

Strong, Rural Communities Need Strong Hospitals

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Northern Tier Regional Rural Health Summit
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The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

About HAP

Advocacy organization representing more than 235 hospitals and health systems throughout Pennsylvania.

Mission

Advocating on behalf of Pennsylvania hospitals and health systems to advance high-quality, accessible, and financially sustainable health care.

Vision

HAP is the trusted voice in promoting a healthy Pennsylvania for all.





We cannot have healthy, vibrant, and economically competitive rural communities without strong, financially stable hospitals.

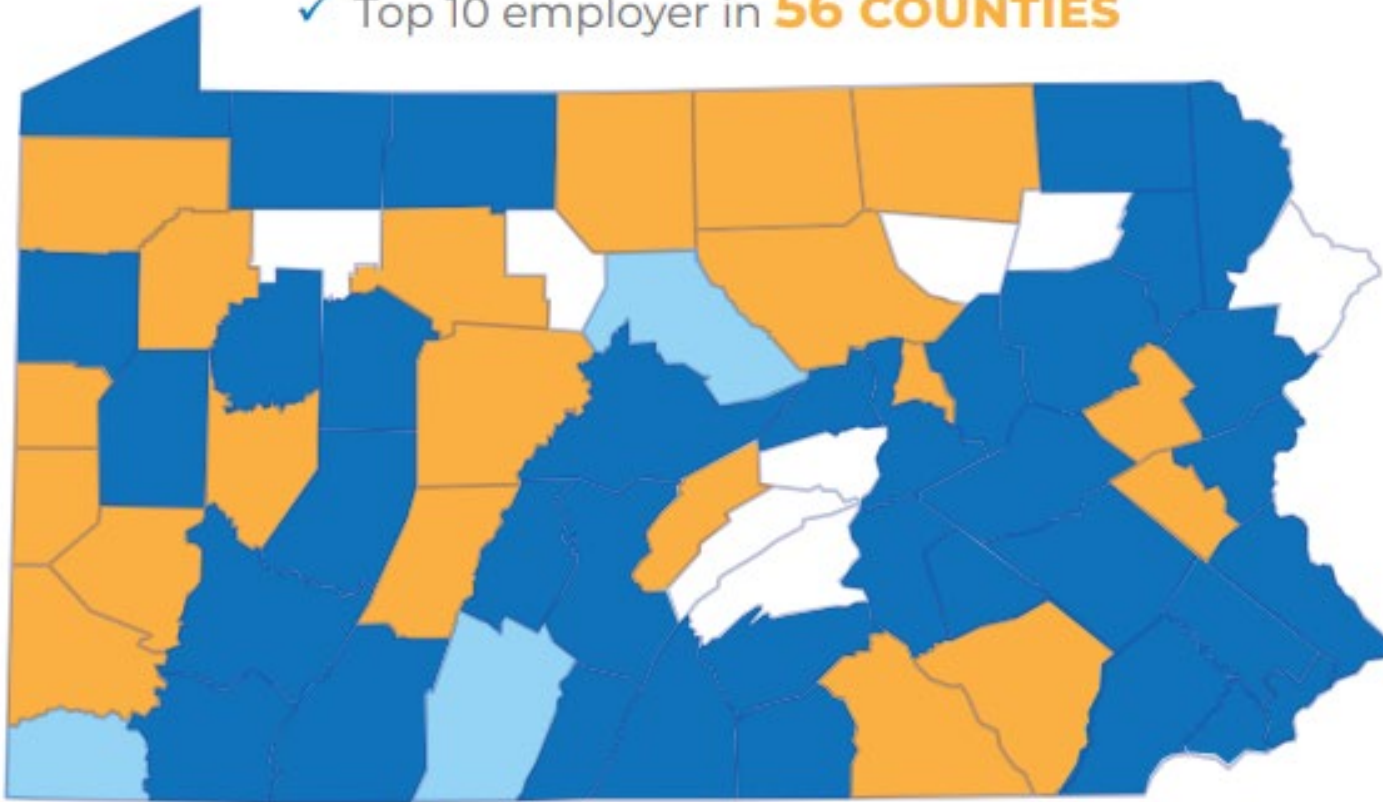
Rural Communities Need Strong Hospitals

- Hospitals provide the necessary services that enable the vibrant communities where people want to live and businesses can grow.
- Health care deserts quickly turn into economic deserts.
- Hospitals anchor rural economies. Statewide, rural hospitals support:
 - **\$12.7 billion** economic impact
 - **\$3.8 billion** wages and benefits
 - **58,105** jobs



✓ Top employer in **20 COUNTIES**

✓ Top 10 employer in **56 COUNTIES**



Orange square: Hospital is the largest employer

Dark blue square: At least 1 hospital in top 10 employers

White square: No hospital in the county

Light blue square: At least 1 hospital in top 30 employers

Jobs in Pennsylvania hospitals pay on average about **7.6 percent higher** than the average wage across all sectors.

Key Challenges for Rural Health

Rural Hospitals At Risk

Pennsylvania rural acute care hospitals:



Fewer than half operating with margins needed for long-term stability*



39% with multi-year losses*

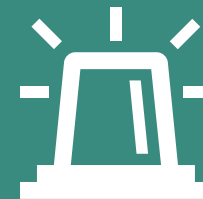


6 rural hospital closures in past decade

*PHC4 FY 2024 data

According to Center for Healthcare Quality & Payment Reform:

- **34%** of rural PA hospital at risk of closing
- **18%** at immediate risk

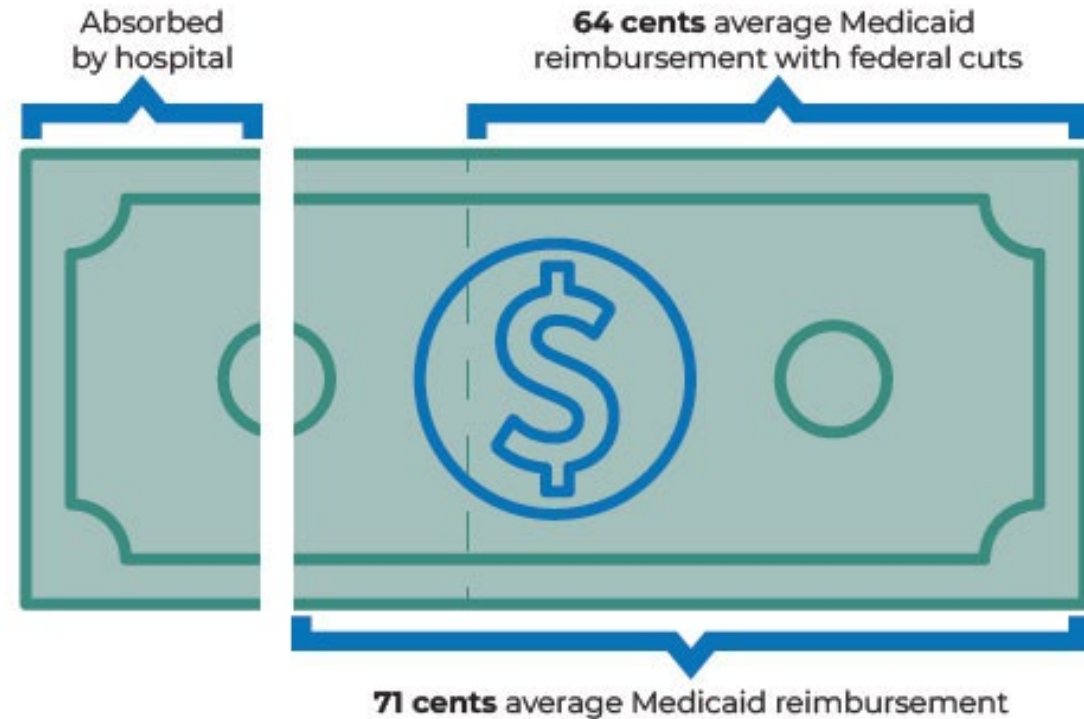


Inadequate Reimbursement

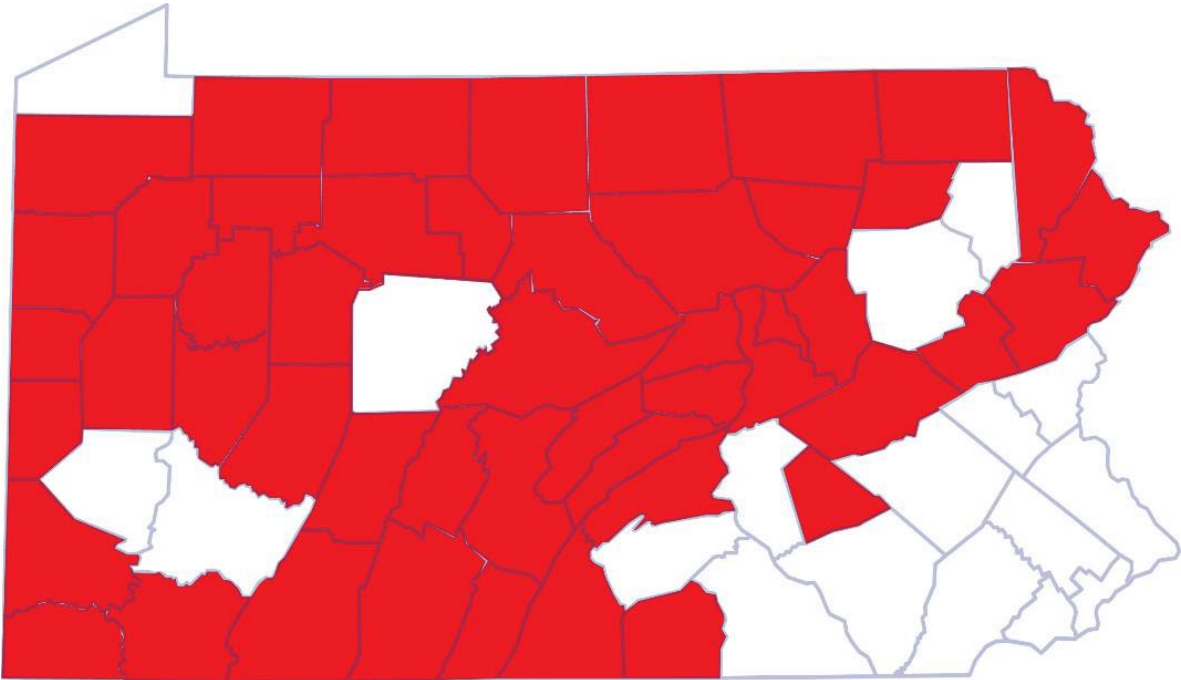
Medicaid provides health insurance for nearly **1 in 4** Pennsylvanians, paying hospitals and providers for the care they provide enrollees.

For years, Pennsylvania's Medicaid program has reimbursed well below what it costs to provide care, leaving hospitals to absorb the difference and putting services at risk. Upcoming federal cuts will widen this gap even more.

For each dollar Pa. hospitals spend providing care to Medicaid and uninsured patients:



Effects of Federal Changes



- Premiums for rural consumers without subsidies: **+116%**
- Rural Pennsylvanians residents with Medicaid: **21%**
- Rural residents who may lose Medicaid coverage: **84,000**

Rural hospitals face a nearly **\$1 billion** net, direct cut in payments over 10 years.

Hospitals Navigating Persistent Shortages Across Roles

2024 Statewide Average Hospital Vacancy Rates

Position	Vacancy Rate	Position	Vacancy Rate
Certified registered nurse anesthetists	30%	Physician assistants	16%
Surgical techs	28%	Pharmacy techs	15%
Clinical nurse specialists	22%	Radiologic techs	14%
Registered nurses*	19%	Central Sterile Processors	14%
Medical assistants	19%	Certified registered nurse practitioners	14%
Respiratory therapists	18%	Medical/lab techs	13%
Nursing support staff	17%	Certified nurse midwives	12%



*Staff nurses providing direct patient care, excludes nurse managers, case managers, and education staff

Challenges for Rural Hospitals

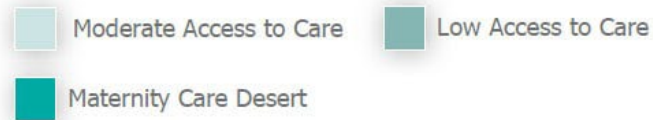
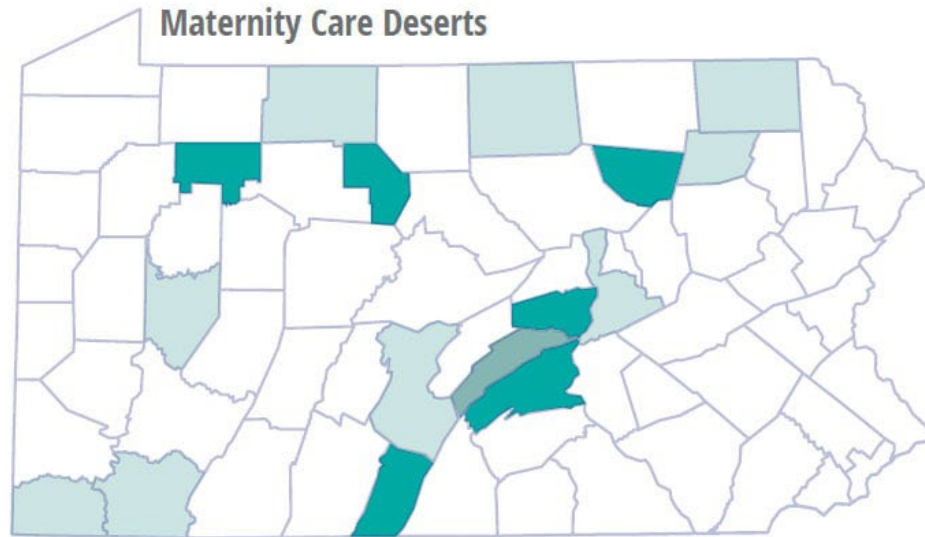
Rural hospitals report even higher average vacancy rates for some key positions:

- 23% physician assistants
- 23% medical assistants
- 21% registered nurses
- 20% radiologic techs
- 19% central sterile processors
- 18% certified registered nurse practitioners



Maternal Health Deserts

39 Pennsylvania hospitals have ended labor and delivery services since 2005, **19** in rural communities



Source: March of Dimes

16 counties with reduced access

47.6% of women in rural counties live more than 30 minutes from a birthing hospital

3.1x longer distance to care for women living in maternity care deserts



180+ babies delivered annually by EMS



Average distance to maternal care:

9.4 miles Urban areas

23.5 miles Rural areas

27.8 miles Maternity care deserts



Opportunities for Policymakers

Federal Advocacy Priorities

- Extend enhanced premium tax credits to continue affordable insurance coverage.
- Protect payments and programs that support rural hospitals.
- Continue telehealth and hospital-at-home programs increase access to care.
- Streamline prior authorization process in Medicare Advantage.
- Safeguard the 340B Drug Pricing Program.



State Advocacy Priorities

- Ensure sustainable hospital payments to reflect the real cost of care.
- Attract and retain health care workers through incentives and training pipelines and extend the reach of providers by expanding scope of practice.
- Modernize outdated regulations to support innovation and efficiency.
- Enact medical liability reforms to keep providers and preserve high-risk services.



Workforce Legislation

Key bills advancing in the General Assembly:

- **SB 998:** Creates a competitive grant program for accredited nurse education programs to expand capacity.
- **HB 157:** Establishes a grant program for hospitals, FQHCs, and birthing centers in rural areas to attract providers through student loan repayment.
- **SB 507:** Establishes a pathway to licensure for Certified Midwives in Pennsylvania.



Regulatory Hurdles

- **Outdated:** Pennsylvania's hospital licensure regulations were last updated **in the 1980s**.
- **Burdensome:** On average, hospitals spend **\$1,200** on regulatory costs per admission and dedicate **59 FTEs** to compliance.
- **Recent Wins:** Addressed high-priority areas while comprehensive **regulatory overhaul** progresses.
 - Provided clarity on physician staffing requirements
 - Removed burdensome equipment attestation mandate



Medical Liability

- Key barrier to maintaining health care workforce and services that communities need to thrive.
- Comprehensive reforms are necessary to restore balance and protect access to care, including addressing the venue rule change.



Partnering for Our Communities

Why Our Voices and Collaboration are Critical

- We **all** have a stake in the future of health care in our communities. These aren't hospital issues, they are **community** issues.
- Just like communities need strong hospitals, hospitals benefit from strong communities:
 - Patient volume to sustain services
 - Local workforce
 - Community partnerships
- It takes collaboration and advocacy from all of us to ensure our communities can thrive.



Opportunities for Collaboration



Health care
workforce
development



Partnerships to
support access
to care



Advocacy for
common
priorities

Northern Tier Rural Regional Health Summit

SUMMIT AGENDA (CONTINUED)

TIME	TOPIC	ROOM
10:35 a.m.	Workgroups: Understanding Challenges and Exploring Solutions	
	Access to Care and Delivery Models	ATHS E203
	Maternal Health	PDC Mt. Laurel
	Health and Pipeline Strategies	ATHS W114
	Community Oasis Mobile Unit	
	Health Lab in PCT Physician Assistant Center	
	Chat	
	Health Systems and Higher Education	Le Jeune Chef Restaurant
	Health	
	President, Pennsylvania College of Technology	
	MD, MBA, President and CEO, The Guthrie Clinic	
	Setting Priorities and Defining Value	
	Delivery Models	ATHS E203
	Health and Pipeline Strategies	PDC Mt. Laurel
	Health and Pipeline Strategies	ATHS W114
	State Funding Mean for Rural Health Care	PDC
	MPH	
	Department of Human Services	
	Findings and Recommendations	PDC
	Finalizing the Rural Health Transformation Plan	PDC
	to Governor Josh Shapiro	

NORTHERN TIER Rural Regional Health Summit



Wednesday, November 12, 2025 • 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pennsylvania College of Technology
John F. Thompson Professional Development Center (PDC)

Bradford, Clinton, Lycoming, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming Counties

This summit is a collaborative gathering of diverse stakeholders designed to foster thoughtful discussion, tackle pressing challenges, and develop clear next steps that lead to meaningful progress for our region.

SUMMIT AGENDA

TIME	TOPIC	ROOM
8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	PDC
9:00 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks	PDC
9:10 a.m.	Driving Decisions Through Data Debra L. Bogen, MD, FAAP Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Health	PDC
9:45 a.m.	Keynote Address Nicole Stallings President and CEO, Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania	PDC
10:00 a.m.	2025-2030 Pennsylvania Rural Health Plan Pennsylvania Rural Health Association	PDC
10:20 a.m.	Morning Break	

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The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania