



HEALTH EQUITY

2023 Fact Sheet

Substandard housing is often seen as an issue for primarily urban settings, but rural populations experience their own unique and significant challenges and needs relating to poor housing quality. An **estimated 60 million Americans**, approximately 20% of the U.S. population, live in the **29 million-plus housing units located in rural communities**. During the COVID-19 pandemic, **migration to rural communities increased, with 63% of nonmetro counties witnessing a net inflow in 2021**, compared to 39% of nonmetro counties in 2019. While the majority of residents in rural areas (76%) remain non-Hispanic White persons, racial and ethnic diversity is increasing; for example, **the median rural county saw its population of color increase by 3.5% between 2010 and 2020**. This increased growth and diversity has brought further attention to the inequities faced by many residents of rural communities that result in inadequate availability of quality healthcare, less access to health resources than urban communities, and ultimately poorer health outcomes, which are further exacerbated by an aging, substandard housing stock.

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Despite health-related disparities, rural communities have historically shown **strength and resilience** during natural disasters, demographic shifts, and economic declines. Rural communities

Specific Examples of Healthy Housing Issues in Rural Communities Include...

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