Health Status and Health Behaviors

Definition of Health

Rural residents define good health as the ability to work and fulfill responsibilities. More importance is given to the ability to work, independence and activity than to the value of health per se.¹

Quality of Health

U.S. residents living in rural settings had worse overall health-related quality of life scores than their urban counterparts, as suggested by a large study. 4.51% of rural residents consistently rated their health as poor compared to 3.64% of urban residents.²

Health Risks

• Rural residents are more likely to have chronic or life-threatening diseases and to face significant mental health issues including substance abuse and seasonal affective disorder.

• Higher proportions of residents of rural counties are current smokers and are at chronic risk of alcoholism.

• Remote rural areas have the highest rates of self-reported obesity among women of all geographic areas (23% vs. 16% living in metropolitan fringe areas).

• Rural residents are also more likely to be inactive during leisure times.²

• Rural populations have higher rates of infant mortality and suicide

• A larger proportion of the rural population self declared that their physical and mental health prevented them from working or attending educational/training activities.

REFERENCES
