



Portland, Oregon

The Office of Rural Health (ORH) works to see that America's Veterans thrive in rural communities. To support the health and well-being of rural Veterans, ORH and its Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers establish and disseminate initiatives that increase access to care for the 2.7 million rural Veterans enrolled in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system. Key focus areas include programs that address workforce shortages, transportation, primary care, mental health, telehealth, and specialty care.