



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(11/20/25) National Rural Health Day Observed Throughout the Region (Celebrating the "Power of Rural")

November 20 is National Rural Health Day. Since 2011, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) has set aside the third Thursday of November to celebrate the "Power of Rural" on National Rural Health Day. This day is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the incredible efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health, and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, Rural Health is the health of people living in rural areas, who generally are located farther from health care facilities and other services than people living in urban areas. More than 46 million people in the United States (15% of the population) live in rural areas.

People living in rural areas are generally at higher risk of disease and death than people living in urban areas for various socioeconomic reasons. These differences in risk are known as rural health disparities. Rural residents are at greater risk of death from: Heart disease, Cancer, Stroke, Unintentional injury (for example: motor vehicle death, opioid overdose and other substance abuse), and chronic lower respiratory disease. Rural residents also are more likely to have multiple health conditions compared to people living in other areas.

"The focus of rural healthcare professionals is to provide residents with primary and preventative services and care, and connect them with other healthcare services in and around their region when needed," said Shawnna Rhine Southern 7 Health Department Community Outreach Coordinator. "They are often your local health department, rural health clinics, hospitals, and other treatment facilities; where those seeking healthcare most often come first."

Southern 7 Health Department is one of 97 local health departments in Illinois under the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). It's the largest surface area health department in the state covering the roughly 2,200 square miles of the lower southernmost seven counties; serving roughly 64,500 people.

Rhine says that without the services and care of other rural providers in the region, many of their patients would need to travel much further for care. "As a local health department, our focus is on disease prevention that includes vaccines, STD testing, environmental health inspections and testing, health education, cancer prevention, family nutrition, and much more. We are grateful to the many dedicated rural healthcare partners in the region to help our clients get the treatment and services they need close to home."

To find a rural healthcare provider in your area, visit findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov.

Southern 7 Health Department is a public health department that serves communities of the seven southernmost counties in Illinois focusing on disease prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles, ensuring access to healthcare services, and serves as the Head Start Grantee for the region.

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