

PROVIDER TYPES

Rural Health Clinics

Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) are healthcare practices that receive enhanced Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates to improve primary care access in rural communities while promoting collaborative care delivery. ¹ Like federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), these clinics offer outpatient primary care and preventive health services, using a team-based approach that includes nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified nurse midwives. However, RHCs are a distinct type of provider with their own CMS certification process and policies, including staffing primary care service requirements, and geographic area.

The RHC designation is very specific. To qualify, the clinic must be located in a non-urbanized area and meet the requirements to be either a medically underserved area (MUA), geographic/population-based health professional shortage area (HPSA), or a Governor-designated and Secretary certified shortage area. For more information on shortage designations from HRSA, [click here](#).

RHCs play an important role in improving healthcare access and outcomes in rural communities by providing essential medical services that would otherwise be unavailable.

For additional information about RHCs, see the [Rural Health Information Hub](#) webpage.

Reference

1 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (n.d.). Rural Health Clinics. Retrieved from <https://www.cms.gov/Center/Provider-Type/Rural-Health-Clinics-Center.html>