

2025-2030

MARYLAND RURAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY



The Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan is purposefully designed to equip state and local entities with a tailorable path toward a future in which all rural Maryland residents can reach their full health potential. The Strategic Plan puts forth three key priorities for organizations and programs to take into account as they work to provide health services across rural Maryland. These priorities aim to strengthen multi-sector collaboration, advance health equity, and foster a more resilient rural health system. By integrating various dimensions of health, the current Strategic Plan encompasses objectives for improving access to care, resources, and opportunities for rural Marylanders to improve health outcomes.

Priority 1: Meaningfully Engage With Partners and Communities to Measurably Address Rural Public Health Challenges



Build and strengthen new and existing partnerships to improve the coordination and alignment of rural public health functions, services, and delivery across agencies, funding sources, and jurisdictions.



Expand outreach and engagement with rural populations and rural-facing community-based organizations to facilitate inclusive, community-informed public health efforts.



Develop and disseminate timely, clear, and consistent evidence-based information regarding rural health care issues, research findings, and innovative approaches to the delivery of health care in rural Maryland.

Priority 2: Leverage a Health in All Policies Approach to Illuminate Health as a Component of Every Aspect of Rural Life



Address social determinants of health by supporting policies that improve identified challenges across sectors, such as nutritious food, safe housing, and reliable transportation.



Establish partnerships to align rural policy development with public health priorities.



Collaborate with state and local policymakers to ensure public health is a core factor in decision-making and resource allocation.



Provide a rural perspective to state and national entities that serve rural Maryland (e.g. public health, healthcare delivery systems, commerce, labor, etc.)

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Priority 3: Build a Strong, Well-Coordinated Health System that Encompasses Public Health, Clinical, and Social Service Delivery to Best Serve Rural Maryland



Support a patient-centric health care system that encourages rural Marylanders' participation in preventive and chronic care disease management.



Expand primary care services and improve access to healthcare through innovative delivery mechanisms, such as telehealth, mobile integrated health services, and reformed payment system.



Integrate public health programs, such as disease prevention, vaccination, and chronic disease management, into nontraditional healthcare settings (& vice versa) to offer a holistic care approach (e.g. integrated behavioral health, dental health hygienists, etc.)



Build a sustainable public and healthcare workforce through targeted education, recruitment, and retention programs that draw from local communities and reflect community needs and experiences.

Beyond detailing the key priorities, objectives, and outcomes, the Strategic Plan discusses the definition of “rural Maryland,” the current status of rural Marylanders' health, and provides an overview of the public health and healthcare delivery system.

The Strategic Plan also provides rural **region and county profiles** as a snapshot of health, compiling the most recent data and indicators on county health.



The full digital PDF of the 2025-2030 Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan can be accessed online by visiting the MDH State Office of Rural Health website <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/pages/rural-health.aspx>