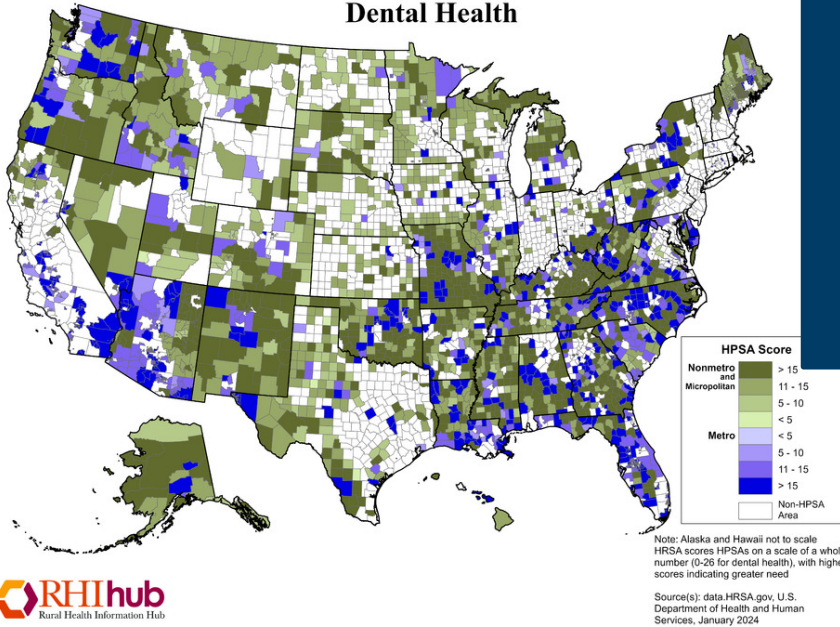


# Rural Oral Health

Health Professional Shortage Areas  
Dental Health



## Barriers to Care

- Geographic isolation
- Lack of adequate transportation
- Higher rate of poverty in nonmetro areas
- Availability of providers willing to treat Medicaid patients
- Lack of dental insurance
- Acute provider shortages

**57.6%**  
of rural adults

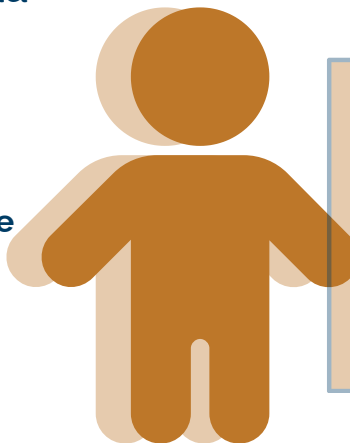
reported that they had visited the dentist in the past year, compared to 66.7% of urban adults

Rural counties have higher percentages of people with partial or full edentulism (having several or all teeth extracted) compared to urban counties



## Oral Health Advocacy Agenda

- Comprehensive Medicare and Medicaid adult benefit
- "Grow your own" and pipeline workforce programs
- Recruiting and retaining workforce
- Benefits of fluoridation
- Eliminating discrimination
- Up-to-date and accurate data
- Addressing veterans oral health
- Innovative delivery systems



Rural children are known to have poorer dental health and are less likely to receive preventive dental care than urban children

# NRHA Supported Legislation



***Dental Loan Repayment Assistance Act S.403/H.R.994***  
Conduct a public education campaign to increase oral health literacy and awareness.



***Medicaid Dental Benefit Act S. 570/H.R. 1342***  
Require Medicaid programs to cover dental and oral health services for all adults and increase the federal matching percentage for such services.



***Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act***  
S. 1867/H.R. 3922  
Improve the availability and quality of childcare in rural communities to help recruit dental professionals.



***Medicare Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act H.R. 33 & Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2023 S. 2012/H.R. 4146***  
Inclusion of dental care under Medicare coverage.



***The Improving Whole Health for Veterans with Chronic Conditions Act S. 1954/H.R. 4150*** Create a pilot program for comprehensive dental coverage for veterans.



***Dental Care for Veterans Act H.R. 2413***  
Make all veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system eligible for VA-provided dental services.