Congress established the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health (ORH) Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers (VRHRC) 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; and White River Junction, Vermont. 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

- **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

- **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

Expansion

In late 2018, Congress encouraged ORH to dedicate funds to increase the number of Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers. ORH is exploring this opportunity to expand on the highly effective resource center model and bring even more successful access innovations to rural Veterans.

Congress established the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health (ORH) in 2006 (38 USC § 7308) to conduct, coordinate, promote and disseminate research on issues that affect the nearly five million Veterans who reside in rural communities. The mandate also requires ORH to develop, refine and promulgate policies, best practices, lessons learned, and innovative and successful programs. Learn more at [www.ruralhealth.va.gov](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov).