

# Access to Health Care Services in the Context of Rural Location

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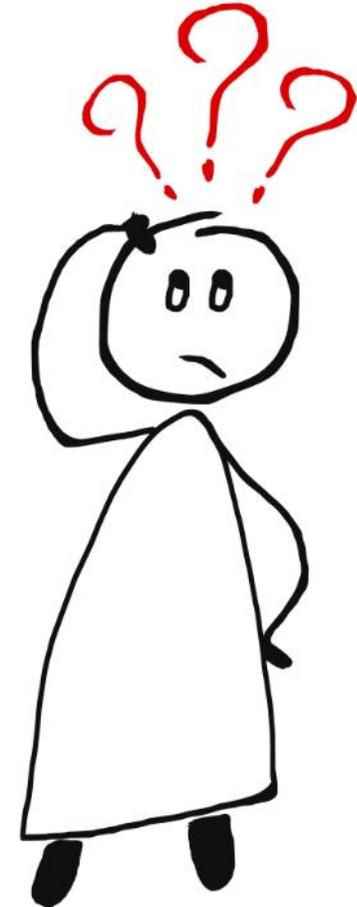
# What is Rural?

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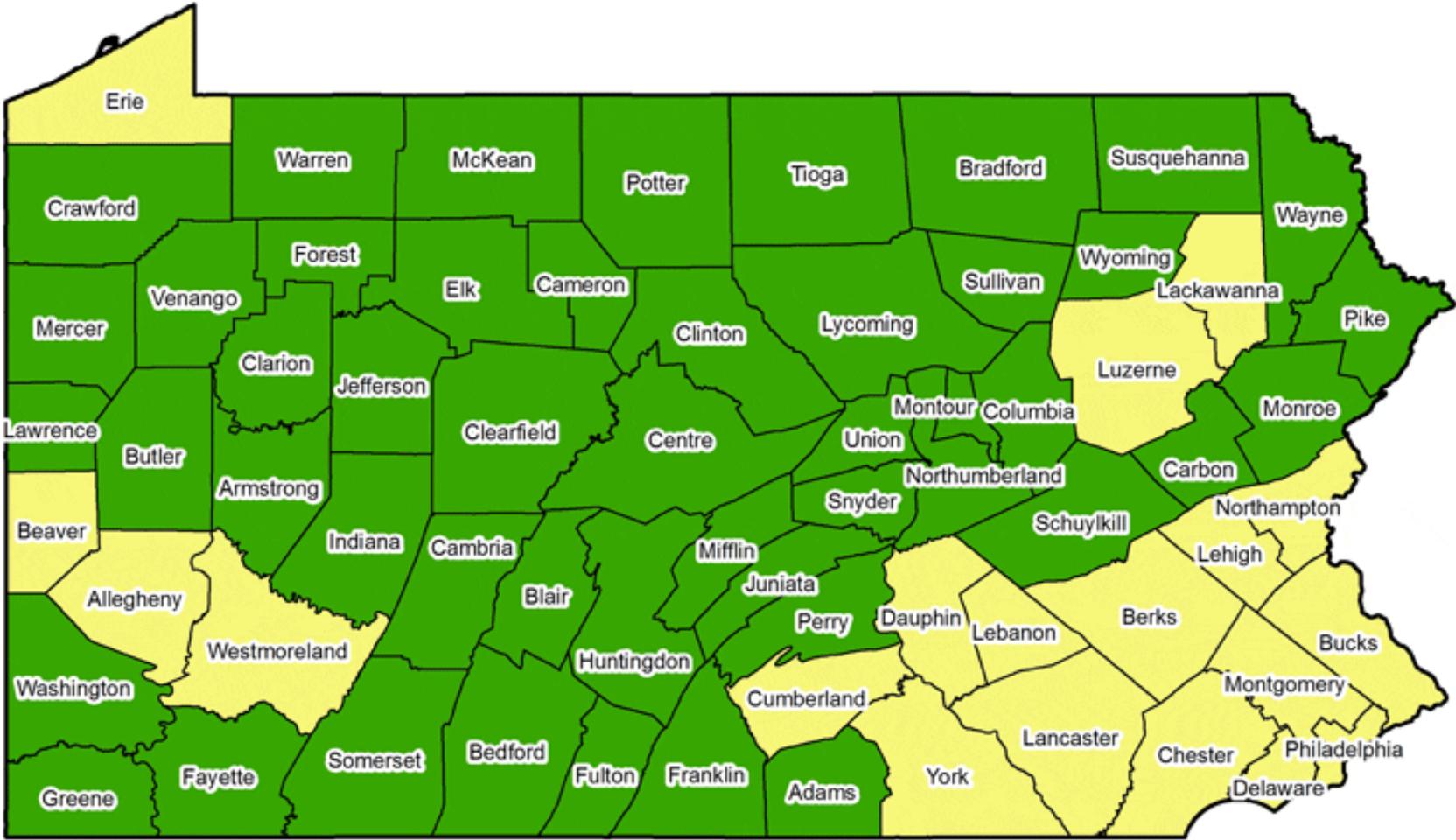
It can be a difficult task trying to define the term “rural” and an even harder task trying to explain it. **Most define “rural” by default.**

**23 percent** of the population and **97 percent** of the nation's landmass are considered to be rural.

- OMB Definition: Metropolitan/Micropolitan/Non-metropolitan
- Census Definition: Urbanized Area/Urbanized Cluster
- Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Definition: Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCAs)
- State-based Definitions



# Rural Pennsylvania Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Urban Rural



# Why Place Matters

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## Composition and Context

- Rural health issues are contextual when they derive from the special characteristics of rural places
- Health problems in rural areas are compositional when they derive from the special characteristics of people residing in rural areas





**Location of residence  
can have as much of an  
impact on health  
access and health  
status as the social  
determinants of health**



# What Is It About “Rural” ...

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## ... Place?

- Geography
- Isolation
- High risk occupations
- Higher numbers of small employers

## ... People?

- Older
- Higher rates of chronic health conditions
- Higher rates of unemployment or full-time employment
- Lower rates of educational attainment
- Higher rates of un- or underinsurance
- Community loyalty



# Rural Communities

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Being from a rural area can be considered to be a “protective” characteristic

- Strong family values
- Household stability
- Family and community cohesion
- Interdependent socialization patterns
- Religious participation
- Discipline
- However: Potential for lack of anonymity and privacy



# Rural Population Health Status

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- Fewer residents exercise regularly, 1/3 are overweight, and 60 percent are at risk for sedentary lifestyles
- High risk occupations: farming, mining, and forestry/fisheries
- Chronic diseases: diabetes, hypertension, obesity; behavioral health issues; dental health concerns



# The Primary Issue for Rural Health Care Is ...

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## ACCESS...

- ... to health care services
- ... to payment mechanisms
- ... and to transportation



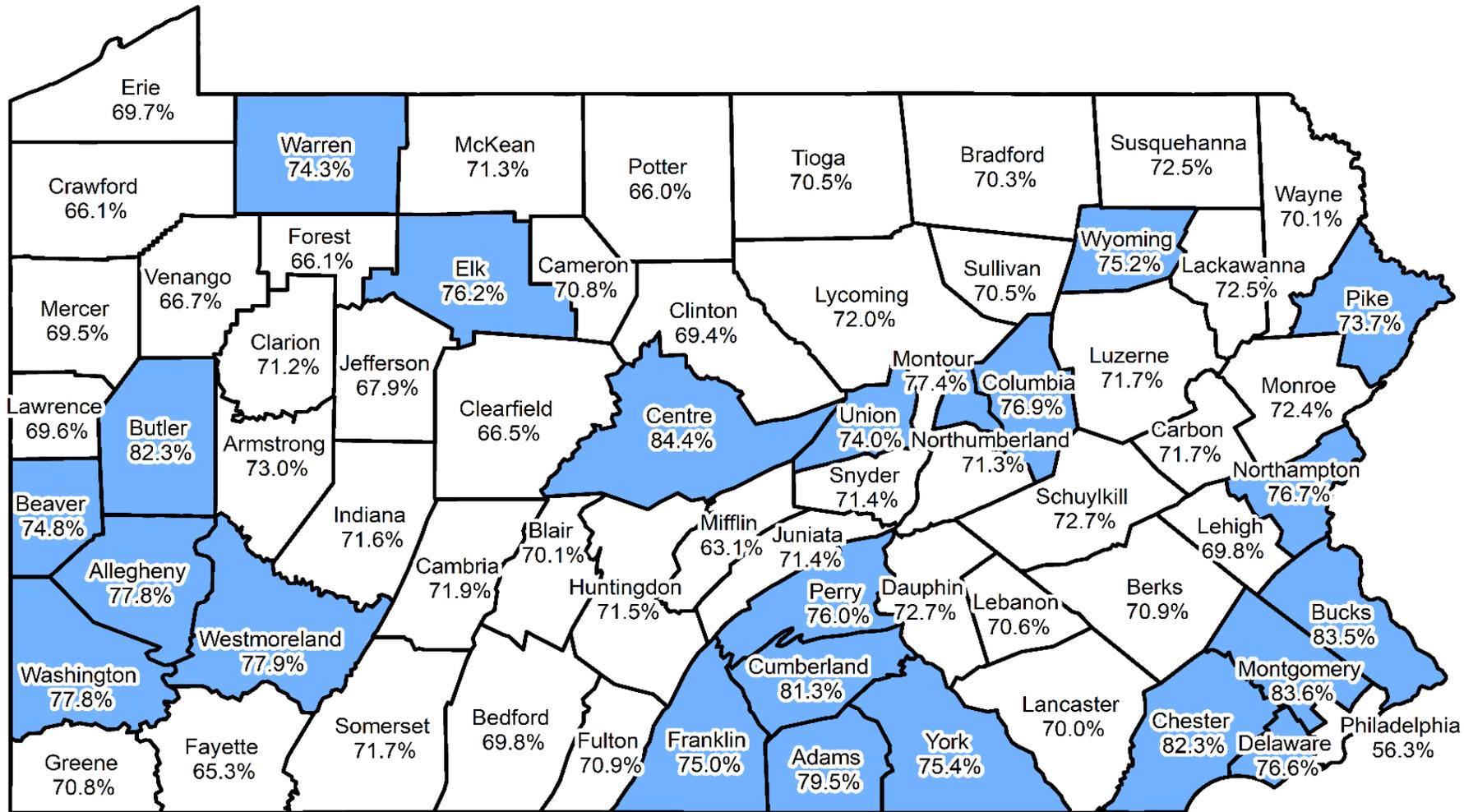
# Rural Workforce

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- Nationally – Only 9 percent of physicians practice in rural areas
- Pennsylvania – 2/3 of primary care physicians practice in the four most populated counties
- Access to specialists, dentists, mental/ behavioral providers, maternal/child health providers
- Frame of reference
- Wages and Reimbursement
- Medical Malpractice
- Isolation
- Spousal considerations
- Quality, coverage, continuing education
- Minority providers and cultural competency
- Oral health, mental, behavioral health, and substance use services
- Maternal health services



# Percent of Pennsylvania County Population with Private Health Care Insurance, 2017



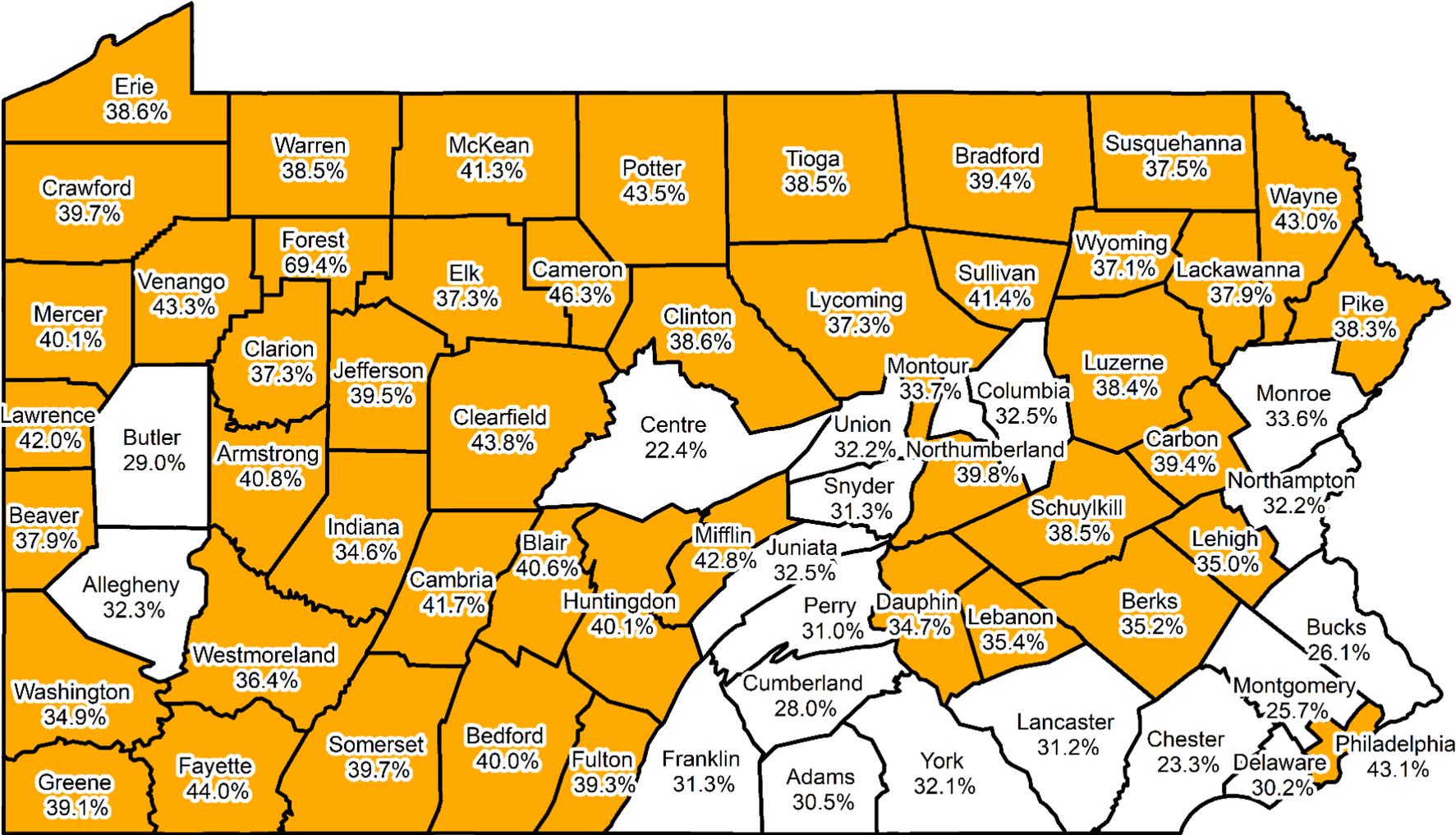
**Rural: 73.0%**  
**Urban: 73.3%**

Percent Total Population with Private Health Care Insurance, 2017 = 73.2%

At or Below Statewide Rate
  Above Statewide Rate

*Includes only civilian noninstitutionalized population.  
Data source: 2017, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.  
Prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.*

# Percent of Pennsylvania County Population with Public Health Care Insurance, 2017



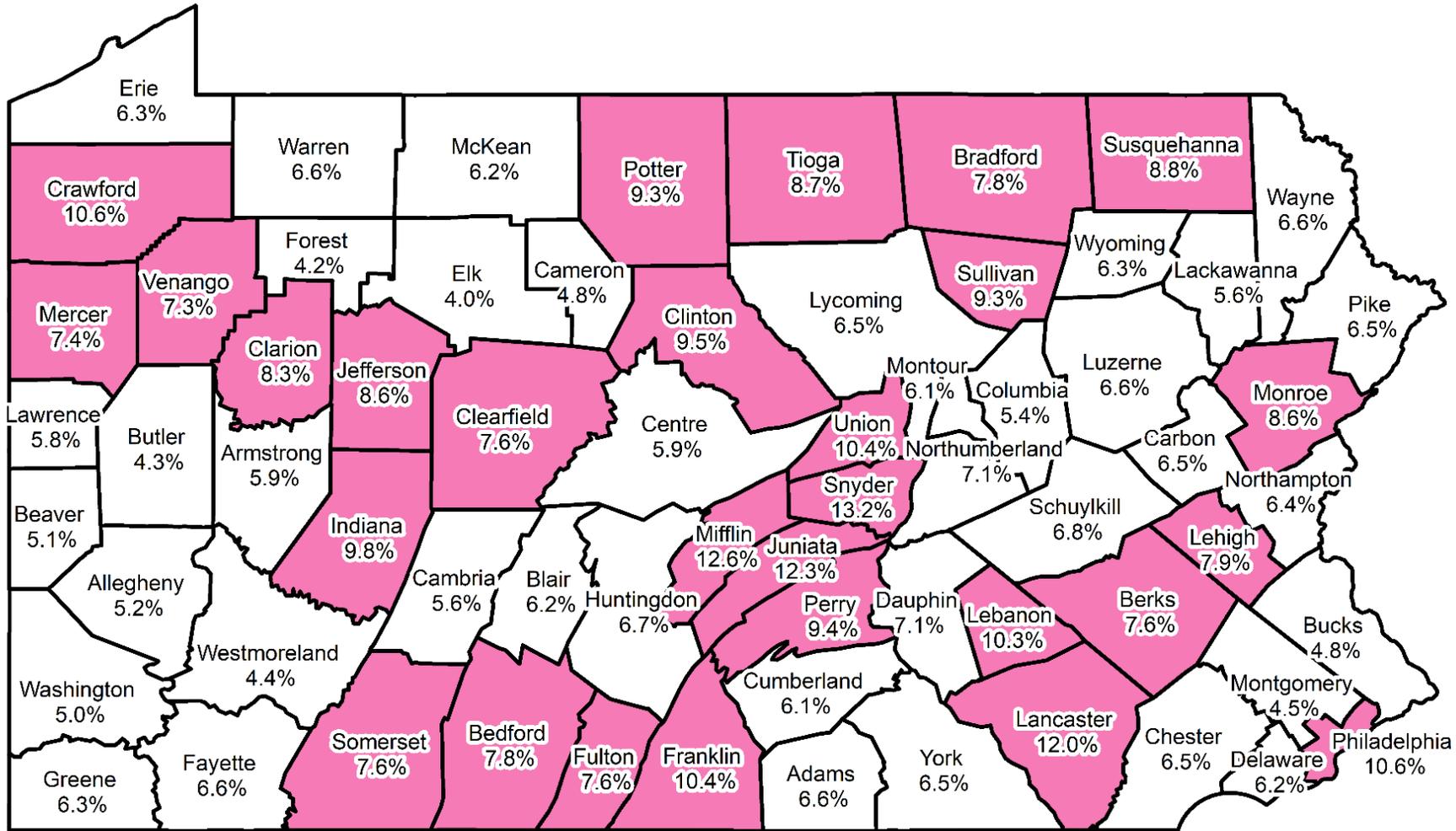
**Rural: 36.8%**  
**Urban: 33.4%**

**Percent Total Population with Public Health Care Insurance, 2017 = 34.3%**

At or Below Statewide Rate
  Above Statewide Rate

*Includes only civilian noninstitutionalized population.  
Data source: 2017, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.  
Prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.*

# Percent of Pennsylvania County Population with No Health Care Insurance, 2017



**Rural: 7.2%**  
**Urban: 7.1%**

Percent Total Population with No Health Care Insurance, 2017 = 7.1%

□ At or Below Statewide Rate    ■ Above Statewide Rate

*Includes only civilian noninstitutionalized population.  
Data source: 2017, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.  
Prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.*

# Rural Transportation Issues



- **Road Conditions**
  - 40% of roads in rural areas are “inadequate for current travel”
  - 50% of bridges > 20 feet long are considered to be “structurally deficient”
  - 54% of all road fatalities occurred in rural areas (2012)
  - Safety hazards on gravel or dirt roads
  - The “ridge-and-valley” topography creates obstacles due to mountain gaps, mountain ridges, tunnels
  - Hazardous winter driving conditions



# Rural Transportation Issues

- **Health Care Access**
  - Average trips for medical/dental services are about 9 miles longer in rural areas
  - Estimated 103 million non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) trips taken annually, average trip costs between \$26 and \$29
  - Estimated cause of 25-30% of missed appointments
  - Medicaid enrollees are 10 times more likely to have their access to timely primary care barred by transportation issues than those with private insurance
  - Impact on level of acuity, cost of care



**~ 23% of the U.S. population lives in rural areas BUT only 11% of transportation grant funding is allocated to rural areas**





**PENDER, Neb.** – May 14, 2019. Farmer Kurt Kaser was working when he found himself in a terrifying situation. His leg got stuck in a piece of farm equipment as Kaser was unloading corn. Alone and realizing he had to quickly make a decision, Kaser used a pocketknife to amputate his own leg to free himself.

“I thought for sure I would pass out, and somehow something told me to keep going,” he told NBC News in a phone interview Tuesday of the accident that occurred near the end of April. “I did what I thought I had to do, and it worked.”

Kaser, 63, said he was moving corn on his farm in Pender when he stepped into a corn hopper and his foot and the bottom half of his leg became stuck in the machine, which was still running. He said his family was not home and he knew it would be a while before anyone arrived at the farm.

After he tried to free himself but couldn't, he grabbed a pocketknife he was carrying and cut his leg free. After he cut himself free from the corn hopper, Kaser crawled to his house about 150 feet away and called 911. He was rushed to a hospital and later airlifted to another hospital where his daughter works.



# Health Care for Agricultural Producers ...

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*You have to have insurance. We have a risky job.*

- 75 percent of farmers and ranchers report that health insurance is an important or very important risk management strategy.
- 41 percent of young ranchers and farmers (18-34 years old) were enrolled in a public insurance program: Medicaid, Tricare or CHIP.
- Expanded Medicaid options allowed them to have insurance for their children and gave them the time and energy to invest in their farm.
- 45 percent worry they will have to sell assets to pay health care costs.



Source: 2017 National Farmer and Rancher Survey Findings, HIREdNAg



# Health Care for Agricultural Producers ...

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- Among those aged 18-64 years old, 73 percent purchased a plan on the Health Insurance Marketplace.
- 72 percent had an off-farm job to pay for health insurance and additional income.
- 59 percent receive benefits through public sector employers: health, education, and government.

*Source: 2017 National Farmer and Rancher Survey Findings, HIREdNAg*



# Farm Stress and Mental Health

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**Agrarian Imperative:** “The powerful connection that farmers have with their land and their animals. It’s a bond that is very difficult to break. And one that makes it very hard for a farmer to consider options that don’t include the land and, in some cases, the animals.” Rossman, 2010.

- Farming is a high stress/high risk occupation
- Suicide rate for farmers is 6 times greater than the national average (CDC, 2016)
- Contributing economic conditions; not expected to improve:
  - Low milk and grain prices
  - Dairy industry in crisis!
  - Rising cost of capital and debt
  - Uncertainties about trade and labor
  - Current and proposed trade tariffs



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### *Celebrating the Power of Rural!*

On November 21, 2019, join in celebration of those who work every day to keep our rural communities healthy.

Join us in celebrating National Rural Health Day 2019!



#### Take the Pledge to Partner

The Pledge to Partner was designed to help us strategically align with people like you who want to achieve higher performance and visibility, optimize our collective contributions, and realize complementary objectives that advance the rural health mission.

Visit [https:// www.powerofrural.org/take-the-pledge/](https://www.powerofrural.org/take-the-pledge/) to take the pledge!



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**Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health**