

SNAPSHOT OF RURAL HEALTH IN COLORADO 2025

 **COLORADO
RURAL HEALTH
CENTER**

The State Office of Rural Health

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The Snapshot of Rural Health is prepared as a resource to highlight and advance interest in the health of rural Colorado.

WHO WE ARE

The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health with the mission of assisting rural communities in addressing healthcare issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change on behalf of its members and all rural healthcare providers.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enhance healthcare services in the state by providing information, education, linkages, tools, and energy toward addressing rural health issues. Our vision is to improve healthcare services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare.

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COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CENTER | *The State Office of Rural Health*

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CRHC'S ORGANIZATIONAL EQUITY STATEMENT

The Colorado Rural Health Center recognizes that many factors impact the health of individuals and communities, including geography, income, and race. We recognize the existence and power of historical and ongoing systematic structures that have excluded individuals from leading their most healthy lives.

We are committed to repairing injustices by championing policies that recognize these inequalities and foster community-led solutions. We are actively working to include diverse opinions and perspectives in our decision making processes and advocacy work and recognize that we all live better lives when everyone has a seat at the table.

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Demographics of Colorado



64 TOTAL COUNTIES



17 urban



24 rural



23 frontier



77%

of Colorado's landmass is considered rural or frontier



12%

of Colorado's population, 716,208 people, consists of rural residents (2022)

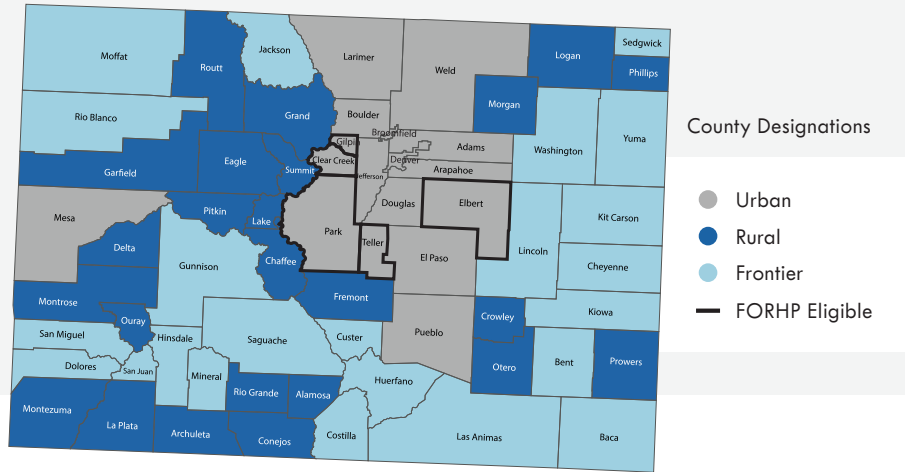


RURAL: A non-metropolitan county containing no municipalities over 50,000 residents.

FRONTIER: A county with a population density of 6 or fewer residents per square mile.

Colorado is a Rural State

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) has modified its list of areas eligible for rural health funding. The Counties outlined in bold are eligible for FORHP funding even though they are designated as Metropolitan Counties.



OUR STATE IS GROWING



5,838,622

people live in Colorado (July 2022)

Ranking 21st in size in the U.S.

+36,500

population increase in 2023



From 2018-2022, housing growth has increased by **45,000 housing units per year**

17,757 new units in rural areas

162,330 new units in urban areas

62,400

births in 2023



↓ by 100 from 2022

45,000

deaths in 2023



↓ by 4,700 from 2022



Colorado's population is forecast to increase by **630,000**

19,000

net migration in 2023



↑ by 4,000 from 2022

Population Changes

While urban areas in Colorado experienced significantly more population growth from 2022 to 2023, rural areas saw a net increase driven primarily by migration. Despite this, rural Colorado has a more favorable population-to-housing unit ratio, suggesting potentially greater relative housing supply.

POPULATION GROWTH FROM 2022-2023

1,289

more people live in rural Colorado

|
3.5% of total state growth

35,277

more people live in urban Colorado



Fastest-growing rural counties by household population

3.7%

Custer

2.2%

Dolores

1.7%

Chaffee

NATURAL AND MIGRATION POPULATION CHANGES



-435

natural decrease in rural Colorado population



+1,724

migration-driven increase



14 rural

counties had a positive natural population change



10%

of all births occurred in rural Colorado



16%

of all deaths occurred in rural Colorado



9%

migration growth occurred in rural Colorado

HOUSEHOLD POPULATION GROWTH

Rural Colorado in 2022

688,637

total household population

1.72

housing unit ratio

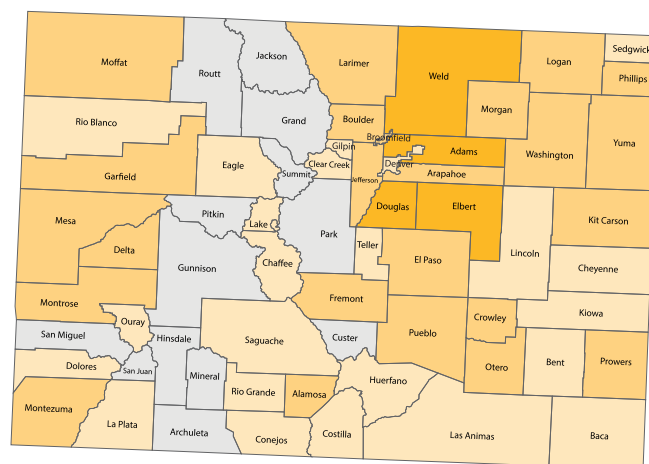
Urban Colorado in 2022

5,026,969

total household population

2.28

housing unit ratio



Housing Unit Ratio

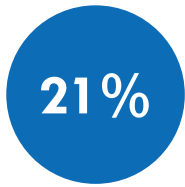
0.6–1.5

1.6–2

2.1–2.5

2.6+

Age, Race, & Ethnicity

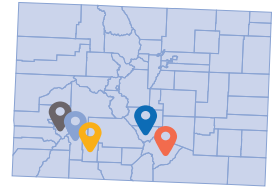


21% of the rural population and 15% of the urban population are aged 65+

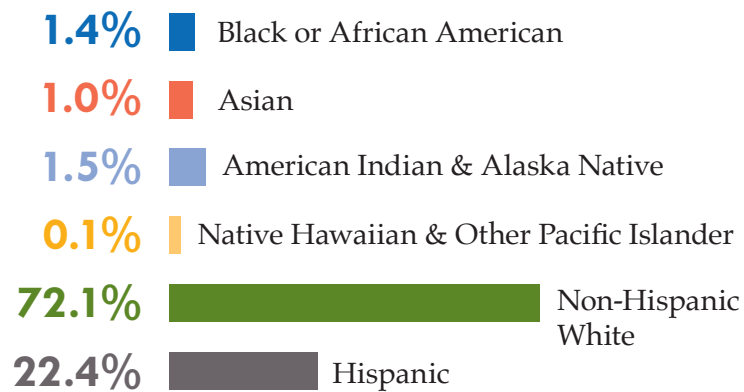


Over the next decade, the 65+ age group is expected to **undergo the fastest and most significant growth**

TOP 5 RURAL COUNTIES WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENT OF 65+ RESIDENTS



RACE AND ETHNICITY OF RURAL COLORADO IN 2022



10% of Coloradans were born outside of the U.S.



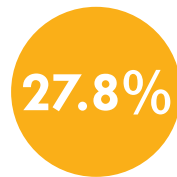
58% of Colorado residents were born in a state other than Colorado

COLORADO IS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE STATE



33.5% of people identify as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or from other racial or ethnic backgrounds in 2022

It is estimated that by 2040, this will increase to 45% of the population



27.8% of the rural population identified as people of color, compared to 34.3% of the urban population

Minority Population Growth (2020-22)



Jobs and Income in Colorado

JULY 2024 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

 **4.2%**
Colorado (unadjusted)

 **3.8%**
rural areas

 **4.3%**
urban areas

The counties with the highest rates

- 6.6%** Huerfano
- 6.6%** Las Animas
- 5.9%** Fremont

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



\$89,100 was the median household income in 2022



On average, median household income was much lower in rural Colorado

\$65,676 rural vs **\$93,217** urban

POVERTY RATES IN COLORADO

12% Rural
9% Urban

Southeast Colorado had the highest poverty rates

27.1% Bent **24.2%** Crowley **24%** Otero **23%** Baca **22.5%** Costilla



The poverty rate among Latino and black Coloradans is >2x higher than Non-Hispanic White Coloradans

INCOME INEQUALITY

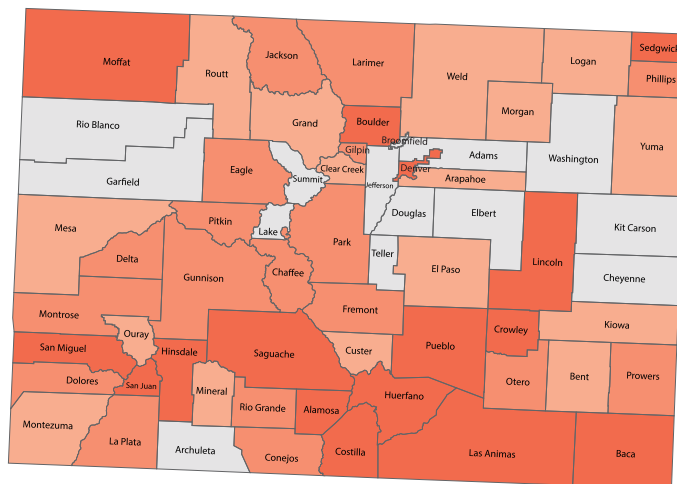
6.3 in Lincoln County



On average, higher income households

earn 4.4x more than lower income households

3.3 in Rio Blanco County



Income Inequality Ratio

- 3.3–3.9
- 4.0–4.3
- 4.4–4.7
- 4.8–6.3

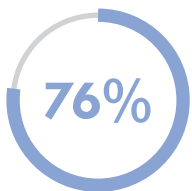
Colorado's Housing Crisis is Escalating

Rising rents, unaffordable mortgages, and a lack of affordable options are impacting residents, particularly those with low incomes. Rural ski towns have seen housing costs skyrocket, exacerbating the problem. Urgent action is needed to expand affordable housing options. Other rural regions of the state, namely the Eastern Plains, are facing an extreme lack of housing stock, especially rental properties.



Among rural counties, **Huerfano County** has the highest percentage of renters spending 35%+ of the income on rent (47.2%)

» Eagle (46%) and Sedgwick (44%) are close behind



76% of extremely low income renters are severely cost burdened



1 in 10 rural adults were worried about paying their rent or mortgage in the past 12 months

Percentage Struggling to Pay Rent/Mortgage

18.5%

Northeast Colorado (Morgan, Logan, Washington, Yuma, Phillips, Sedgwick)

22.1%

Pueblo

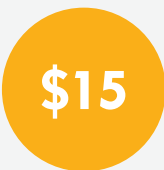
15.9%

Central and Eastern Denver Metro Area

11.3%

San Luis Valley

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



\$15 is more than the mean renter wage in 16 rural counties

Housing Wage (modest two-bedroom)



\$37.47 Colorado

\$32.11 National

\$44.60

in Eagle County

\$17.40

in Sedgwick County

Living Wage (for 1 adult, 2 children)

What one full-time worker must earn on an hourly basis to help cover the cost of their family's minimum basic needs where they live while still being self-sufficient



\$58.79/hr Colorado

\$50.04/hr National

\$36.87/hr

in Baca County

\$70.04/hr

in Eagle County

Food Insecurity

Gaining access to healthy and affordable food can be a challenge for rural residents. Many rural areas lack food retailers and are considered food deserts: areas with limited supplies of fresh, affordable foods. The food environment index is a score reflecting factors that contribute to a healthy food environment, ranging from 0 (worst) to 10 (best).

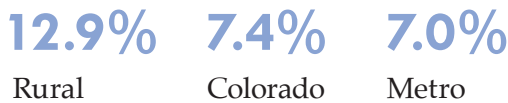
COLORADO'S FOOD ENVIRONMENT INDEX



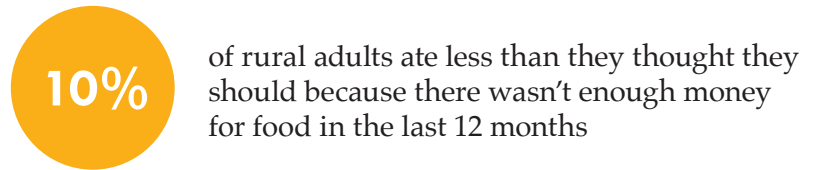
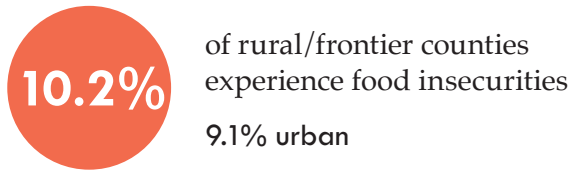
Food index scores vary throughout Colorado with index scores as low as **1.6 in Costilla**

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) IN RURAL AREAS

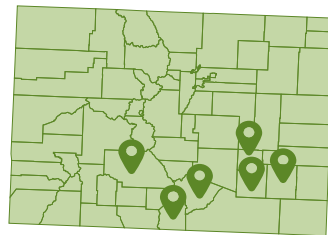
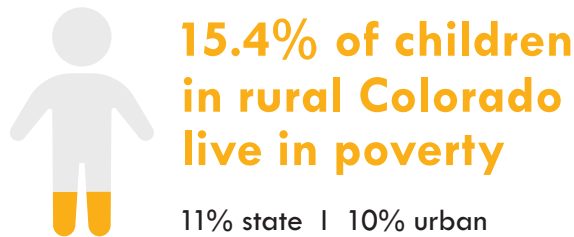
Percent of households on SNAP



Highest rates of households on SNAP by county

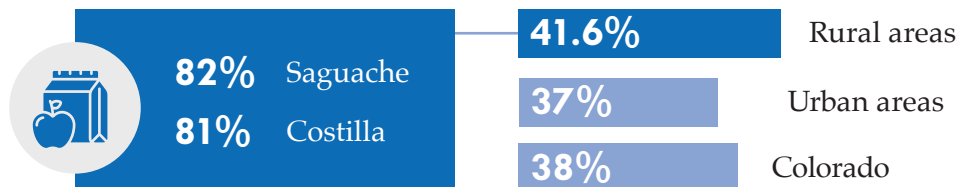


CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS



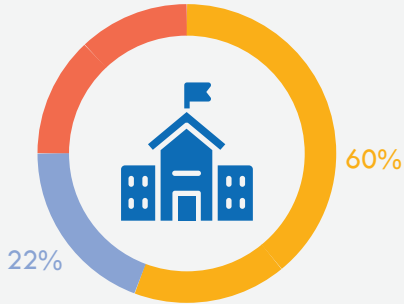
Costilla, Otero, Crowley, Saguache, Huerfano, and Bent **all have ~1 in 3** children living in poverty

Children eligible for free or reduced price lunch enrolled in public schools



179

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN COLORADO



32 districts

are defined as 'urban'

37 districts

are defined as 'rural'

110 districts

are defined as 'small rural'



SMALL RURAL: K-12,
<1000 enrolled students

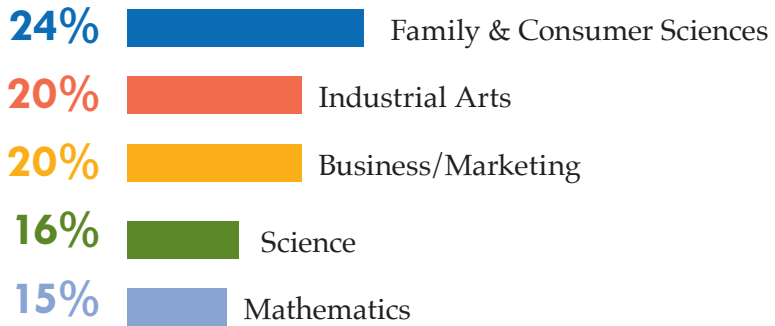
RURAL: K-12, 1,001-6,500
enrolled students

Education in Colorado

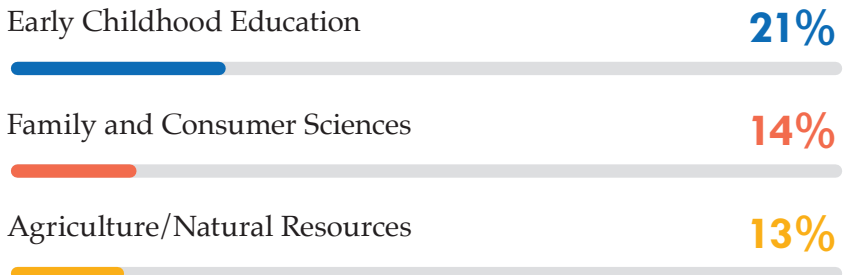
The 2023-2024 Educator Shortage Survey showed that small rural and rural districts had the highest percentage of positions filled through a shortage mechanism or left unfilled.

SUBJECT AREA SHORTAGES IN SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Highest shortages for Small Rural Districts



Highest shortages for Rural Districts



TEACHER SALARIES IN 2023-24



\$60,775 is the overall average teacher salary in Colorado
29th in the nation



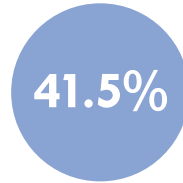
12 districts with the lowest average teacher salaries were in small rural counties
The average salary was \$38,455

Education Enrollment, Health & Funding

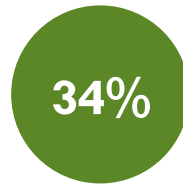


22%

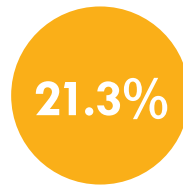
of all positions to hire in Colorado for the 2023-2024 school year were in rural or small rural districts



of Colorado schools had **comprehensive health education** required for all



of rural counties **HAD a licensed psychologist** in school districts within the county



of rural counties **did NOT have a licensed registered nurse** in school districts within the county

DIVERSITY IN RURAL SCHOOLS 2023-24



44.1%

of students attending rural schools (PK-12)

36.4%

of students attending small rural schools (PK-12)

AVERAGE FUNDING PER STUDENT IN 2022-23



\$14,943 was spent per student in school districts across Colorado for a total of \$13.1 Billion

\$14,849 per pupil
urban average

\$15,656 per pupil
rural average



Kiowa County has one of **the lowest at \$9,170 per student**



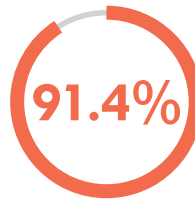
San Juan has the **highest at \$29,624 per student**

Per student funding is highest in rural districts due primarily to the enrollment size factor adjustment in the school finance formula


Graduation & Higher Education



of Bent County high school students graduated within 4 years in 2023, the lowest rate in the state



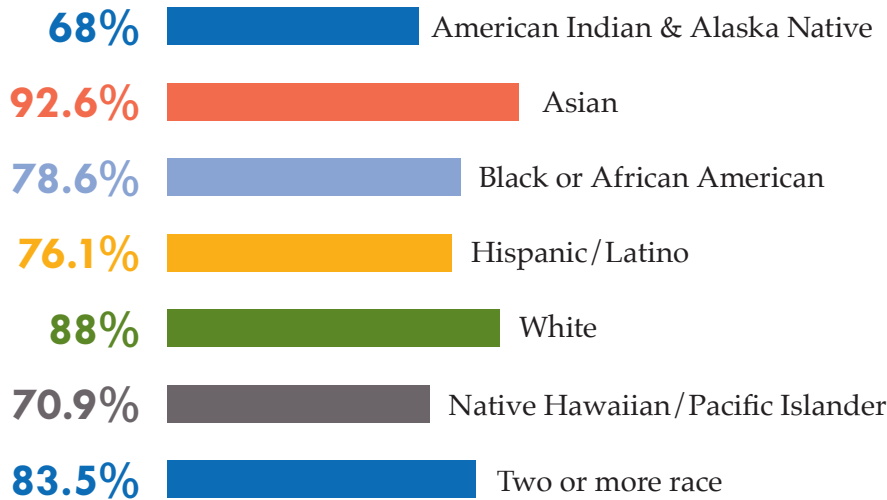
of the population over 25 in rural Colorado has completed high school

The 4-year graduation rate in 2023 was 83.1%  across all Colorado school districts, its highest level in nearly a decade

TOP 5 HIGH SCHOOL 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES



THE 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES BY RACE IN 2023



ADVANCED COURSE OFFERINGS

Colorado public high schools in 2022-23 school year

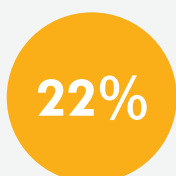
38% offered at least 5 AP courses*

48% had at least one AP STEM course

71% of the rural districts did not offer any AP courses as of 2020

*Advanced Placement (AP) courses

HIGHER EDUCATION RATES



of individuals 25 and over in rural Colorado have attained a bachelors degree or higher

28% urban | 27% state

College enrollment rate for 2021 high school graduates

50% State average

47.5% All rural districts

Healthcare Coverage

In rural Colorado, more people are covered by Medicare and Medicaid than urban Coloradans. This is due to lower incomes, higher rates of seniors, higher costs of private insurance, and less private coverage options in rural Colorado. These coverage demographics emphasize the importance of supporting public insurance programs and the significant number of rural residents who utilize these coverage options.

17.2%

of all CHP+ enrollments were in rural Colorado, as of August 2024



Enrollment rates among the potentially CHP+ eligible population

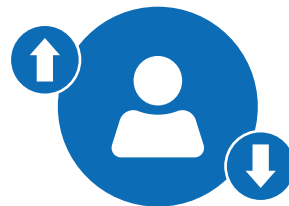
6% rural | 3.4% urban

2022-23	Rural Payer Mix	Urban Payer Mix
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance	45.6%	58.7%
Medicaid/CHP+	34.7%	30%
Medicare	22%	16.5%
Enrolled in Public Insurance	56.7%	46.5%

THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IMPACT ON MEDICAID AND CHP+ ENROLLMENT

During the pandemic (2020-23), Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment

increased by 550,000 people



Post pandemic unwind (2023-July 2024), Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment

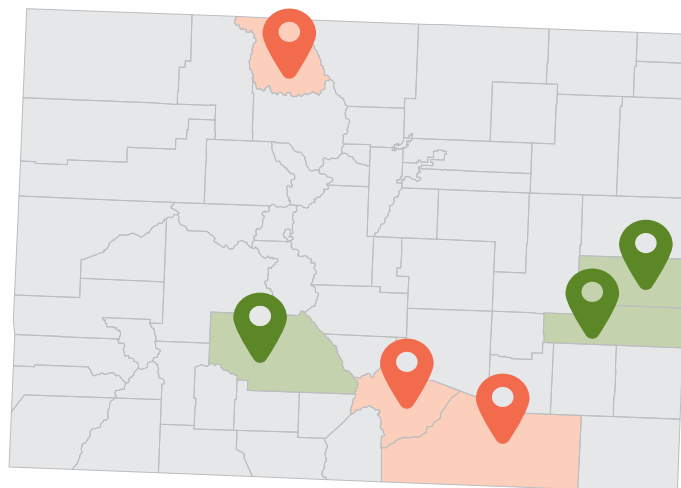
decreased by 546,000 people

19 rural counties

experienced an increase in Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment from 2020-24

Counties with Highest Enrollment Gains

- 3% Cheyenne
- 2.8% Kiowa
- 2.1% Saguache



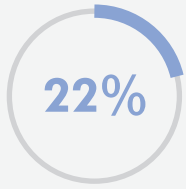
28 rural counties

experienced a decrease in Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment from 2020-24

Counties with Highest Enrollment Drops

- 7.2% Jackson
- 5.5% Huerfano
- 4.9% Las Animas

MEDICARE COVERAGE IN 2023

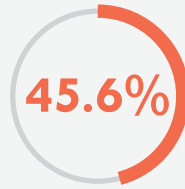


of rural Colorado was covered by Medicare compared to 16.5% of urban areas

The counties with the highest percent covered by Medicare were all rural

36.8% Huerfano **36.6%** Custer **35.5%** Costilla

EMPLOYER SPONSORED COVERAGE IN 2022



of rural Colorado was covered by employer sponsored insurance compared to 58.7% of urban areas

Mountain resort counties had the highest employer sponsored health insurance rates within rural Colorado

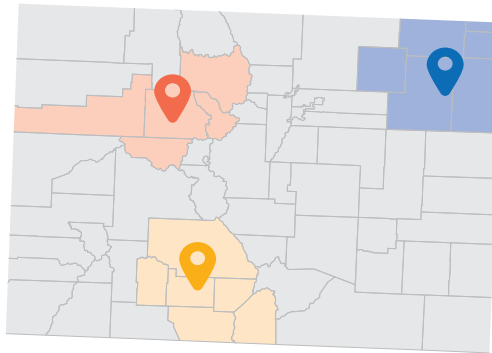
59% Eagle **58%** Lake **55%** Gunnison **54%** Summit



Rural Colorado experienced higher uninsured rates for adults under 65

12.3% Rural
8.9% Urban
9.3% State

HIGHEST UNINSURED RATES AMONG ADULTS <65

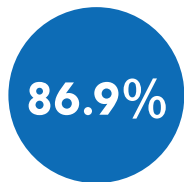


13.5% Mountain Resort Communities
14.8% Northeast Plains
13.2% San Luis Valley

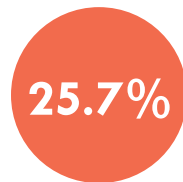
WHAT PREVENTS UNINSURED COLORADANS FROM HAVING COVERAGE?



lost their job or changed employers



cost is too high



don't know how to get insurance

BARRIERS TO GETTING CARE



29.2% of rural Coloradans skipped needed care because of cost, compared to 25.8% of urban Coloradans

MEDICAL BILLS

1 in 4

Coloradans had a **surprise medical bill** in the past 12 months

American Indians & Alaska Natives

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are the two federally recognized tribes residing in Colorado. Both of these tribes have reservations in southwestern Colorado. Each are governed by their own constitution, laws, and court systems that function independently of both the state and local governments.



The Indian Health Service (IHS) **provides comprehensive health services for about 2.56M** of the nation's American Indians & Alaska Natives



American Indians and Alaska Natives still continue to experience **higher rates of death due to**

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| heart disease | stroke | Alzheimer's |
| cancer | liver disease | influenza |
| diabetes | suicide | pneumonia |

4 locations for The Indian Health Service in Colorado:

- Ute Mountain UTE Health Center
- White Mesa Health Station
- Southern Ute Health Center
- Denver Indian Health and Family Service

The life expectancy today is 5.5 years below average

73 years

American Indians and Alaska Natives



78.5 years

U.S. population of all races



74,129 people

who identify as American Indians and Alaska Natives alone live in Colorado

About 1.3% of the population

A vast majority of people identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native live in urban areas, primarily the Denver metro area and Colorado Springs

The Southern Ute Tribe is the largest employer in La Plata County with revenue from:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Oil and gas production | Real estate development | Housing and construction |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|

Ute Mountain Ute Reservation covers 553,000 Acres in the Four Corners region, with major industries:

- | | | |
|---------|--------------|-------------|
| Tourism | Construction | Agriculture |
|---------|--------------|-------------|

DESCENDANTS OF:

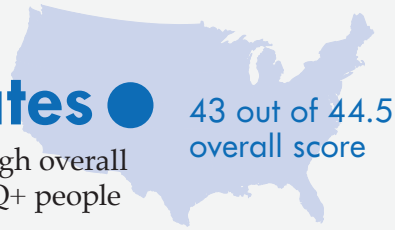
- Cheyenne
- Lakota
- Kiowa
- Navajo
- 200+ tribal nations

LGBTQ+ People in Colorado

Colorado is

1 of 15 states

considered to have a high overall equality tally of LGBTQ+ people



LGBTQ+ Coloradoans were just as likely to live in rural areas as urban areas with almost

1 in 10 individuals identifying as LGBTQ+



46%

of LGBTQ+ adults reported having good mental health, compared to 72.2% of heterosexual, cisgender Coloradans

13%

of the LGBTQ+ population lives in rural Colorado

MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH IN COLORADO

60% Unable to access mental healthcare in the past year

52% Fear of discussing mental health concerns

45% Fear of not being taken seriously

88%

LGBTQ+ youth felt their well-being was significantly affected by recent politics



1 in 4 LGBTQ+

youth in Colorado experienced a lack of acceptance within their community

COMPARED TO LGBTQ+ YOUTH IN URBAN AREAS, THOSE IN RURAL AREAS ARE

9%

more likely to experience depression symptoms

19%

more likely to attempt suicide

Compared nationally

49%

in rural areas and small towns

26%

in urban and suburban areas

Healthcare for LGBTQ+, Transgender & Nonbinary Coloradans

More than ever before, Colorado needs health professionals with training in the specific needs of the LGBTQ+, transgender and nonbinary community.

AFTER BEING SEEN BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

LGBTQ+ patients

13%

felt they were treated with less respect or received lower quality services

25.9%

reported their provider dismissed their health concerns



Straight and cisgender patients

6.5%

felt they were treated with less respect or received lower quality services

14%

reported their provider dismissed their health concerns

MANY TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS IN RURAL COLORADO STRUGGLE TO FIND PROPER CARE



Transgender and non-binary people in rural areas are over 3x more likely than cisgender LGBTQ+ people to:



See a particular healthcare provider because **the provider was known to see other LGBTQ+ patients**

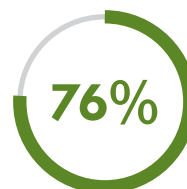


Travel 75+ miles to see their transgender-related medical care provider



Transgender populations experience the most difficulty finding providers

largely because there are treatments needed, such as hormone therapy, that often aren't standard with traditional care



of Medical Schools included LGBTQ+ health themes in the 2017-18 AAMC Curriculum Inventory, with half having three or fewer related learning activities

Veterans in Colorado



357,465 veterans currently live in Colorado

7.7%

of the rural population over 18 are veterans

8%

of the urban population over 18 are veterans

TOP 3 RURAL COUNTIES WITH THE HIGHEST RATE OF VETERANS

16.6%

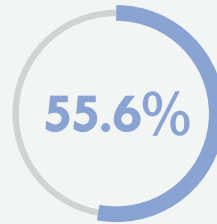
Jackson

14%

Dolores

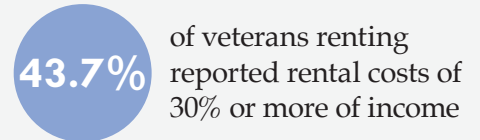
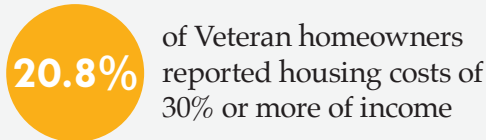
12.3%

Huerfano



of veterans living in rural Colorado are 65+ compared to 41% in urban areas

AMONG RURAL VETERANS



WHERE DID COLORADO VETERANS LIVING IN RURAL AREAS SERVE?



1.3% World War II

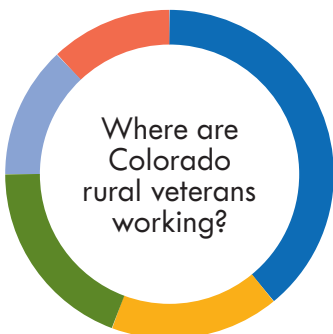
13% Between conflicts

41.2% Gulf War

5.5% Korean War

39.0% Vietnam Era

EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS AMONG RURAL VETERANS



38.5% Management, business, science, and arts occupations

16.5% Service occupations

19.5% Sales occupations

12.2% Construction and extraction

11.9% Transportation



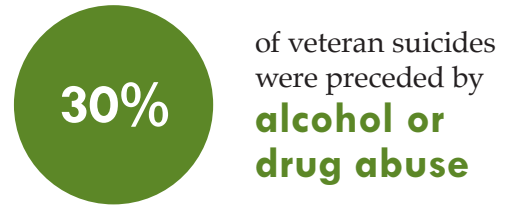
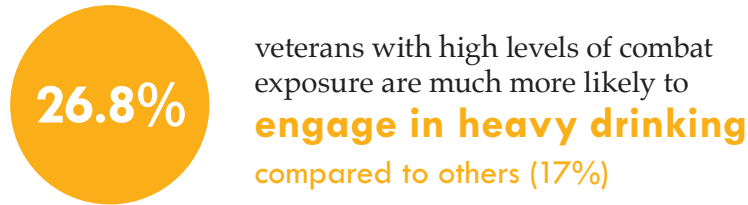
8% of veterans living in rural Colorado had income below the poverty level



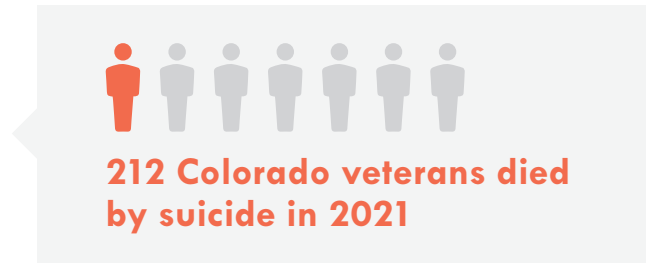
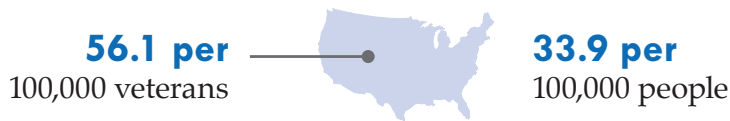
14% of homeless veterans reside in rural and non-metro Colorado

Health of Veterans

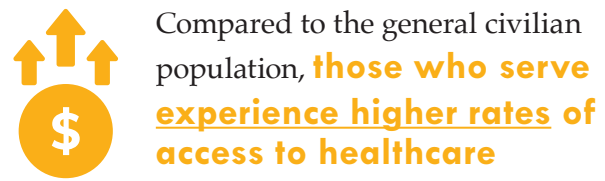
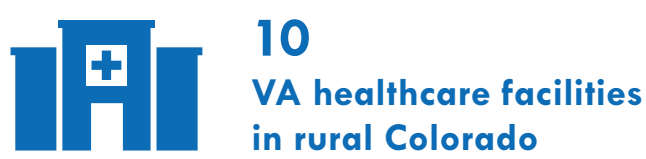
Compared to the general civilian population, those in the U.S. armed forces experience increased rates of mental health challenges, including depression, frequent mental distress, and suicidal thoughts. Veterans are also more likely to experience physical health challenges, including higher rates of chronic disease and pain.



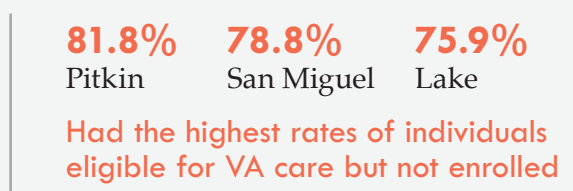
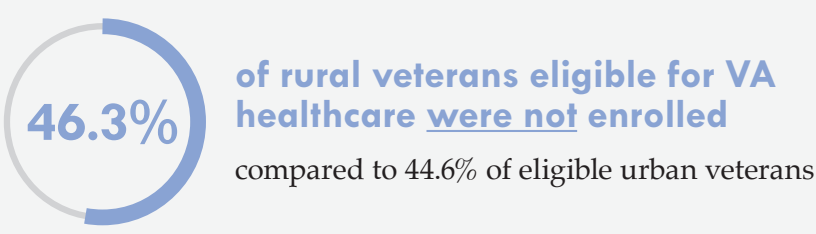
The rate of veteran suicides in Colorado is **65% higher than the national rate**



VETERANS IN RURAL COLORADO
21.6% have a service-connected disability
31.3% have a disability



MOST OF COLORADO'S VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES ARE LOCATED IN URBAN AREAS

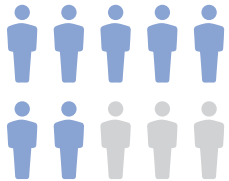


Rural Health in Colorado




Chronic Disease

In 2022, the top 10 leading causes of death in Colorado were Heart Disease, Cancer, Unintentional Injuries, Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases, COVID-19, Cerebrovascular diseases, Alzheimers, Suicide, Diabetes Mellitus, and Chronic Liver Disease.

 **7 of the top 10 leading causes of death are chronic diseases**

AGE ADJUSTED HOSPITALIZATIONS IN 2022

 **5.4 per 10,000**
COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) hospitalizations statewide

Rural Counties with the highest rates	17.5 Las Animas	16.0 Rio Grande	14.4 Prowers
---------------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------

 **5.3 per 10,000**
Asthma hospitalizations statewide


Rural Counties with the highest rates	4.7 Delta	4.7 Montezuma	4.0 Morgan
---------------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------------


 **17.3 per 10,000**
Heart Attack hospitalizations statewide

Rural Counties with the highest rates	32.0 Crowley	28.0 Huerfano	24.9 Rio Grande
---------------------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES IN RURAL COLORADO

 **32**
Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

 **12**
Rural Prospective payment system (PPS) Hospitals

 **55**
Federally Certified Rural Health Clinics (RHC)

 **82**
Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)

 **20**
Community Health Centers

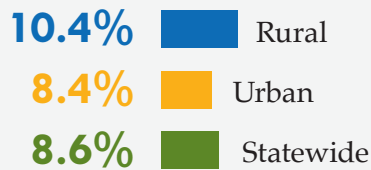


The 10 leading causes of death in rural Colorado

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Cancer | 6 | Cerebrovascular Disease |
| 2 | Heart Disease | 7 | Alzheimers |
| 3 | Unintentional Injury | 8 | Diabetes Mellitus |
| 4 | Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases | 9 | Suicide |
| 5 | COVID | 10 | Chronic Liver Disease |

PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC DISEASE AMONG COLORADO ADULTS IN 2023

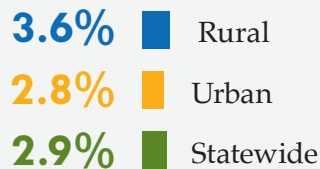
Diabetes



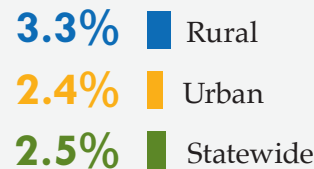
High Cholesterol



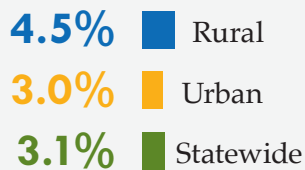
Heart Attack



Stroke



Heart Disease



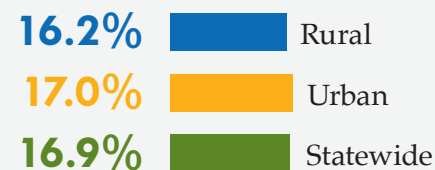
Arthritis



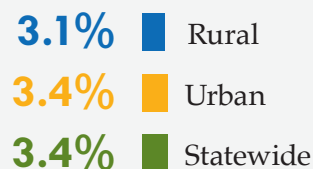
High Blood Pressure



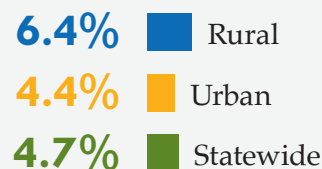
Asthma



Kidney Disease



COPD



CANCER IN COLORADO

25,526

new cancer cases in 2021

8,411

deaths caused by cancer in 2023

15.4%

of Cancer deaths occurred in rural Colorado

13.6%

of new cancer cases occurred in rural Colorado

Age adjusted cancer diagnosis rate per 100,000

376

Statewide

346

Rural



Age adjusted rate for cancer deaths per 100,000

120.8

Statewide

122.9

Rural

Slightly lower in rural areas

Slightly higher in rural areas

Top 4 most lethal cancers in Colorado

- Lung and Bronchus
- Blood Cancers
- Colorectum
- Breast

Cancer incidence rates per 100,000 from 2020 to 2021



Lung



Blood



Colorectum



Breast

34.4 Statewide

30.8 Rural

11.7 Statewide

9.1 Rural

29.5 Statewide

27.0 Rural

66.4 Statewide

55.0 Rural

MELANOMA IN COLORADO



~2,000 new melanoma cases are expected every year in Colorado



From 2020 to 2021, the incidence rate of melanoma per 100,000 **in rural Colorado was 21.5**

» Higher than the statewide rate of 19.9

Due to high elevation and high outdoor recreation

Colorado has one of the highest death rates for melanoma in the U.S.

99%

five-year survival rate for early melanoma treatment

CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASE IN COLORADO PER 100,000 RESIDENTS

The age adjusted rate for chronic lower respiratory disease deaths was **41.5** in rural Colorado

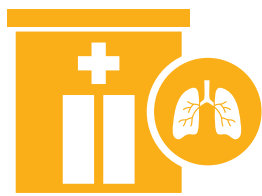
This is higher than the statewide rate of 35



Southeast counties had the highest rates of chronic respiratory disease deaths

96.1 Otero	93.2 Bent
90.4 Crowley	88.6 Las Animas

ASTHMA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS PER 10,000 RESIDENTS



28.6 asthma emergency department visits statewide in 2022

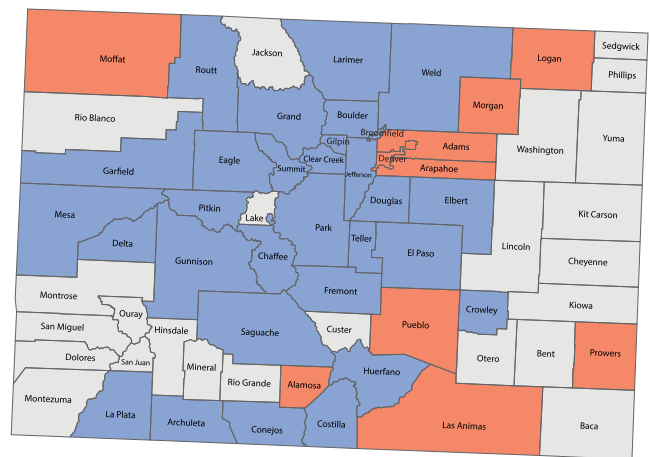
This is an increase from 2021 (23 per 10,000 visits)

The highest rates statewide in 2022 per 10,000 visits

56.1 ages 0-4	53.8 ages 5-14	33.0 ages 15-34
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As individuals get older, the likelihood of an ED visit due to asthma decreases

Age adjusted rates of Asthma emergency visits in 2022



Significantly higher than the state average Significantly lower than the state average

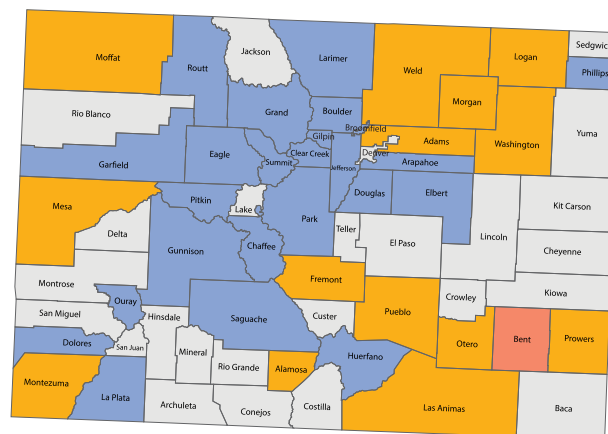
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD) PER 10,000 RESIDENTS IN 2022

The rate of COPD emergency department visits was **25** across the state

78.9 was the highest in Bent County

Females were more likely to visit the emergency department for COPD than males

28.1 Females	21.9 Males
------------------------	----------------------



COPD ED visit rates
 Higher than the state average
 Lower than the state average

DIABETES

In 2022, roughly 25% of all healthcare dollars were incurred by people with diabetes. 61% of total medical costs incurred by people with diabetes was directly attributable to the disease. Nearly 1 in 7 healthcare dollars is directly attributable to diabetes.

34+ million people

in the U.S. have diabetes, with 1.5 million diagnosed every year

In 2023, diabetes rates were **24% higher in rural Colorado** compared to urban areas





In 2023, diabetes self-management course participation among adults

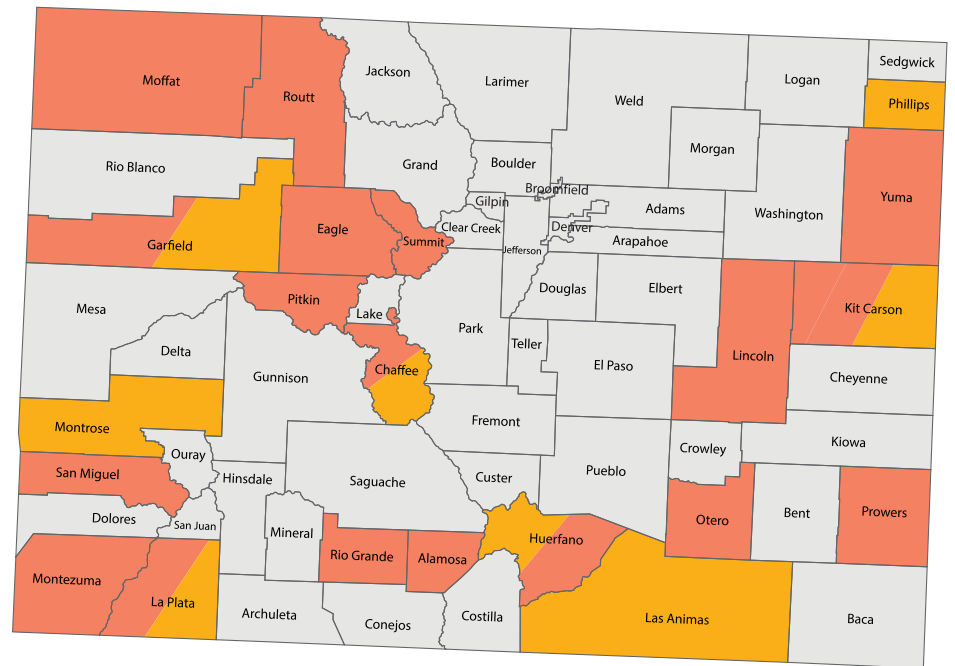
62.3% Rural
64.4% Urban

RURAL COUNTIES WITH DIABETES EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) teaches participants how to eat healthy, be active, monitor blood sugar levels, take medication, problem solve, reduce risk for other health conditions, and cope with their disease. It is evidence-based and improves clinical outcomes, health status, and quality of life.

 Rural counties with a Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support program (DSMES)

 Rural counties with a National Diabetes Prevention Program



In rural Colorado, the age adjusted death rate for diabetes mellitus was **17.3 per 100,000**

Slightly higher than the statewide rate of 17



The age adjusted death rates among American Indians/Alaska Natives and Hispanic individuals in rural Colorado were **2X more than the Non-Hispanic White population**

HEART DISEASE AMONG COLORADO ADULTS



Age adjusted heart disease death rate per 100,000 in 2023

125.9 Rural
 121.4 Statewide
 ↓ from 205.3 in 2001

Age adjusted stroke death rate per 100,000 in 2023

30.1 Rural
 34.2 Statewide
 ↑ from 27.3 in 2022

In rural Colorado, the risk is significantly higher for males (153.60) than for females (98.5)

High Cholesterol in Ages 20+

35.7% Rural
 32.5% Urban
 32.8% Statewide

Blood Pressure Medication

70.7% Rural
 68.8% Urban
 69.1% Statewide

Adults who have had a heart attack and are attending cardiac rehab

48.1% Rural
 56.5% Urban

Compared to 55.6% statewide



Adults ages 20+ reported having a cholesterol screening within 5+ years

85.4% Rural
 86.8% Urban

Increase from 71.7% of rural adults reported having a screening in 2015

NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE AMONG COLORADO ADULTS

Obesity

23.4% Rural
 25.1% Urban
 24.6% Statewide

Overweight

36.4% Rural
 34.8% Urban
 35.0% Statewide

Underweight

3.7% Rural
 2.6% Urban
 2.7% Statewide



From 2019-2022 the highest prevalence of obesity has been in the eastern plains

20%

of rural adults reported no leisure time for physical activity compared to 17% in urban areas

17%

of rural Coloradoans eat vegetables more than once daily, compared to 19% of urban residents

Older Adults

Rural aging comes with a host of challenges including the lack of medical services, infrastructure needs regarding transportation and internet connectivity, affordable, safe and manageable housing, and an increased risk of social isolation.



10% of rural older adults (ages 60+) had income below the poverty level

Compared to 7.8% in urban Colorado



11% of housing in rural Colorado had 10+ units compared to 19% in urban areas in 2022

Indicating fewer options for manageable housing



In Colorado, as of June 2024, **43% of the providers who do not participate in Medicare** were in a behavioral health discipline and 20% were in an oral health discipline

Of the rural providers who opted out

22%	19%	22%
behavioral health discipline	oral health discipline	family practice

OLDER ADULTS IN RURAL COLORADO EXPERIENCE MORE POSITIVE HEALTH FACTORS

Physical inactivity

19.6% Rural
21.1% Urban

Obesity

18.7% Rural
25.0% Urban

Frequent mental distress

4.6% Rural
8.0% Urban

Physical distress

10.4% Rural
16.2% Urban

MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS

In 2023, suicide rates among 65+ adults in Colorado were:

32.4 per 100,000

older adults in rural areas



22.8 per 100,000

older adults in urban areas

Depression rates in Colorado among adults 65+ in 2022

14.8% urban areas



11.9% rural areas



The drug overdose rate among those 65+ in rural Colorado increased by **26.6% from 2022 to 2023**

Rural 13.6 compared to Urban 17.2 per 100,000

Fall prevalence among those 65+



34.8% Rural
28.8% Urban



Colorado ranked as the #2 healthiest state for older adults

Strengths for older adults

- Low prevalence of poverty
- Low prevalence of physical inactivity

Challenges for older adults

- High suicide rate
- High prevalence of falls

OLDER RURAL COLORADANS

90%

or more of trips in rural communities are made by personal vehicle



Rural older adults who stop driving become more isolated from resources and social interactions

51.8%

of rural adults 65+ reported being up to date on core clinical preventative services in 2022, compared to 56.6% of urban adults

~25% of all Colorado older adults receive care from caregivers



30% reported difficulties performing regular activities

↑ 48%

Nationally, Medicare Advantage enrollment in rural communities has increased from 2019 to 2023

36% of all Medicare beneficiaries in rural Colorado are enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans (57% in urban areas in 2024)



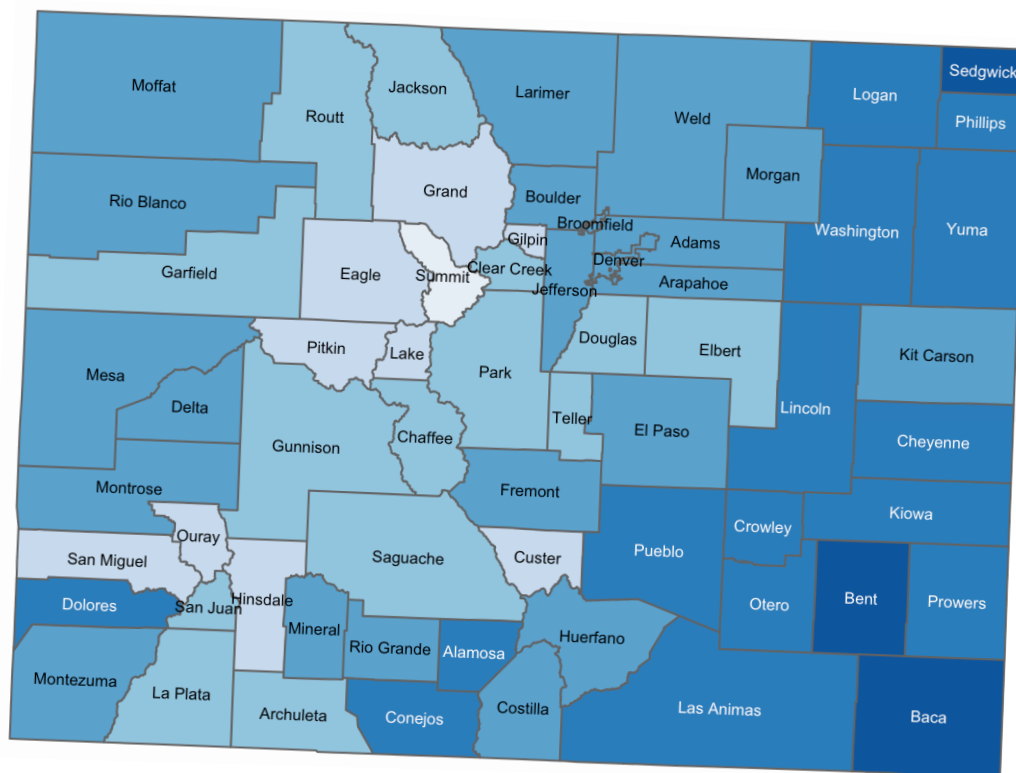
1 certified nursing home bed per 40 individuals

aged 65+ in rural Colorado (compared to 1 per 49 in urban areas)

However, 15 rural counties do not have a nursing home

See appendix for detailed map

DEATH RATE AMONG ADULTS AGED 65+ IN 2023



3,180 rural

3,453 urban

3,409 statewide

Rate per 100,000

0 - 1,000

1,000 - 2,000

2,000 - 3,000

3,000 - 4,000

4,000 - 5,000

5,000 - 6,000

Maternal Health

Closures of rural hospitals, labor and delivery units, and obstetric services contribute to lack of access to maternity care for rural Coloradans. In Colorado, 64% of rural and frontier counties do not have access to hospital obstetric services. A maternity care desert is any county without a hospital or birthing center offering obstetric care and without any obstetric providers.



51% of rural Colorado is considered a "Maternity Care Desert"



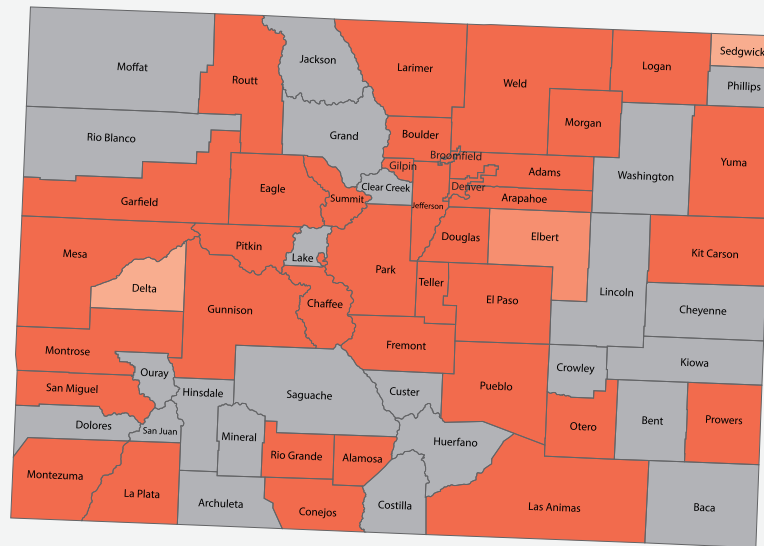
On average, women living in maternity care deserts **travel 51 miles for maternity care**

7.2X farther than those with access



Only 18 of Colorado's

32 Critical Access Hospitals have an obstetrics department



Access to Maternity Care

- Full Access
- Moderate Access
- Low Access
- Maternity Care Desert

Women in rural areas are

15X MORE LIKELY to travel 30+ minutes to give birth than women in urban areas



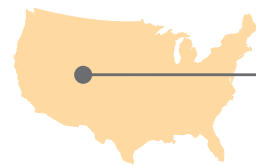
80.7% of live births

were to women receiving early prenatal care in Colorado in 2022

Rural counties had lower rates compared to urban counties (75% to 82%)

ABORTION IS PROTECTED UNDER COLORADO LAW

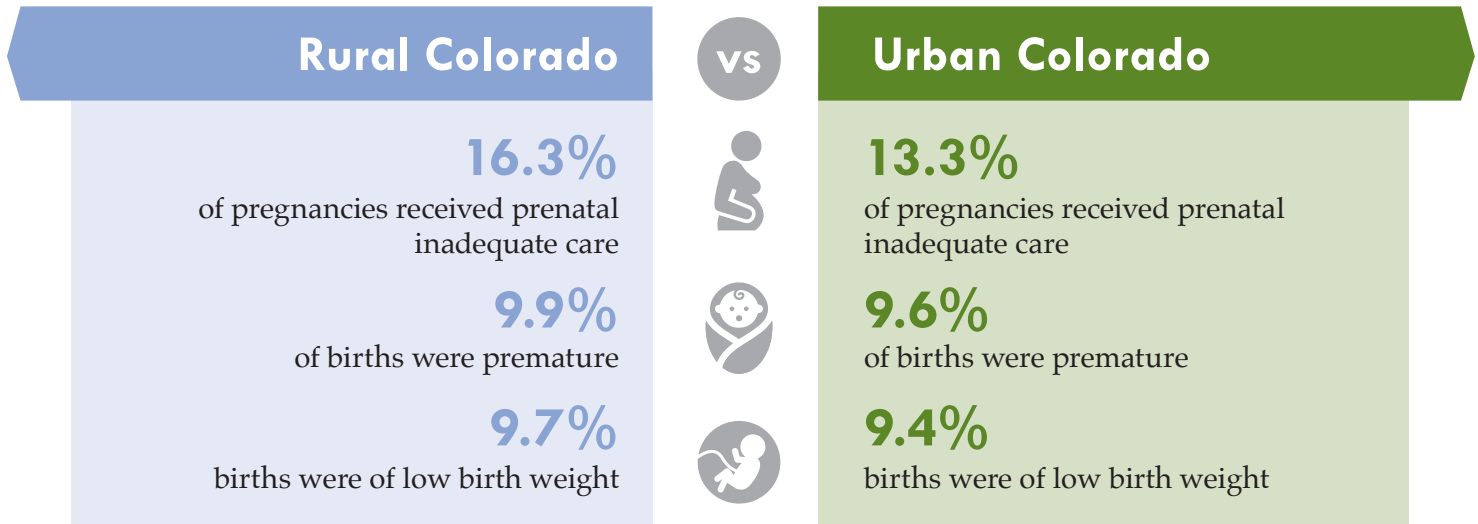
22 states now prohibit abortion or restrict it earlier in pregnancy



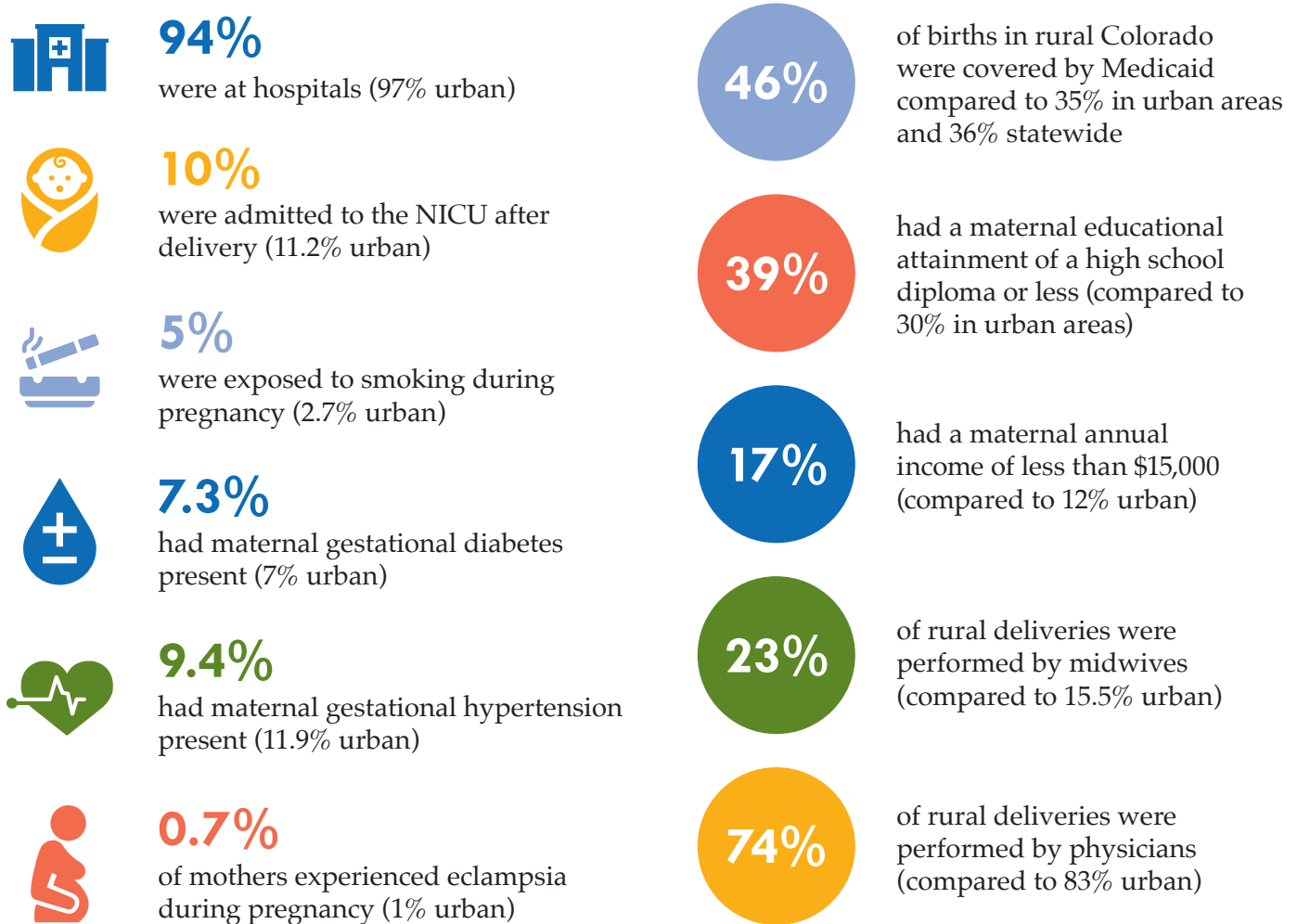
14,154 abortions were reported in Colorado in 2022 (27.9% were from out of state)

28% of the abortions reported by Colorado residents were reported in non-metro areas in 2022





Childbirth and Infant Health




RURAL BIRTHS IN 2023



IN AN AVERAGE WEEK IN COLORADO

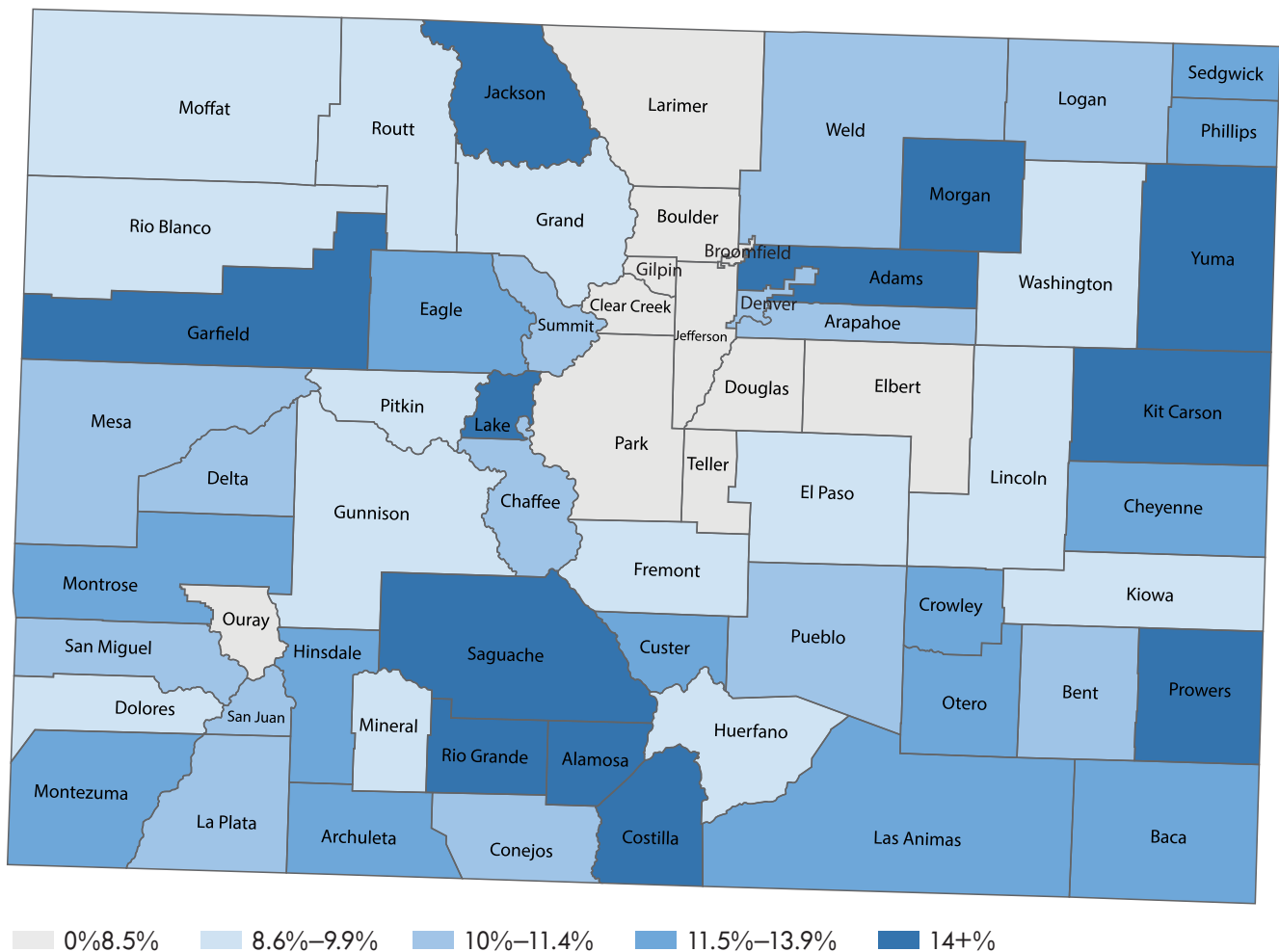
1,199 babies are born		127 rural babies
120 babies are born preterm		13 rural babies
118 babies are born low birth weight		12 rural babies
842 women receive adequate prenatal care		91 rural women

 **6,578**
rural births
in 2023

35% of rural births

had maternal participation in Women Infant and Children (WIC) during pregnancy, compared to 25% in urban areas

HIGHEST UNINSURED RATES FOR COLORADO WOMEN AGED 15-44 IN 2022



MATERNAL MORTALITY

Pregnancy associated mortality from 2016 to 2020

51.5 urban **62.5** rural

131.9 frontier per 100,000



Pregnancy related mortality from 2016 to 2020

22.9 urban **27.7** rural

82.4 frontier per 100,000

817 people died from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth in the U.S. in 2022 — a 32% decrease from the previous year



From 2018-2020, the Colorado maternal mortality rate was

~16 deaths per 100,000 live births

*Below the national rate

Women living in frontier counties who are pregnant or postpartum

3X MORE LIKELY to die from pregnancy-related causes than those who lived in urban counties

GYNECOLOGICAL CARE IN COLORADO



77.5% of women aged 18+ reported having a pap smear within the past 3 years

73.6% of rural women reported being up to date in 2020



57.4% of rural counties do not have a practicing OBGYN

To achieve equal access there would need to be 20 more active OBGYNs in rural Colorado



Active OBGYNs in a patient care role per 100,000 women aged 13+

25 rural **32** urban

2020-2022 Adequate/Adequate Plus Prenatal Care by Race and Ethnicity

72.9% White	61.0% American Indian/Alaska Natives
69.5% Asian/Pacific Islanders	59.5% African Americans
66.0% Hispanics	



The teen birth rate is **52% higher in rural Colorado compared to urban areas**

14 teen births per 1,000 women ages 15-19 in Colorado in 2022

On average rural Colorado experienced significantly higher teen birth rates (18.5) compared to urban counties (12.2)

Vaccines and Immunizations

Different diseases have different thresholds to reach herd immunity. Research shows that when vaccine rates fall below those thresholds, the risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks increases.

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR



With the exception of the Hepatitis B vaccine, immunization rates among kindergartners for school-required vaccines were

below 90% for the THIRD year in a row



of all K-12 students across the state are compliant with vaccine requirements



88.3% of kindergartners

are covered by the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine in the 2023–2024 school year

An increase of 1.5% from 2022



20% of rural counties

have an all schools and child cares vaccine compliance rate of below 90%

Colorado requires several vaccines for children in school or child care

Hepatitis B	Rubella	Tetanus
Measles	Polio	Pertussis
Mumps	Diphtheria	Chickenpox



There are additional, optional vaccines that public health officials recommend

COVID-19	Human papillomavirus
Hepatitis A	Meningococcal
Rotavirus	Influenza

WORK-RELATED INJURIES

Each year, on average, 112 work-related deaths occur in Colorado, or approximately one work-related fatality every three to four days. Every year, thousands of other people are injured on the job or become ill from work-related exposures.



16.7% of Colorado workers

were employed in an occupation with a high risk of morbidity

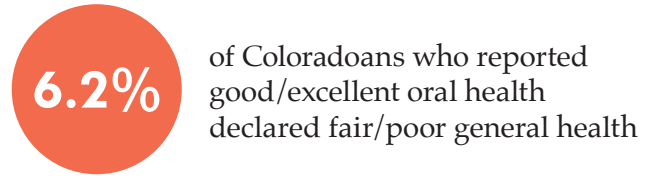
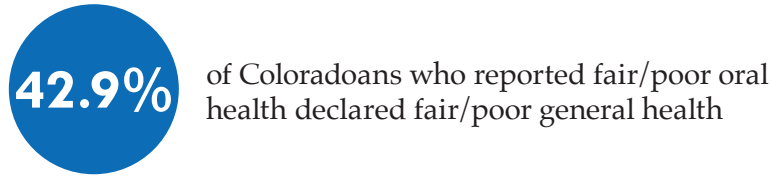


13.1% of Colorado workers

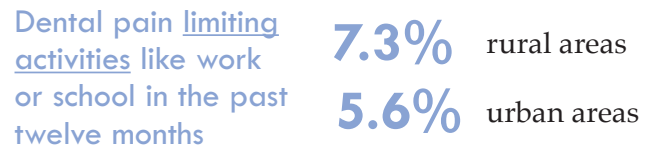
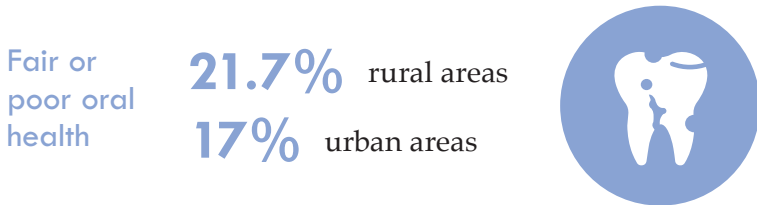
were employed in an occupation with a high risk of mortality

Oral Health

Physical, oral, and mental health are all interconnected. Coloradans experiencing poor oral health were more likely to experience fair or poor overall health.



COLORADO ADULTS REPORTED IN 2023



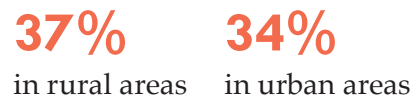
Coloradans reporting fair/poor oral health are **7X MORE LIKELY** to report poor general health than those with good/excellent oral health

30%+ of people in the San Luis Valley and Southeast Plains reported fair to poor oral health in 2023, the highest in the state

Coloradans ages 65+ who have lost ALL of their natural teeth



Coloradans ages 18+ have lost at least one tooth due to decay or periodontal disease



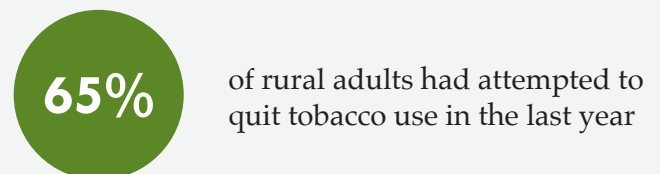
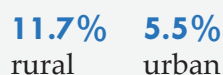
ORAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco use, such as cigarettes or smokeless chew tobacco, is known to **cause oral health problems**

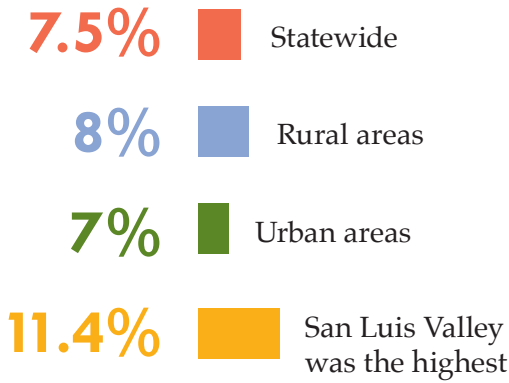
Adults who are currently smoking cigarettes



Adult males who use smokeless tobacco



STUDENTS WHO MISSED SCHOOL DUE TO ORAL OR DENTAL PAIN IN 2023



SCHOOL-BASED SEALANT PROGRAMS

2022 Study analyzing CDC funded School Based Sealant Programs

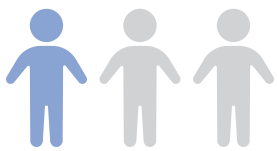


26 cavities were prevented

for every 100 sealants applied, over 9 years



Providers would save money if the cost of restoring 1 cavity was at least 4X the cost of placing the sealant



1 in 3 children

in Colorado have experienced dental decay by the time they reach kindergarten



Nearly half experience a cavity by 3rd grade



Children aged 5-19 living in low-income families are

2x as likely to have cavities,

compared with children from higher income families



Children who suffer from poor oral health are

12X more likely

to have days where they are unable to perform school related activities days than those who do not

DISPARITIES IN DENTAL ACCESS IN COLORADO

Across Colorado, 74.3% of adults visited a dentist or dental hygienist within the past 12 months, these populations visited the dentist less with the past 12 months:

70.8% living in rural areas

64% Black or African American

65% Hispanic

65% insured through Medicaid

67% 19-50 years of age

67% income below 200% of the FPL

39% uninsured

Dental Care Access

70% of rural counties are entirely designated as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (compared to 35% of urban)

19 of 47 rural counties (40%) have at least one low fee dental clinic that offers dental care on a sliding fee scale to individuals who are unable to afford treatment

Only 10 dental providers outside of the Front Range and Grand Junction who accept Medicaid

Across rural Colorado, there is **~1 active dentist per 1,909 people** Compared to 1 per 1,403 people in urban areas

Medicare doesn't cover services for teeth or structures directly supporting the teeth. Only 43% of adults over 65 in rural Colorado reported dental coverage in 2023.

Reasons why Coloradoans skipped dental care within the last year

Dental office or clinic was not in their community	6.4% Rural	2.5% Urban
Dental office or clinic was not accepting new patients	5.6% Rural	3.9% Urban
They did not have a way to get to a dentist/clinic	4.5% Rural	3.8% Urban

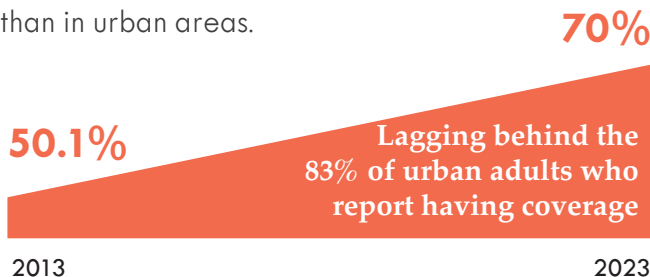
Rural Colorado has higher rates of uninsured individuals and those on public insurance

Public Insurance	70% visited a dentist; 75% reported good/excellent oral health
Uninsured	38.8% visited a dentist; 58% reported good/excellent oral health
Private Insurance	80.4% visited a dentist; 90% reported good/excellent oral health

DENTAL INSURANCE COVERAGE HAS INCREASED FOR ALL COLORADANS

The cost of dental healthcare is a much larger barrier to dental care in rural Colorado than in urban areas.

The rate of dental insurance coverage has increased in rural Colorado



21.2% of people in rural areas reported not getting needed dental care due to cost
Compared to 16.6% in urban areas

Behavioral Health in Colorado

All 47 of Colorado's rural and frontier counties are designated mental health professional shortage areas. Rural Coloradans continue to experience worse behavioral health outcomes and lower access to behavioral healthcare than urban residents. Stigma related to needing or receiving behavioral healthcare in small communities persists and can make the already small pool of providers even smaller.



26,661

mental health providers
in Colorado

8.2% are located in rural areas

Compared to urban areas, access is 52% worse in rural Colorado

1 provider per 320 residents
in rural areas

1 provider per 210 residents
in urban areas

Adults who reported 14+ poor
mental health days per month

13.1%

rural areas

16.3%

urban areas

Depression rates are slightly
higher for urban adults

19.2%

rural areas

21.6%

urban areas



18-24

is the age group
experiencing the
highest depression
rate at 28.7%



15.2% of rural Coloradans
reported needing mental healthcare but
were unable to get it (17% statewide)

Top Rural Reasons:

- ✓ 55% had concerns about the cost of treatment
- ✓ 53% reported having a hard time getting an appointment

**Individuals reporting poor
mental health**

**22.9% Rural
26.7% Urban**

IN 2023, COLORADO RANKED 5TH HIGHEST IN THE NATION FOR YOUTH DEPRESSION

High school students reporting
recent poor mental health

28.4%

statewide

29%

rural areas

Non-Binary students were
2.3X more likely

to report recent poor mental health
than cisgender students



High school students reporting
unmanageable stress levels most days

21.4%

statewide

23.2%

rural areas



of rural high school students
reported they felt hopeless almost
every day for two or more weeks

Suicide



The age adjusted suicide rate was higher in rural Colorado

PER 100,000 IN 2023

25.5 Rural **20.9 Statewide**

Age adjusted suicide rates among males in rural areas were significantly higher than females



37.8
per 100,000

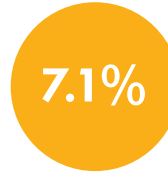


12.0
per 100,000

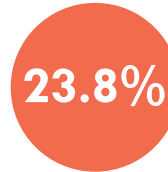


Suicide rates among rural age groups per 100,000

11.7 aged 15-18	25.7 aged 19-24	39.4 aged 25-34	31.3 aged 35-44
38.9 aged 45-54	31.7 aged 55-64	25.3 aged 65-74	43.6 aged 74+



of adults in rural Colorado had a suicidal ideation within the past year compared to 6.3% of urban adults



of rural adults who had a suicidal ideation attempted suicide compared to 16.4% of urban adults

YOUTH SUICIDE IN COLORADO



16 lives aged 10-24 were lost to suicide in rural areas in 2023



56% of youth suicides (aged 10-24) were caused by firearm in rural Colorado
57% urban

High school students considered suicide attempts in the past 12 months

10.3%
in rural areas



9.3%
statewide

High school students would not seek help if concerned about mental health

15.4%
in rural areas



14.3%
statewide

The youth suicide rate is

35% higher in rural Colorado

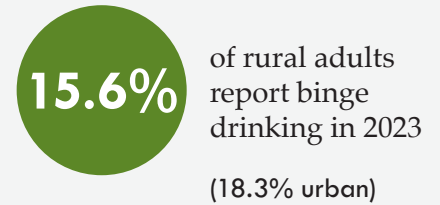
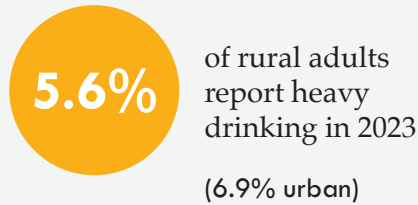
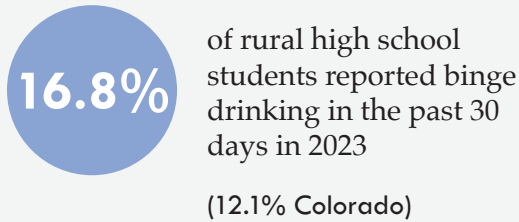
19.8 per 100,000 in rural vs. 14.7 in urban



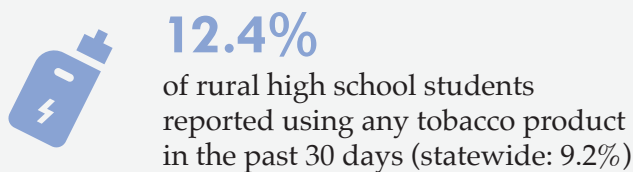
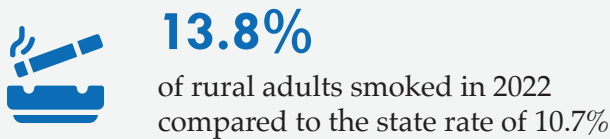
Protective factors to reduce risk of suicide among youth include

- ✓ Safe schools and strong adult connections
- ✓ Access to culturally competent, evidence-based care
- ✓ Reduced access to substances or devices used in/for suicide

Substance Use

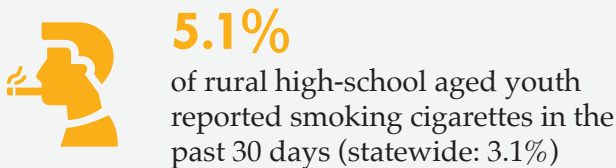


TOBACCO USE IN RURAL COLORADO



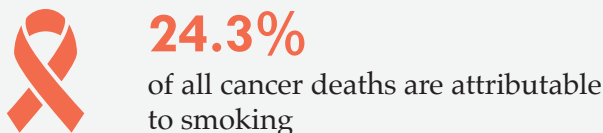
The highest prevalence of youth tobacco use was 16.7% across these counties:

Archuleta La Plata San Juan
Dolores Montezuma

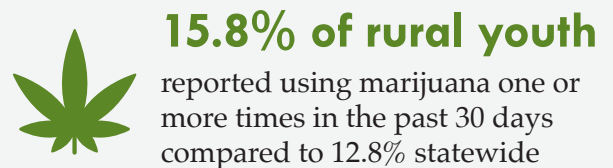


The highest prevalence of youth cigarette use was 8.5% across these counties:

Gunnison Hinsdale Ouray
Delta Montrose San Miguel



MARIJUANA USE IN RURAL COLORADO



The highest prevalence of youth marijuana use was 21.3% across these counties:

Archuleta La Plata San Juan
Dolores Montezuma

RURAL ESTIMATES & TOP 5 REASONS YOUTH REPORT USING SUBSTANCES



18.6% to have a good time with friends

14.5% to feel good

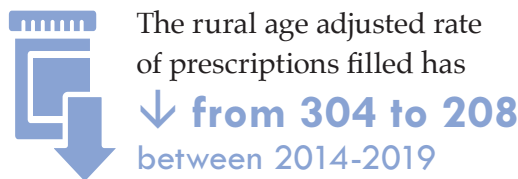
12.6% to cope

12.5% to experiment

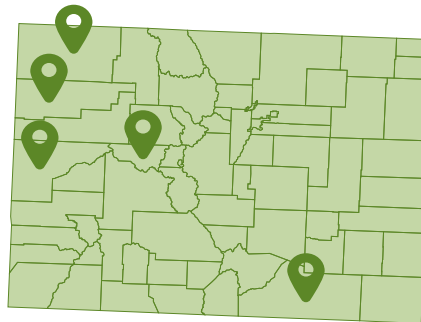
8.2% boredom

BENZODIAZEPINE PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

Rural females had more benzodiazepine prescriptions filled than urban females



Top 5 rural counties benzodiazepine prescriptions dispensed



- 375** Pitkin
- 325** Las Animas
- 314** Rio Blanco
- 310** Moffat
- 306** Mesa

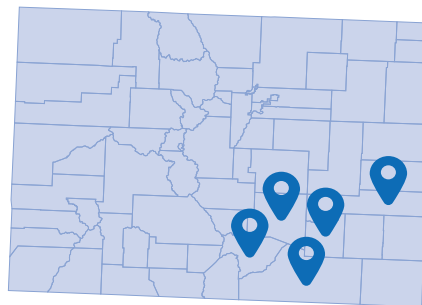
OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



Females had much higher rates of opioid prescriptions filled compared to males



The highest opioid prescribing rates are seen within southeast Colorado



- 790** Pueblo
- 756** Las Animas
- 750** Huerfano
- 718** Kiowa
- 705** Otero

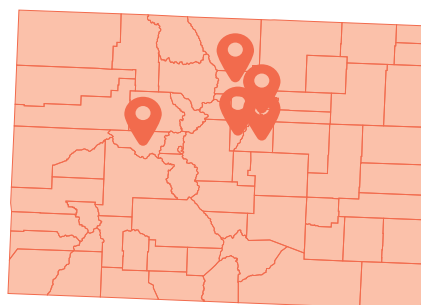
STIMULANT PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

Urban areas had higher rates of stimulant prescriptions filled compared to rural



Top 5 rural counties for stimulants dispensed

Rates are significantly higher in urban areas



- 323** Pitkin
- 259** Douglas
- 233** Broomfield
- 199** Boulder
- 198** Jefferson

Substance Use Disorder

In 2022, 1,799 drug over dose deaths occurred in Colorado. This represents a 4.4% decrease from 2021. 11,236 emergency department visits in 2023 involved drug overdoses.

OVERALL DRUG OVERDOSES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN 2022

Age adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths in 2022

28.1 rural areas **30.2** urban areas



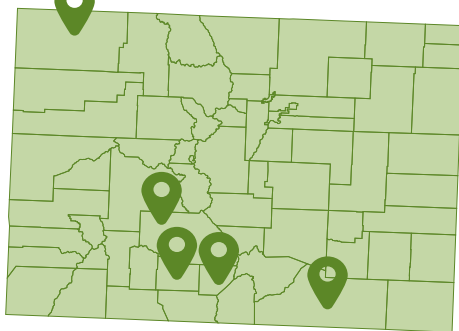
The greatest burden was among the American Indian/Alaska Native population in rural areas

36.1 American Indian/Alaska Native **28.2** Non-Hispanic White **23.4** Hispanic

Top 5 counties with the highest

age adjusted drug overdose death rates per 100,000

From 2020 to 2022



71.5 Alamosa
71.3 Las Animas
54.5 Rio Grande
50.8 Moffat
50.2 Saguache

In 2022, rural males had double the rate of drug overdoses

36.7 Men **18.3** Women

Average annual age adjusted rate of drug overdose with suicide intent

3.1 in rural areas **2.7** in urban areas

DRUG-RELATED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS

From 2022-2023, the average annual age adjusted rate of **emergency room visits for overdose involving ALL drugs**

210 in rural areas **202** in Colorado



Counties with the highest drug overdose ED visit rates

446 Huerfano **454** Alamosa **434** Las Animas

Females in rural Colorado have higher rates (247) compared to males (175)

26%

of emergency department visits involving drug overdoses in 2023 were for individuals aged 15 to 24

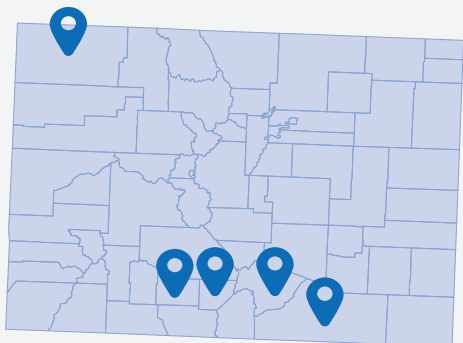
23%

of emergency department visits in rural Colorado were for individuals aged 15 to 24

OPIOID DRUG OVERDOSES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS

Top 5 counties with the highest rates

of age adjusted opioid overdose death from 2020-2022



- 55.2** Las Animas
- 42.7** Alamosa
- 38.5** Rio Grande
- 37.5** Moffat
- 32.7** Huerfano

2022 age adjusted rate of **opioid overdose death**

16.7 in rural areas  **19.8** in urban areas

Rates were significantly higher among rural males from 2020-2022

 **20.7** Males  **10** Females

The Rural Hispanic Population experienced the largest burden

- 18.3** Hispanic
- 15.9** White
- 15.9** Native Americans/ Alaska Natives



From 2022-2023, the average annual age adjusted **rate of emergency room visits for overdose involving opioids**

27.2 in rural areas **32.6** in Colorado

There were no major differences by gender in rural areas.

51%

of the 1,799 drug overdose deaths in 2022 involved synthetic opioids containing fentanyl

Age adjusted rate of overdose deaths mentioning fentanyl per 100,000 in 2022

16 urban areas **12.4** rural areas

 The rate has more than doubled in rural areas since 2020

METHAMPHETAMINE OVERDOSES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS

The average annual age adjusted rate of **meth overdose in Colorado**

11.6 rural areas **11.9** urban areas

Las Animas (43.3), Alamosa (40), and Rio Grande (34.5) had the highest rates



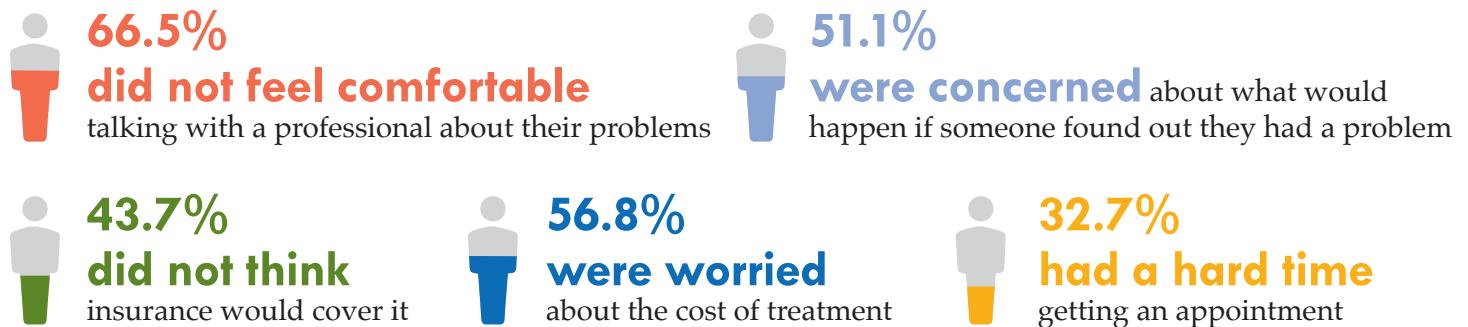
Males die 2X more from meth in rural Colorado

 **14.7** Males  **6.7** Females

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Expansion of MAT (Medication-Assisted-Treatment) through the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and University of Colorado Anschutz has provided medications for opioid use disorder and behavioral health services to 4,219 people in 25 rural and frontier counties as of 2023.

100,000 COLORADANS DIDN'T RECEIVE NEEDED SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT IN 2023



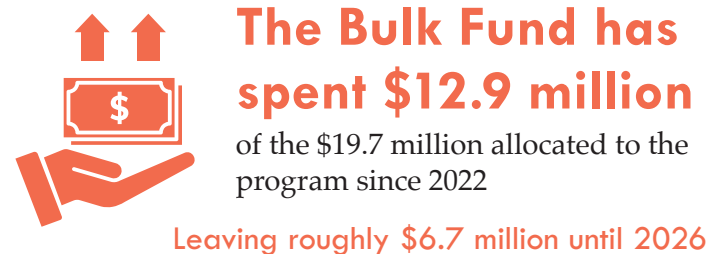
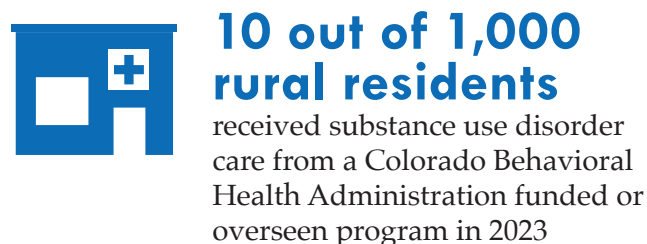
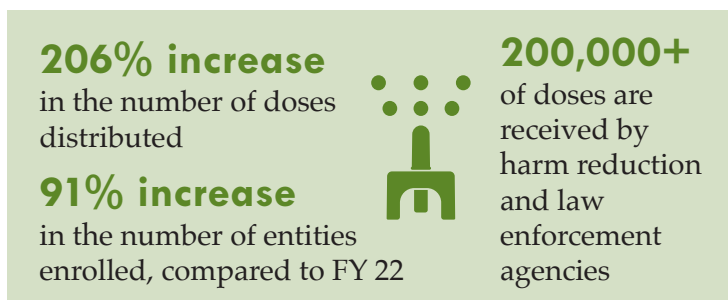
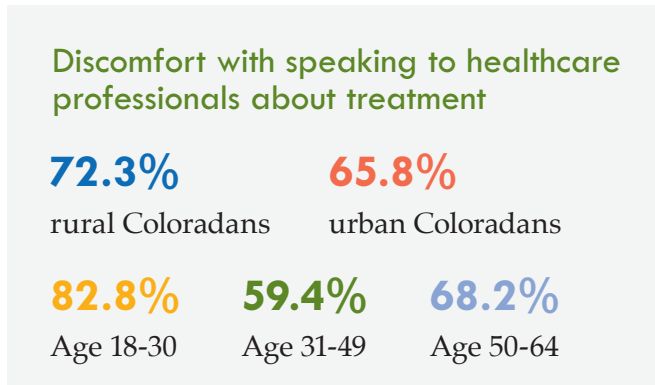
Stigma/concerns of someone finding out about needing care



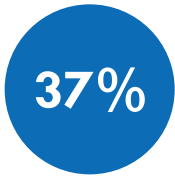
The Naloxone (Narcan) Bulk Fund has provided free naloxone to eligible entities in Colorado since 2019



As of 2021, one third of eligible entities were in rural areas



Gun Violence



of adult Coloradans indicate they currently have **firearms in their home**



of those with firearms in their homes **stored their firearms while loaded**



of those who kept loaded firearms in their home reported that those **firearms were stored unlocked**

This means that 1 in 20 adult Coloradans have **a loaded gun stored unlocked in their home**

GUN ACCESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IN RURAL AREAS

28% of high school

students report having access to firearms in or around their home (16% statewide, 75% higher in rural)

32% of high school

students report having access in under 1 hour (19% statewide, 68% higher in rural)



70% of parents

who own firearms said their children could not get their hands on the guns

But 41% of kids

from those same families said they could get to those guns within 2 hours

FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO PER 100,000 FROM 2020 TO 2022

The average age adjusted rate of **deaths due to firearms**

19.3 rural areas **16.7** statewide

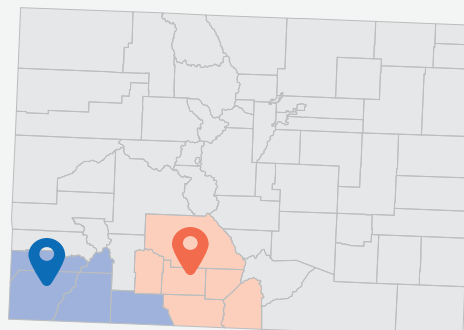
31 rural males **6.6** rural females



Firearm deaths among youth under 18

3.3 rural areas **4.3** urban areas

Counties with the highest access to firearms without adult supervision



39.3% Southwest Colorado

41.5% San Luis Valley

Climate Change

With increasing temperatures come shifts in snowmelt runoff, water quality concerns, stressed ecosystems and transportation infrastructure, impacts to energy demands, and extreme weather events that can impact air quality and recreational opportunities.

CURRENT WATER LANDSCAPE

83% of Colorado's water comes from winter snowfall, spring rain and monsoon showers collecting as surface water
Remaining 17% comes from ground water

~90% of the population is on the Front Range
only 20% of the natural streamflow goes to the eastern slope

Over 500,000-acre feet of water is diverted annually through the continental divide to the front range

Thanks to above average precipitation, **Colorado's system of reservoirs was 100% full in 2023, for the first time in 3 years**

Ground water use across Colorado

85% for irrigation
60% is deemed as non-renewable

As of June 2024, reservoir levels were at 94% of normal

Statewide snowpack in 2024 was 114% of normal

~18% of the population relies on it for their water

Drought conditions have generally improved since 2022 when 100% of the state was abnormally dry or worse

TEMPERATURE INCREASES

From 1980 to 2022, Colorado's annual average **temperature warmed by 2.3°F**

By 2050, Colorado statewide annual **temps are projected to warm by +1.0°F to +4.0°F compared to today**

At that point, an average year is likely to be as warm as the warmest years on record up to 2022

Fall season temperatures in Colorado have risen about +3°F between 1980 to 2022

+2.5°F Summer
+1.7°F Spring
+1°F Winter

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

Despite two consecutive above-average snow years, the Colorado River still struggles as of Sept 2, 2024

40% capacity at Lake Powell

33% capacity at Lake Mead



By 2050, municipal and industrial water could face a shortage between **230,000 to 740,000 (in dry years) acre feet annually**



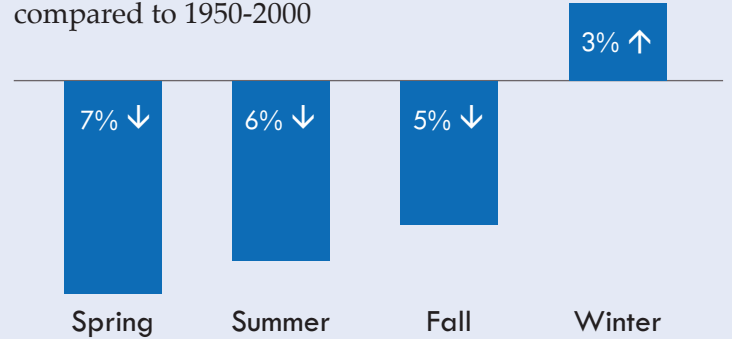
Currently municipal and industrial water use is about 500,000 acre feet annually

Since the relatively wetter periods of the 1980s and 1990s, Colorado has experienced more persistent dry conditions since 2000



Colorado's average precipitation was **4% lower from 2001-2022**

2001-2022 Seasonal Precipitation Changes compared to 1950-2000



Recent research has shown that for every 1°F increase in temperature, streamflow decreases by 5%

ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS



Annual Streamflow
Decreases in most projections



Peak Runoff Timing
Earlier



Crop Water Demand
Increases



Snowpack
Decreases in most projections



Drought
More frequent



Heat/Cold Waves
More/Less Frequent

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT TO AGRICULTURE IN COLORADO

Potentially decreased future water supply has large impacts on Colorado's agriculture industry.



90% of water used
in Colorado is for Agriculture

7% Municipal
3% Industrial



Colorado agriculture generates about \$47 Billion annually



of Colorado's irrigated farmland has been lost since 1997

90%
in Crowley

60.2%
in Pueblo

37.6%
in Bent

35.2%
in Otero



75% of Colorado's irrigated agricultural land is located within three major river basins

44%
South Platte

14%
Arkansas

16%
Rio Grande



By 2050, Colorado farmers and ranchers could experience water shortages by **2.5 to 3.5 million area feet statewide**



Current agriculture water is about 4.8 million acre feet annually

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT TO AIR QUALITY IN COLORADO



The average daily PM2.5 concentration (fine particulate matter) across the state

6.4 micrograms per cubic meter in urban areas

4.3 micrograms per cubic meter in rural areas

» The Northern Front Range exceeds the ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard and will likely worsen with climate change as ozone increases with higher temps

2024 "State of the Air" report findings

Denver & Fort Collins were worse for particle pollution and ozone

Colorado Springs ranked among the country's cleanest cities



Wildfire activity is expected to increase with climate change

Air quality in Colorado, especially in summer and fall, is likely to worsen as temperatures rise

Rural Health Infrastructure in Colorado

Healthcare Access

COLORADO'S RURAL HOSPITALS IN 2023 PROVIDED



10.8%
of hospital beds
in the state



5.7%
of all inpatient
days



4.6%
of all inpatient surgeries



8%
of all births



11%
of all emergency
room visits



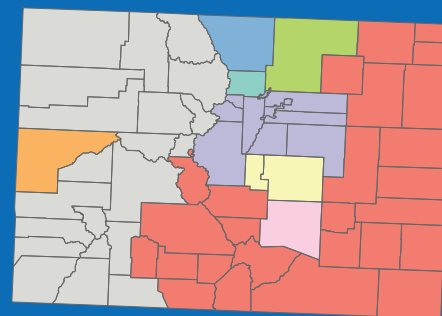
14.7%
of all outpatient
visits

6 COLORADO COUNTIES DON'T HAVE A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY



Dolores
Hinsdale
Mineral
San Juan
Jackson
Gilpin

HOSPITAL REPORTING REGIONS



Boulder
Colorado Springs
Denver
Grand Junction
Fort Collins
East
Greeley
Pueblo
West



17 counties that don't have a hospital in the county

Jackson
Washington
Clear Creek
Gilpin
Park
Elbert
Crowley
Bent
Costilla
Custer
Saguache
Mineral
Hinsdale
San Juan
San Miguel
Ouray
Dolores



15 rural counties that don't have a Certified Rural Health Clinic

Routt
Eagle
Summit
Pitkin
Ouray
San Miguel
Dolores
San Juan
La Plata
Mineral
Alamosa
Costilla
Bent
Crowley
Lincoln



13 rural counties that don't have a Federally Qualified Health Center

Sedgwick
Phillips
Yuma
Washington
Cheyenne
Rio Blanco
Custer
Mineral
Ouray
San Juan
Hinsdale
Grand
Jackson

Broadband Access

In 2023, the Biden Administration allocated funding to Colorado through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, as part of the Biden administration's 'Internet for All' initiative. This program aims to bridge the rural-urban divide and connect America's rural and underserved populations to high-speed broadband.



Colorado received \$826.5 Million from the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funds in 2023



Colorado aims to have 99% of households connected to high-speed broadband using BEAD funds by 2027



Applications for BEAD funding began in 2024 through the Advance Colorado Broadband grant program

Broadband Priority Areas

Unserved locations
No access to speeds of 25/3 mbps

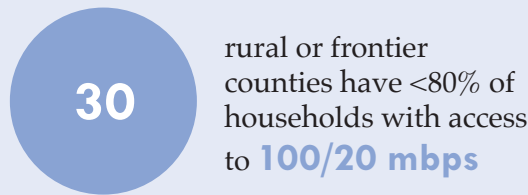


Underserved locations
No access to speeds of 100/20 mbps

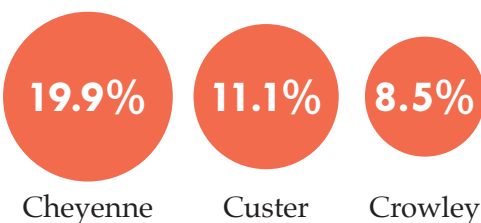
STATEWIDE BROADBAND ACCESS AS OF JUNE 2023



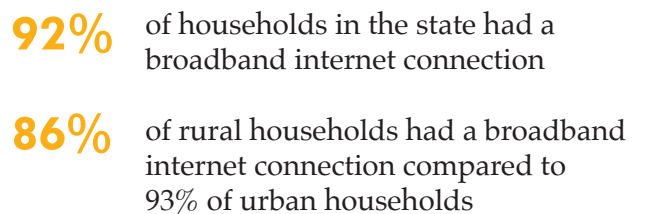
Rural and Frontier Broadband Disparity



Southeast Colorado has the poorest access to 100/20 mbps broadband



ACCESS IN 2022



Health Information Technology

Electronic Medical Record (EMR) software, also known as Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems, has become an integral part of modern healthcare, but its cost often goes unnoticed by employers and can be a significant burden for providers. Common hidden fees include: implementation, training, data conversion, maintenance, data storage, customization, and third party integrations.

ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD (EMR) OPTIONS



Comprehensive EMR Systems

Full-featured EMR systems with telehealth that include scheduling, e-prescribing, and basic billing

\$ \$200-\$300/month per provider



Pay-Per-Patient Models

Offers flexible pricing based on active patients, with features for subscription-based practices

\$ Starting as low as \$50/month per provider plus a per-patient fee



Direct Primary Care Solutions

Platforms designed for direct primary care practices, catering to the specific needs of subscription-based medical practices

\$ \$300/month per provider



Enterprise Solutions

Offering comprehensive services for larger healthcare organizations and hospitals

\$ Millions of dollars for implementation, with high annual maintenance fees

2024 RURAL CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The Community Analytics Platform (CAP), developed in partnership with CCMCN, is a comprehensive dashboard containing crucial data on patient populations, chronic disease, outmigration, Admit, Transfer, Discharge (ADT), and more.



1,233 unique

views from 27 different RHCs and CAHs across the state

The most viewed projects

489

Chronic Disease

356

Journey Mapping

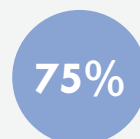
195

ADT



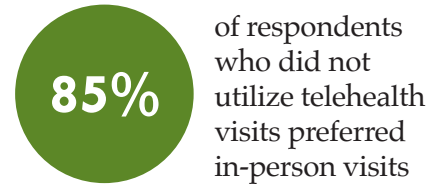
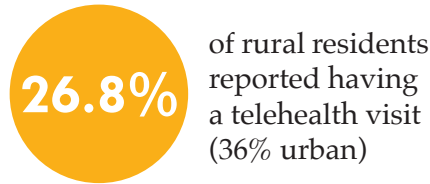
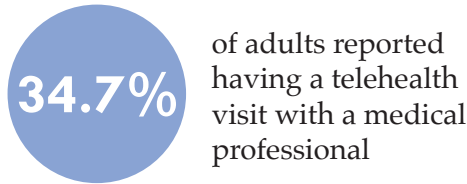
348,594 patients

were attributed to 111 rural health providers participating in the CAP

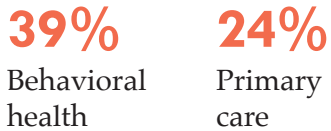


of CAHs were contracted to participate in the CAP, and 69% of RHCs as of September 2024

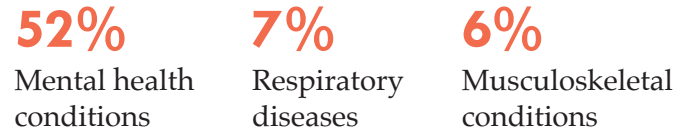
TELEHEALTH IN COLORADO



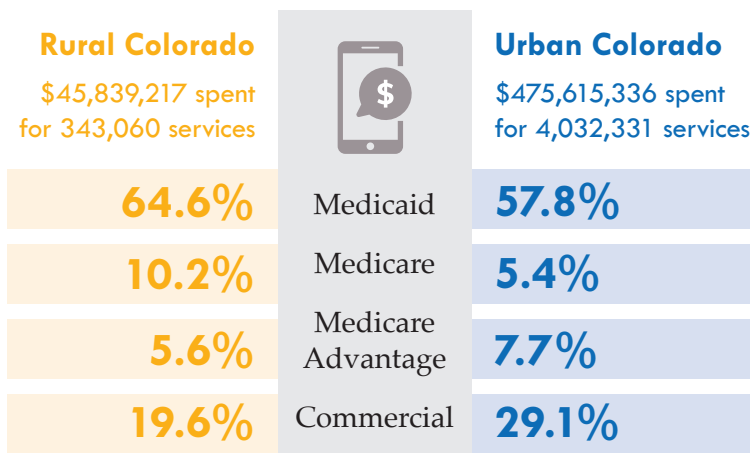
Top telehealth providers for rural Colorado (2021-2022)



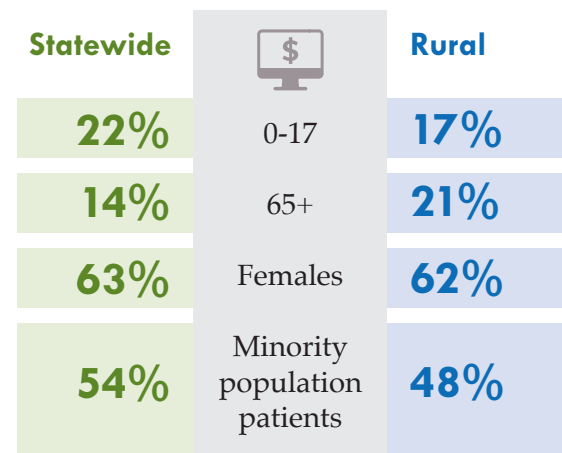
Top conditions treated via telehealth in rural Colorado (2021-2022)



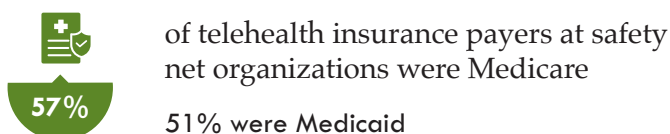
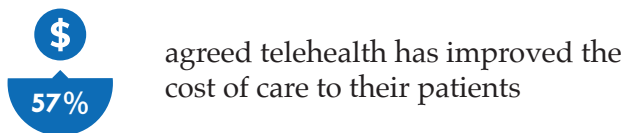
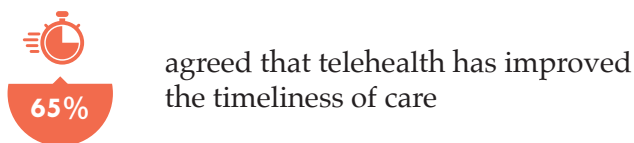
TOTAL SPENDING ON TELEHEALTH SERVICES FROM JAN 2021 TO JAN 2022



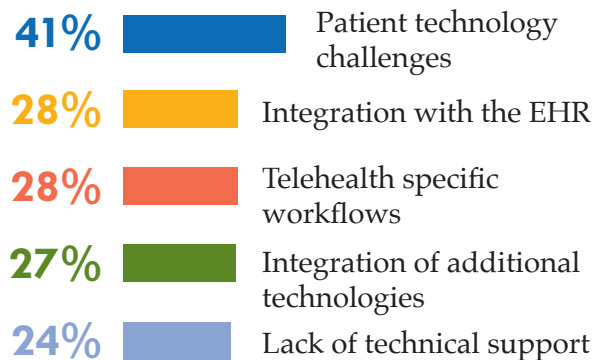
AMONG ALL PAYERS USING TELEHEALTH VISITS FROM JAN 2021 TO JAN 2022



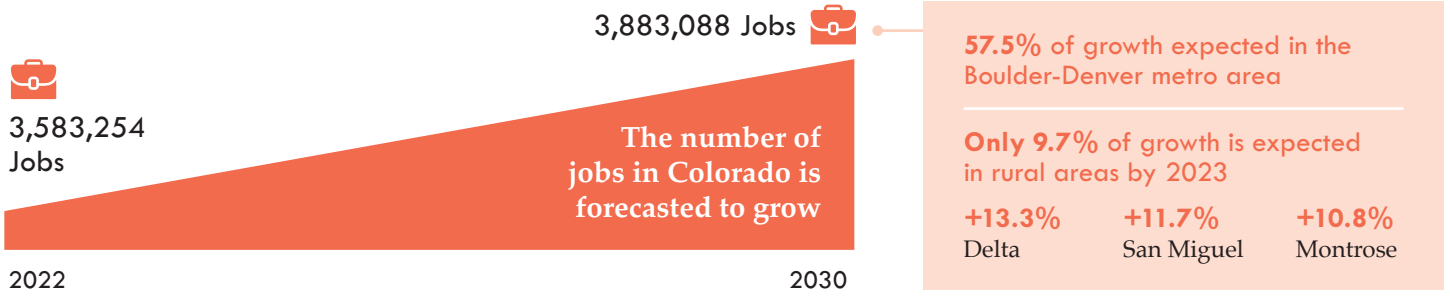
2021 COLORADO TELEHEALTH SAFETY NET PROVIDER SURVEY



Largest barriers to telehealth among safety net providers



Jobs and Income



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION FOR THE POPULATION AGED 16+ IN 2022

63.3% of Rural Colorado			vs	68.8% of Urban Colorado		
34.5%	44.1%	39.5%	16-19	38.9%	35.6%	42.2%
73.1%	86%	80.0%	20-24	75.6%	70.3%	80.6%
78.1%	87.7%	83.1%	25-34	87.3%	82.2%	92.1%
79.1%	92%	85.8%	35-44	85.9%	77.4%	94.2%
77.9%	87.7%	82.9%	45-54	85.9%	79.4%	92.3%
64.7%	71.1%	67.9%	55-64	71.5%	69.1%	74%
28.9%	39.4%	34.1%	65-74	34.4%	29.9%	39.5%
7.5%	13.4%	10.3%	75+	10.6%	8%	13.9%

COLORADO HAS BEEN STRUGGLING WITH A TIGHT LABOR MARKET

2.7 jobs for every unemployed person in 2023, resulting in:

\$46 billion loss in annual Gross Domestic Product



Due to a higher unemployment rate (August 2024)

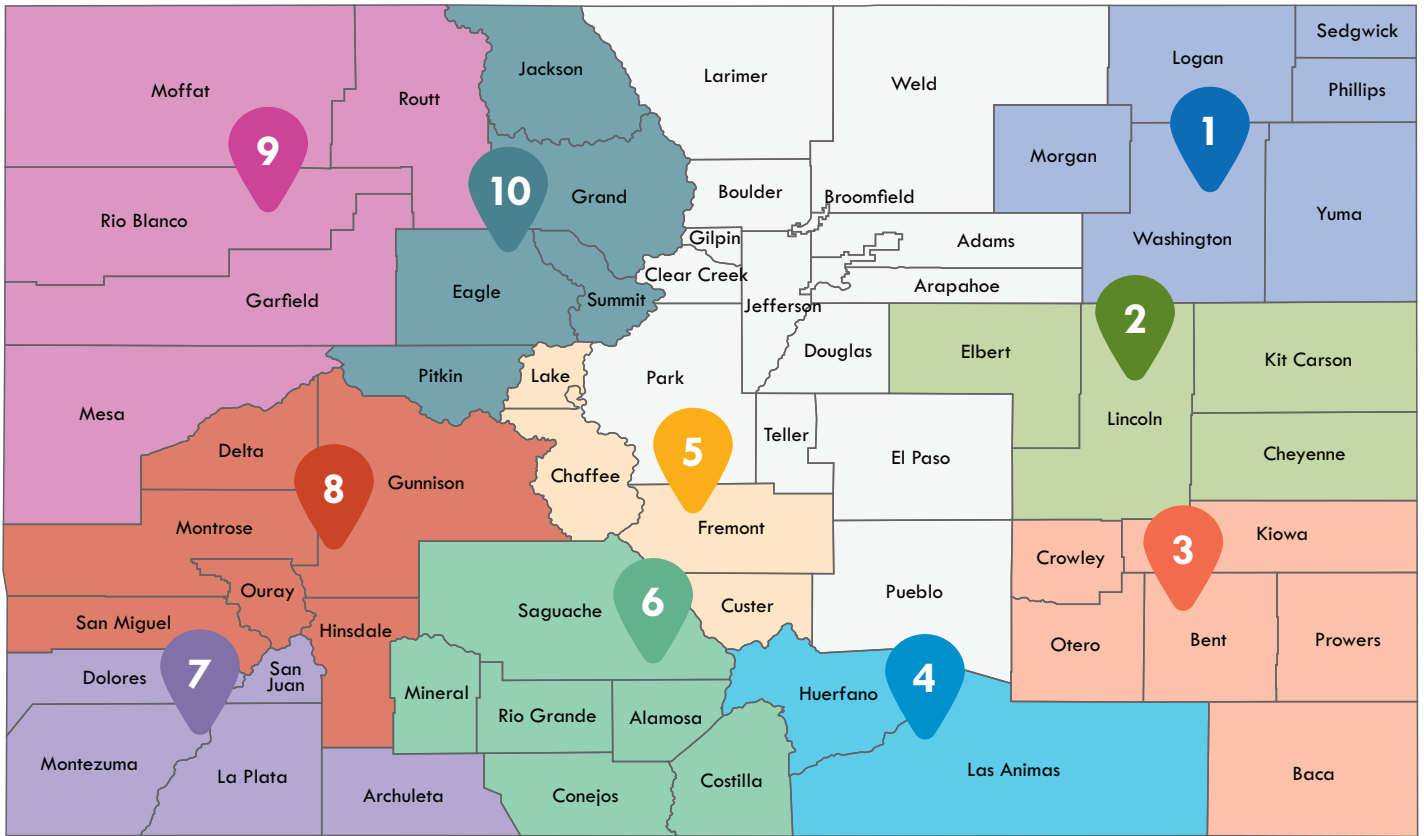
Per every unemployed person

1.1 jobs statewide **1.3 jobs** rural **1.1 jobs** urban

Rural counties with the most jobs per unemployed person

3.6 Rio Blanco **3.3** Pitkin **2.1** Garfield

Regional Industries



NORTHEASTERN REGION



Key industries

- Food & agriculture
- Advanced manufacturing
- Health & wellness
- Transportation
- Energy
- Natural resources

Fun Fact

Three of the top four agriculture producing counties in the state are located in the region

CENTRAL PLAINS



Key industries

- Food & agriculture
- Health & wellness
- Energy & natural resources
- Transportation

Fun Fact

Lincoln county produces over 850 MW of wind power ranking 2nd in the state with installed production capability

SOUTHEASTERN REGION



Key industries

- Health & wellness
- Food & agriculture
- Manufacturing

Fun Fact

Produces a high volume of agricultural exports from livestock, to vegetables, sunflowers, and world famous cantaloupe and melons

SOUTHERN REGION

4

Key industries

Health & wellness Energy resources
Outdoor recreation

Fun Fact

The southern gateway to Colorado and is on the nationally recognized Santa Fe Trail.

UPPER ARKANSAS REGION

5

Key industries

Health & wellness Energy & natural resources
Outdoor recreation

Fun Fact

Leadville is the highest incorporated city in the U.S., with an altitude of 10,152 feet

SAN LUIS VALLEY REGION

6

Key industries

Health & wellness Food & agriculture Outdoor recreation

Fun Fact

The largest Alpine Valley in the world!

SOUTHWESTERN REGION

7

Key industries

Health & wellness Energy & natural resources
Outdoor recreation

Fun Fact

Home to the two Native American tribal reservations in Colorado

CENTRAL WESTERN SLOPE REGION

8

Key industries

Advanced manufacturing Outdoor recreation
Health & wellness

Fun Fact

Home to gold medal fly fishing and trophy hunting along with two world class ski resorts

NORTHWESTERN REGION

9

Key industries

Health & wellness Energy & natural resources
Outdoor recreation

Fun Fact

Agriculturally rich with vineyards, wineries, fruit orchards, and sheep and cattle ranches

WESTERN REGION

10

Key industries

Outdoor recreation Health & wellness

Fun Fact

Home to 11 internationally-known ski areas and is nearly 80% public land

Colorado's Healthcare

Rural Colorado healthcare facilities are facing continued sustainability challenges, impacted by inadequate reimbursement rates, workforce shortages, an increase in the uninsured population, and mounting regulatory burdens. While Colorado has bucked the national trend of over 130 rural hospitals closing since 2010, there are numerous Colorado hospitals currently at risk.

Colorado's healthcare economic impact (direct, indirect, and induced)

 **744,000** jobs
\$147.5 billion output



Healthcare is one of the **top 3 industries** in rural Colorado





Rising costs and financial pressures in Colorado hospitals between 2021-2022

14.2%
increase in salary, wages, and benefits

73.5%
increase in contracted labor expenses

8.4%
increase in supply expenses

10.4%
increase in operating expenses

Financial Indicator	All Colorado hospitals (2022)	Rural East Hospitals	Rural West Hospitals
 Bad debt The sum of all charged amounts a provider billed but did not receive payment for the service	\$220M up 15% from 2021	\$13.6M down 2%	\$39.6M up 23%
 Charity care The sum of all charged amounts determined by the health care provider to be charity care and thus unreceived revenue	\$326M up 11% from 2021	\$4.6M down 2%	\$25.2M up 19%
 Operating expenses Total operating expenses include materials, supplies, contract services, fees, depreciation, interest, taxes, utilities and more	\$21.4B up 10.4% from 2021	\$777M up 10.7%	\$1.9B up 9.7%
 Net patient revenue Payments a hospital receives after deducting allowances, bad debt, and charity care from billed charges	\$21.3B up 5.9% from 2021	\$763.6M up 9%	\$1.9B up 7.7%

2022 UNCOMPENSATED CARE (charity care + bad debt) BREAKDOWN BY PAYER

All Colorado Hospitals

4%	Medicare
2%	Medicaid
17%	Commercial
60%	Self Pay
17%	Colorado Indigent Care Program

Rural East Hospitals

4%	Medicare
0.5%	Medicaid
20%	Commercial
53%	Self Pay
22%	Colorado Indigent Care Program

Rural West Hospitals

2.6%	Medicare
0.5%	Medicaid
18%	Commercial
55%	Self Pay
23%	Colorado Indigent Care Program

2022 NET PATIENT REVENUE BY PAYER

All Colorado Hospitals

27.3%	Medicare
17.5%	Medicaid
48.9%	Commercial
1.0%	Self Pay
5.4%	Colorado Indigent Care Program

Rural East Hospitals

36.3%	Medicare
23.8%	Medicaid
31.4%	Commercial
2.8%	Self Pay
5.7%	Colorado Indigent Care Program

Rural West Hospitals

30.2%	Medicare
13.3%	Medicaid
50.2%	Commercial
2.7%	Self Pay
3.6%	Colorado Indigent Care Program



55% of Colorado rural hospitals were operating with negative profit margins in 2024



Less than 10% were identified as being vulnerable to closure

48%

national increase in medicare advantage enrollment in rural communities from 2019 to 2023

36%

of all medicare beneficiaries in rural Colorado are enrolled in Medicare Advantage (57% in urban)

IMPACTS OF RURAL HOSPITAL CLOSURES



220 hospital jobs
72 non-hospital jobs
are lost when one closes

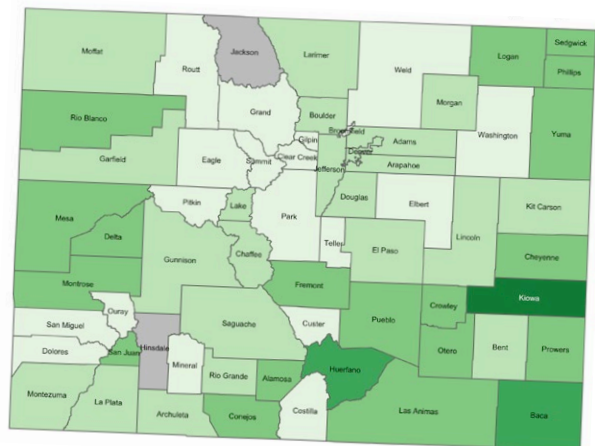
↓ **2.7-4%**
decrease in per capita income

↑ **1.6-3.1%**
increase in community unemployment rate

🕒 **11-15**
more minutes in EMS transport

📍 **20 mile**
increase in non-emergent distance to care

HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE EMPLOYMENT



% of County Employment
 0-10 10-20 20-30 30-40 40-50 Missing

Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Financial Sustainability

On average, from 2021 to 2022, Total Margin, Operating Margin, Days Cash on Hand, and Days in Net Accounts Receivable all decreased among Colorado CAHs. Early trends for 2023 show an increase in Total Margin, but continued decreases for the other indicators. In 2024, 16 (50%) of Colorado CAHs and 24 rural hospitals were operating in the red.



2%
Total Margin
in 2022

50% of Colorado's CAHs are performing below the 3% benchmark

Total Margin is the percentage calculated by dividing net income by total revenues. The higher the Total Margin value, the more the hospital retains on each dollar of sales.



2%
Operating Margin
in 2022

50% of Colorado's CAHs are performing below the 2% benchmark

Operating Margin measures how much profit a hospital makes on a dollar of sale, after paying for variable costs of production. The higher the Operating Margin the more profitable a hospital is.



168
Days Cash
on Hand

19% of Colorado's CAHs are performing below the benchmark of 60

Days Cash on Hand measures the number of days that an organization can continue to pay its operating expenses, given the amount of cash currently available.



47
Days Revenue in
Accounts Receivable

35% of Colorado's CAHs are performing below the benchmark of 53

Days Revenue in Accounts Receivable measures the number of days that it takes an organization to collect its receivables. Low values means that it takes a hospital fewer days to collect its accounts receivable.

COLORADO CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS SAW THE IMPACTS OF THE FOLLOWING



There is a 9% gap, with median operating expense growth outpacing median operating revenue growth from 2021 to 2022



50% of CAHs had uncompensated care represent more than 3% of operating expenses (3% is the US median and benchmark)



34% Colorado CAH CEO turnover in 2023-24, compared to 18-20% nationally

Uncompensated Care Indicators for Colorado CAHs Outperform National Medians

2.6% non-Medicare and non-reimbursable Medicare bad debt (2.7% national)

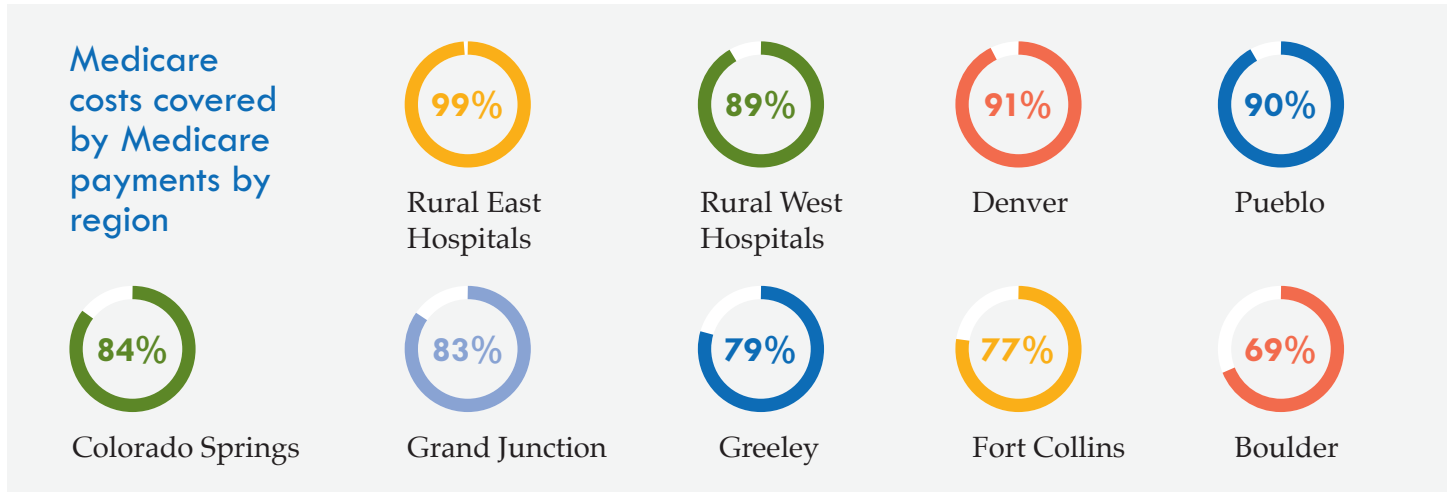
0.7% charity care (2.3% national)

3.3% uncompensated care (5% national)

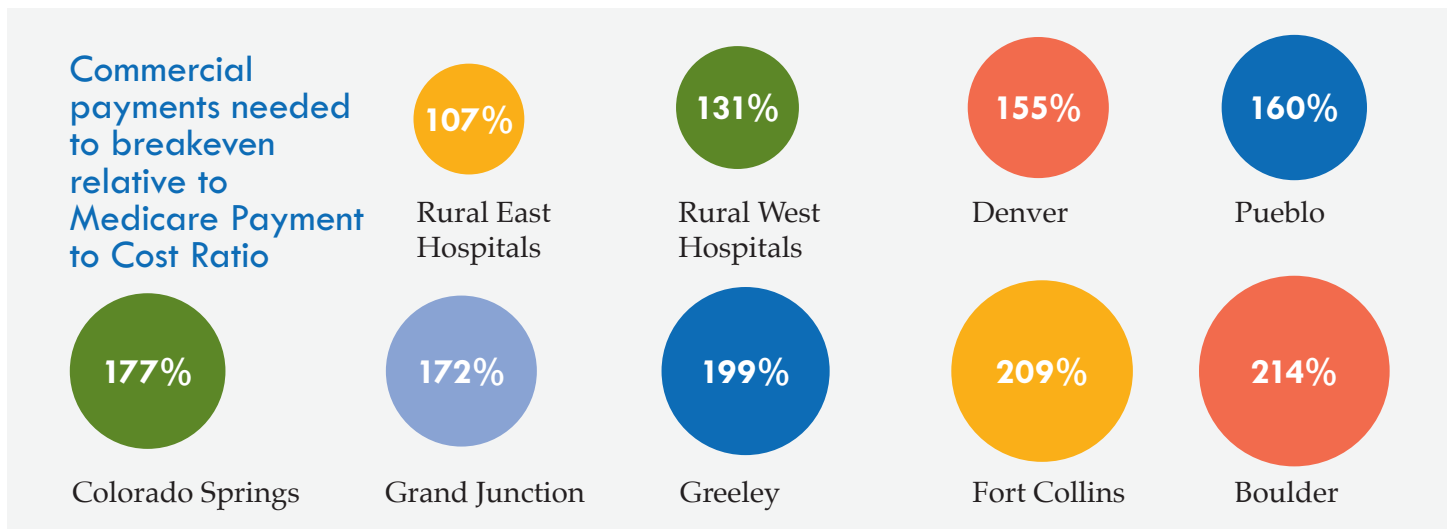
2.7% unreimbursed cost of Medicaid, CHIP, and state & local indigent care programs (3.8% national)

HOSPITAL FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

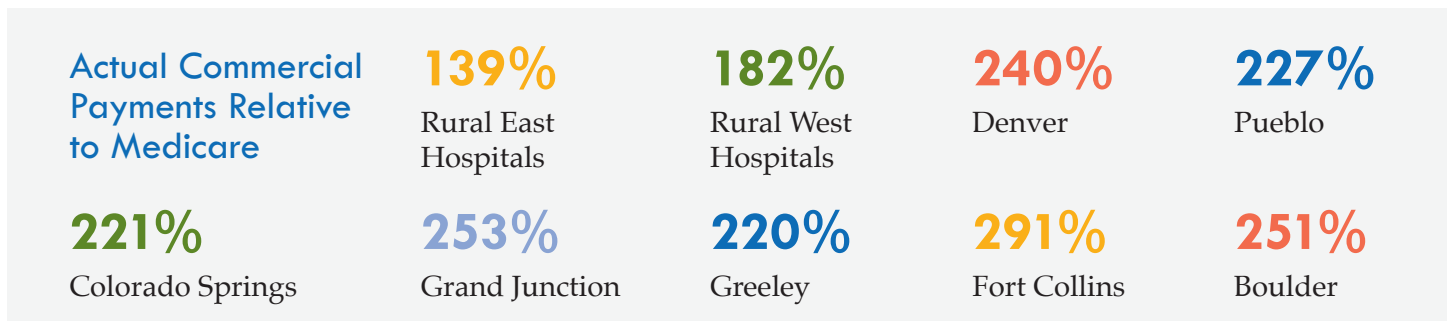
Benchmarking hospital payments to Medicare rates can encourage cost efficiency and financial sustainability. Rural Colorado hospitals generally see Medicare cover a higher proportion of costs but receive lower relative commercial payments. Consequently, changes to Medicare and Medicaid policies would disproportionately impact these hospitals.



A value of 99% means that Medicare payments are covering 99% of Medicare Costs (a higher value means Medicare payments are covering more of the service costs).



A value of 107% means that the hospitals could break even if commercial payments were 107% of what Medicare pays for the same procedure (a higher value means increased reliance on commercial payments to break even)



A value of 139% means that actual commercial payments are 139% of what Medicare pays for the same procedure.

Healthcare Workforce

A strong healthcare workforce is fundamental to providing quality, timely care in rural Colorado. It also plays a critical role in rural economic development. Rural healthcare facilities must have sufficient providers, administrators, and support staff to operate sustainably and meet the care needs of their communities.



A shortage of 54,100 to 139,000 physicians

is projected nationally by 2033 with the most alarming gaps in primary care and rural communities



887,865 unique job postings in the Colorado Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry from Aug 2021 to Aug 2022

350,000 more than the next highest industry

Colorado
Advertised
Nursing Positions
in 2022

Registered Nurses (RNs)

121,437 job postings
23,412 unique job postings
~5 postings/unique job



Nurse Practitioners (NPs)

5,288 job postings
1,323 unique job postings
~4 postings/unique job

2021 REGISTERED NURSES



**3,372 total employed in hospitals/
nursing homes in rural Colorado**



**11% of all RNs employed at hospitals/
nursing homes across the state**



**119 RN vacancies at hospitals/nursing
homes in rural Colorado**

5% of vacancies across the state*

2021 LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE



**303 employed in hospitals/nursing
homes in rural Colorado**



**38% of all LPNs employed at hospitals/
nursing homes across the state**



**18 LPN vacancies at hospitals/nursing
homes in rural Colorado**

18% of Colorado's vacancies

*This number only considers personnel who were on the hospital/facility payroll at the end of the hospital's reporting period for 2021. Only considers RNs employed at hospitals or nursing homes.



**In 2021 there was 1 Registered Nurse employed at a hospital/
nursing home per 217 rural residents and 1 per 226 urban residents**

COLORADO IS FACING A MENTAL HEALTH WORKER SHORTAGE

The state is predicted to face a deficit
**of 4,400+ mental health
workers by 2026**



In 2024, all counties in Colorado but Larimer county were identified as
**Health Professional Shortage
Areas for Mental Health**

CARE WORKER SHORTAGES IN COLORADO



The annual mean wage of registered nurses in 2023 was **\$91,730**



Travel nurses in Colorado earn up to **\$2,941 per week on average**, with the potential to earn ~\$38,232 during a standard 13-week assignment



Annual Mean Wages of Registered Nurses

\$94,130 Northwest Colorado
\$86,160 Southwest Colorado
\$84,750 Eastern & Southern Colorado

AGE OF COLORADO LICENSED & EMPLOYED NURSES IN 2022

Registered Nurses		Nurse Practitioners
22%	55+	23%
45%	45+	47%
27%	34 or under	14%



Colorado needs 33,000 new nurses

per year meet the demand amid a nursing shortage and retiring population

2023 COLORADO TALENT GAP



Registered Nurses



Certified Nursing Assistants

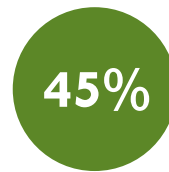


Licensed Practical Nurses

PHYSICIAN BURNOUT AND DEPRESSION (2023)



53% feel burned out | **23% feel depressed**



of RNs and LPNs reported feeling burned out multiple times per week in 2022

Specialties Most Affected by Burnout

Emergency Medicine Pediatric
 Internal Medicine OBGYN



~20% of the healthcare industry workforce has left the industry since 2020

Top Reported Causes of Burnout

61% Too many bureaucratic tasks
38% Lack of respect from coworkers
37% Too many hours worked



40% of healthcare employees

considered quitting, ranking the industry lowest in satisfaction among 27 sectors in a 2023 survey

HEALTHCARE SHORTAGE



Of all active, licensed physicians, rural Colorado receives

8.5% of the physicians
8.3% of the MDs
10.9% of the DOs

Note: "Inactive" physicians were excluded from this measure

2021 active physicians in a non-federal patient care role

1 per 486 rural people

1 per 325 urban people

OF ALL ACTIVE, LICENSED PROVIDERS RURAL COLORADO RECEIVES

- 11.2%** of Primary Care Physicians
- 6.2%** of General Internal Medicine
- 6.2%** of Pediatric Physicians
- 9.6%** of OBGYNs
- 15.3%** of Orthopedic Surgeons
- 15.5%** of Emergency Medicine Physicians
- 5.8%** of Psychiatrists
- 9.0%** of Physician Assistants
- 9.6%** of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN)
 - 9.4%** Nurse Practitioners
 - 11.5%** Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
 - 9.4%** Advanced Practice Nurse Midwives

WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AMONG RURAL HEALTH FACILITIES

- 3%** offer a housing stipend as a benefit
- 50%+** of facilities say housing stipends boost recruitment and retention
- 43%** offer loan repayment
- 50%** listed it as a desired benefit
- 38%** offer a bonus/productivity structure
- 56%** listed it as a desired benefit

Of all active physicians in rural Colorado



50% are aged 55+

(34% in urban)

Only 3% are < 35 years old
(13% in urban)

PHYSICIAN TO POPULATION RATIOS BY SPECIALTY IN COLORADO

Rural		Urban
1 to 1,322	Primary Care	1 to 1,199
1 to 6,283	General Internal Medicine	1 to 2,995
1 to 2,336 ¹	Pediatric	1 to 1,207 ¹
1 to 3,945 ²	OBGYNs	1 to 3,108 ²
1 to 7,539	Orthopedic Surgeons	1 to 9,725
1 to 3,892	Emergency Medicine	1 to 5,120
1 to 18,848	Psychiatric	1 to 8,360
1 to 1,769	Physician Assistant with an NPI*	1 to 1,260
1 to 1,067	Advanced Practice Registered Nurses*	1 to 812

¹under age 18 ²women age 13+ *in 2022



1 mental health provider per



320 rural residents



210 urban residents

Emergency Medical Services



839,101 electronic patient care reports

submitted by licensed ground service agencies for 911 / Emergency responses with patient transport (Jan 2022 to Dec 2023)

741,352

Urban areas

79,449

Rural areas

18,300

Frontier areas

11.6% of these responses were in rural and frontier Colorado

IN URBAN COLORADO

3,807 EMTs

2,844 Paramedics

156 Advanced EMTs

9 EMS Agency providers per 1,000 patients

IN RURAL COLORADO

702 EMTs

587 Paramedics

140 Advanced EMTs

18 EMS Agency providers per 1,000 patients

IN FRONTIER COLORADO

381 EMTs

163 Paramedics

83 Advanced EMTs

34 EMS Agency providers per 1,000 patients

AVERAGE INCIDENT TIMES IN COLORADO



Incident response time

8 min **9 min** **13 min**
Urban Rural Frontier



Incident transport time

13 min **15 min** **22 min**
Urban Rural Frontier



In frontier counties, on average, EMS teams take over 30 minutes from dispatch to patient arrival, excluding on-scene time

TOP 3 REASONS FOR DISPATCH (2022-2023)



Sick person

23.6% **14.6%** **10.3%**
Urban Rural Frontier



Falls

11% **12.7%** **13%**
Urban Rural Frontier



Breathing problem

9.2% **8.6%** **9.4%**
Urban Rural Frontier

116 EMS agencies
in urban counties

10% volunteer 37% mixed 53% paid

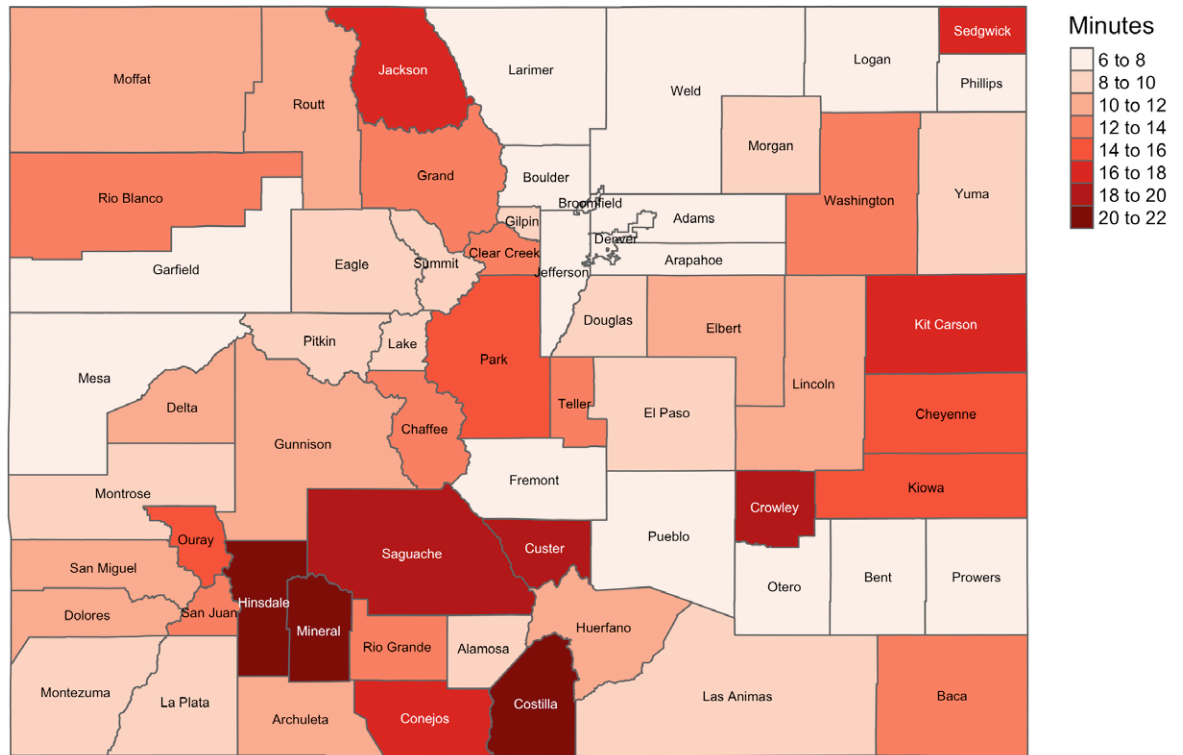
53 EMS agencies
in rural counties

13% volunteer 42% mixed 45% paid

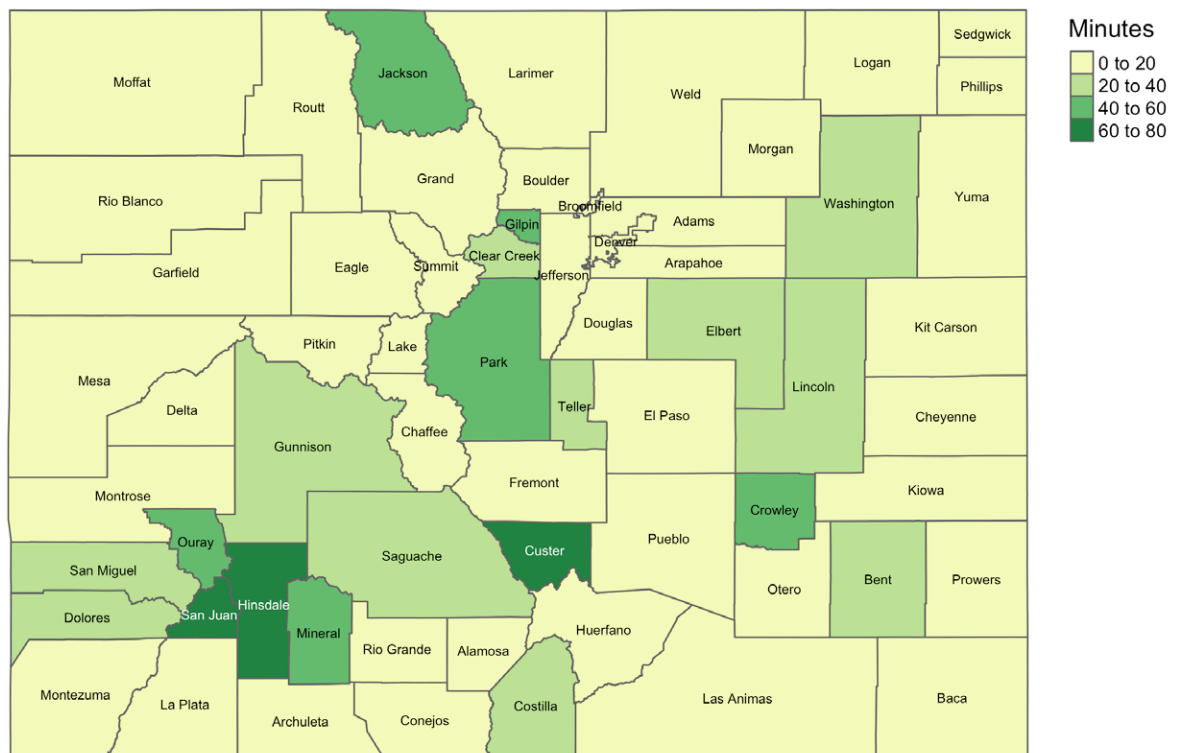
42 EMS agencies
in frontier counties

36% volunteer 40% mixed 24% paid

Average EMS Response Time (2023)



Average EMS Transport Time (2023)



Cost to Patient Case Study

THE BACKGROUND

Health insurance companies often create programs to encourage patients to receive care outside of their local hospitals in order to decrease healthcare costs and reduce insurance premiums. For patients living in urban areas, this means better access to care, a higher volume of providers, and a greater diversity in options for primary care and specialty care providers.

For rural patients, this is not the case. It is important to consider the additional hidden costs affiliated with this concept. Rural areas often do not have many options outside of local hospitals. In turn, when insurance prompts a patient to seek care outside of the local hospital, the patient often is required to spend time and money to travel further (sometimes a day) to receive care.

THE CHALLENGE

Examples of extra costs to patients when traveling to non-local hospitals



Lost wages due to travel



Gas Money



One day federal meal per diem (cost of food)



Accommodations due to travel

While insurance companies have a cost savings of ~\$400 from rural patients traveling to non-local hospitals, the patient has a cost burden upwards of \$700.

THE RESULTS

Average Overall Cost Burden Observed by Rural Patients traveling to distant, non-local hospital/clinic

Cost Burden Description	Amount in USD	Running Total of Cost Burden (USD)
Average Member Liability Amount ¹	\$22.00	\$22.00
Mileage Reimbursement ²	\$165.00	\$187.00
One Day of Lost Wages ³	\$235.00	\$422.00
One Night of Accommodations ⁴	\$163.00	\$585.00
One Day Federal Meal Per Diem ⁵	\$133.00	\$718.00
Total Cost Burden		\$718.00

Average Cost Savings of Insurance Providers if Rural Patients travel to distant, non-local hospital/clinic

Scenario	Amount in USD
Scenario 1: Patient living in Kit Carson, CO but travels to Denver, CO	\$316
Scenario 2: Patient lives in Eads, CO but travels to Colorado Springs, CO	\$438
Scenario 3: Patient lives in Rangely, CO but travels to Grand Junction, CO	\$520
Average Cost Savings to Insurance Company¹	\$425

Transportation

Due to the aging population in rural Colorado, CDOT has prioritized increasing options for senior citizens and veterans to reach basic amenities and medical care. One strategy is to increase CDOT outrider service by 2024 to include communities of Lamar, Fort Lyon, Las Animas, La Junta, Swink, Rocky Ford, Manzanola, and Fowler, and add additional connections in Durango, Mancos, Cortez, Dolores, and Rico.

CDOT's 10-year strategic plan, released in 2019, showed Colorado ranked 47th in the U.S. for the condition of rural roads



CDOT proposes to repair 1,300 miles of rural pavement across the state

\$1.3 billion

going toward rural roads between 2020–2030

24% of older adults

have trouble finding transportation options for trips wanted/needed



 63% to medical appointments

 41% for shopping/pharmacy trips

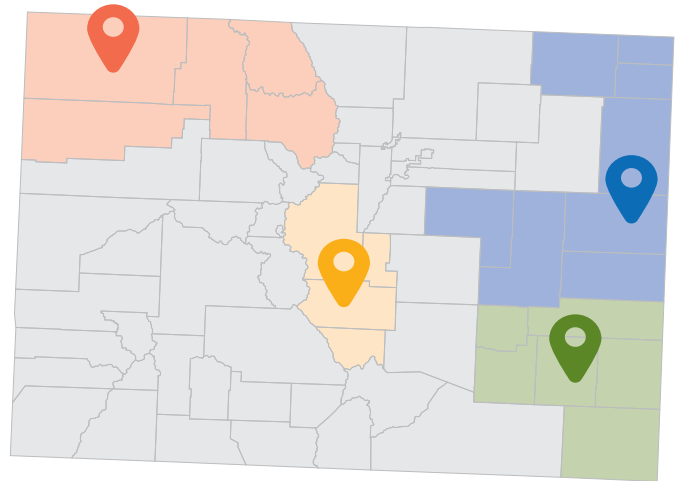
Rates for these categories were higher in rural Colorado

 70% rural 48% urban

 44% rural 31% urban

Adults who would likely use public transportation 20% rural 35% urban

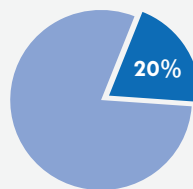
Counties with the greatest difficulty securing transportation for medical appointments



-  Eastern Colorado
-  Southeast Colorado
-  Central Front Range
-  Northwest Colorado



15% of statewide transit ridership comes from rural Colorado, which makes up only 12% of the state's population



\$619 million of the unfunded project list would be dedicated to providing mobility options to rural Coloradans, including seniors and veterans from 2024-2029

Childcare

Child care is needed across the state. Only two Colorado counties have enough licensed child care capacity to serve the number of children in the county: Hinsdale and San Juan, both of which have fewer than 30 children age 5 and under.

Colorado children with all parents in the workforce

66.8% rural

65.4% urban

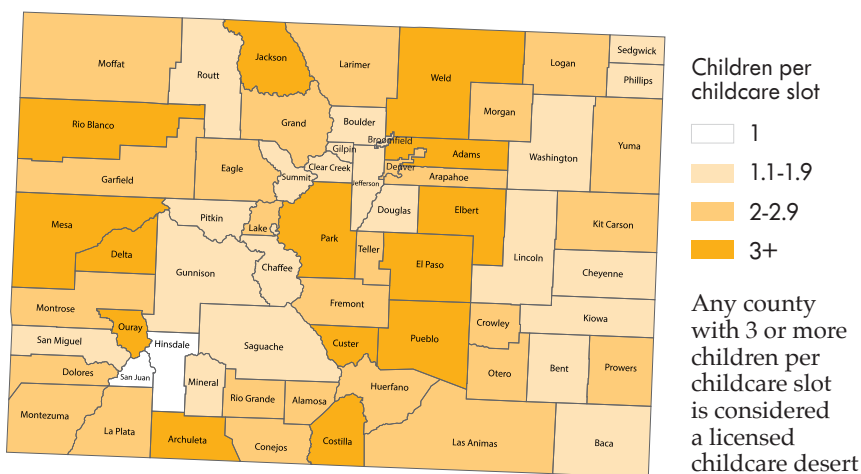


11 rural counties | **7 urban counties**

372,951

Colorado children are under age 6

41,244 rural children under age 6



Colorado ranked as the third most expensive state for infant childcare

AVERAGE COST OF CENTER-BASED CARE IN COLORADO

	Tuition for an infant	\$15,881 2020	\$19,573 2022
	Tuition for a 4-year old	\$11,911 2020	\$13,809 2022
	Tuition for 2 children	\$27,792 2020	\$33,382 2022

\$2.3 billion annual loss of Colorado's economy due to child care challenges

2023 ANNUAL MEAN WAGE OF CHILDCARE WORKERS

\$38,240
or **\$18.39/hour**
in Colorado



\$37,460
South and Eastern
Colorado

\$36,800
Southwest/Central
Mountains Colorado

\$39,630
Northwest
Colorado

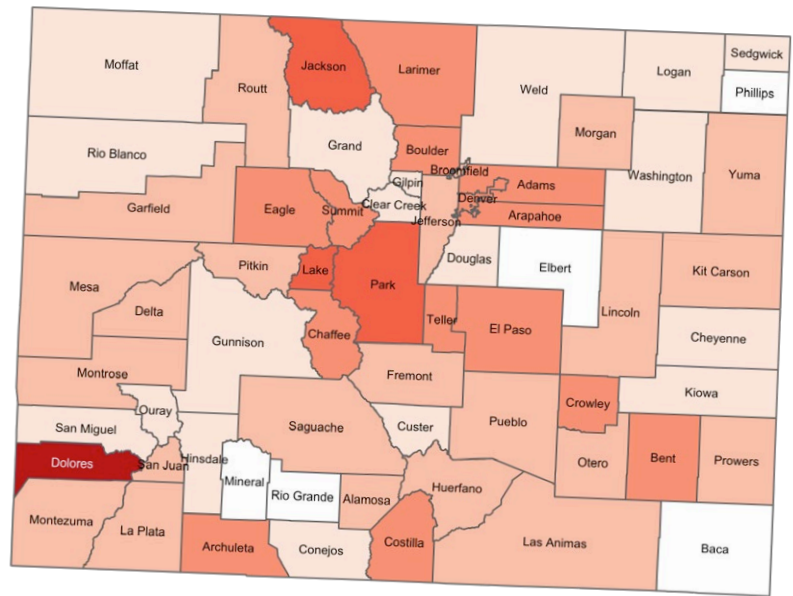
2023 CHILD CARE COST BURDEN

31% is the average
childcare cost burden
in Colorado



**1/3 of a median-income
family's earnings goes to
child care for two children**

Southwestern Colorado's unmet
childcare rate (17%) is **5X+ higher**
than urban Douglas County's (3%)



ADVANTAGES OF FREE CHILD CARE



Colorado families with free child
care earn an average of
\$9,450 more
than those without access to it

**Mothers with free childcare
work more compared to
mothers without free childcare**



3.19+
hours per week



11%+
participation

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Through the Universal Pre-K (UPK)
Program, all Colorado children can
**get up to 15 hours of free,
high-quality preschool the
year before kindergarten**



**2,100 licensed
child care providers**
are listed in Colorado's Universal
Preschool system (2024)



349 providers are located in rural areas

Outdoor Industry & Tourism



Outdoor recreation added \$13.9 billion

to Colorado's economy in 2022

>> 19.9% increase from 2021



Snow sports are the top outdoor industry driver and rank 1st in the U.S.

\$1.4 billion to the Colorado's economy



The average outdoor recreation outing per person in 2023 decreased

62.5 outings per person



The outdoor recreation participant base grew 4.1% in 2023 to a record

175.8 million people

57.3% of the U.S. population ages 6+
92% of Colorado residents

BENEFITS OF COLORADO TOURISM IN 2023



93.3 million people visited Colorado



\$28.3 billion in visitor spending

on Colorado outdoor recreation

>> This supported 188,000 jobs and generated \$1.8 billion in state and local tax revenue



Breakdown of visitor spending

\$13.9 billion
in Denver

\$2.6 billion
in Southwestern Colorado & San Luis Valley

\$4.3 billion
in Central Mountains

\$1.4 billion
in Northwest Colorado

\$3 billion
in Pikes Peak region

\$446 million
in Colorado's Eastern & Southern Plains

In Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) compensation in 2022, Colorado ranked

10th

among all states in employment



8th

among all states in employment growth

11th

among all states in compensation



7th

among all states in compensation growth

In 2022, outdoor recreation compensation and employment continues to grow in Colorado



9.2%

129,773 jobs

increase in employment in Colorado compared to 7.4% increase nationally



12.3%

\$53,372

increase in compensation in Colorado compared to 9.1% increase nationally

Agriculture



30.2M acres of land in farms in Colorado



36,056

number of farms and ranches in Colorado (2022)



79.5%

of all farms and ranches are owned and operated by individuals and families in Colorado (28,652 farms)



838 acres

average size of farm and ranch (60% of farms are below 140 acres in size)



\$8.2 billion in farm production expenses

\$226,319 average per farm



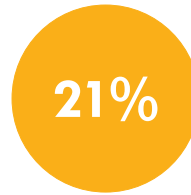
\$2.8 billion

in crops (including nursery and greenhouse)



\$6.4 billion in livestock

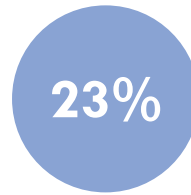
(including poultry and their products)



21%

estimated decrease in Colorado's 2023 net farm income

Record beef prices (Colorado's #1 Ag export) and high spring precipitation offset rising input costs and decreased government program income in 2023



23%

estimated decrease in U.S. farm income in 2023



\$1.8 billion net cash

farm income (\$50,692 average per farm)

Renewable Energy



39%

of Colorado's total electricity net generation was from renewable sources in 2023



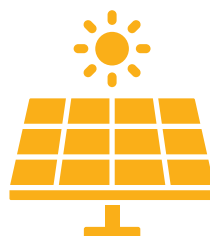
Colorado's use of wind power was

5X greater in 2023 than it was in 2010



70%

of Colorado's renewable electricity generation was from wind power in 2023



2023 solar power capacity in Colorado

Ranked 11th in the nation

23% of the state's renewable electricity

OIL AND GAS

In 2023, Colorado produced more than twice as much crude oil than in 2010, primarily from the increased use of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies. Demand for refined petroleum products in Colorado is about two-and-a-half times more than the state's refining capacity. Several pipelines, primarily from Wyoming, Texas, and Kansas, help supply the Colorado market.



As of 2023, Colorado is the **4th largest onshore oil producer in the U.S.**

This accounts for only 4% of the total U.S. crude oil production

Colorado's total oil and gas production in 2023 is estimated to be nearly

\$16 billion

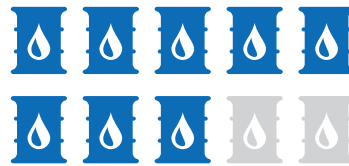


37.5% lower than the all-time high in 2022



The U.S. provides **~14.5% of the total crude oil** for the global market

Increasing Colorado's production would have close to no impact on global supply and prices



8 out of 10 barrels of crude oil produced in Colorado come from Weld county

Rural counties with the highest production by barrel

3.2M

Rio Blanco

1.1M

Garfield

899,000

Jackson



Nationwide, Colorado is the **8th largest in both natural gas reserves and production**

Accounting for almost 4% of the U.S. total reserve



40% of natural gas and coalbed methane gas production came from rural Colorado

Garfield (360,211,253 MCF) was the largest rural producer in 2023

COLORADO MINING

2023 Electricity net generation



32%

Coal-fired power plants

↓ down from 68% in 2010



29%

Natural gas



39%

Renewable resources



7 coal mines operated in 2022



\$747 million coal sold

by Colorado mines in 2022

↑ 34% from 2021



1,284 employees

in the coal mining industry in 2022

In 2022, Colorado was the



Largest producer of molybdenum

3rd largest producer of gold

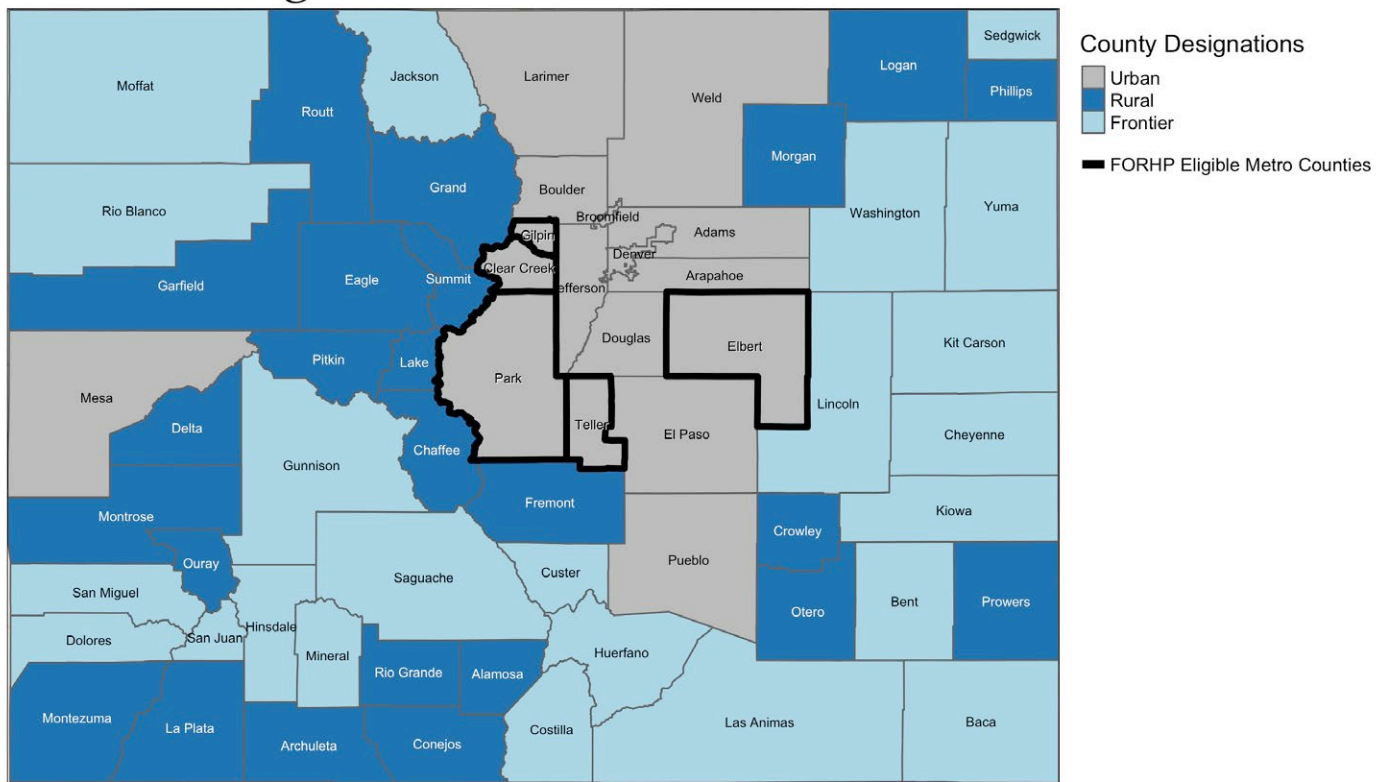


The combined production value was about \$915 million

Appendix



FORHP Eligible Areas



The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) has modified its list of areas eligible for rural health funding. The Counties outlined in bold are eligible for FORHP funding even though they are designated as Metropolitan Counties. The newly adopted designation method designates outlying Metropolitan counties that do not contain any Urbanized Area (UA) population as fully eligible for rural health grants.

RURAL COUNTIES

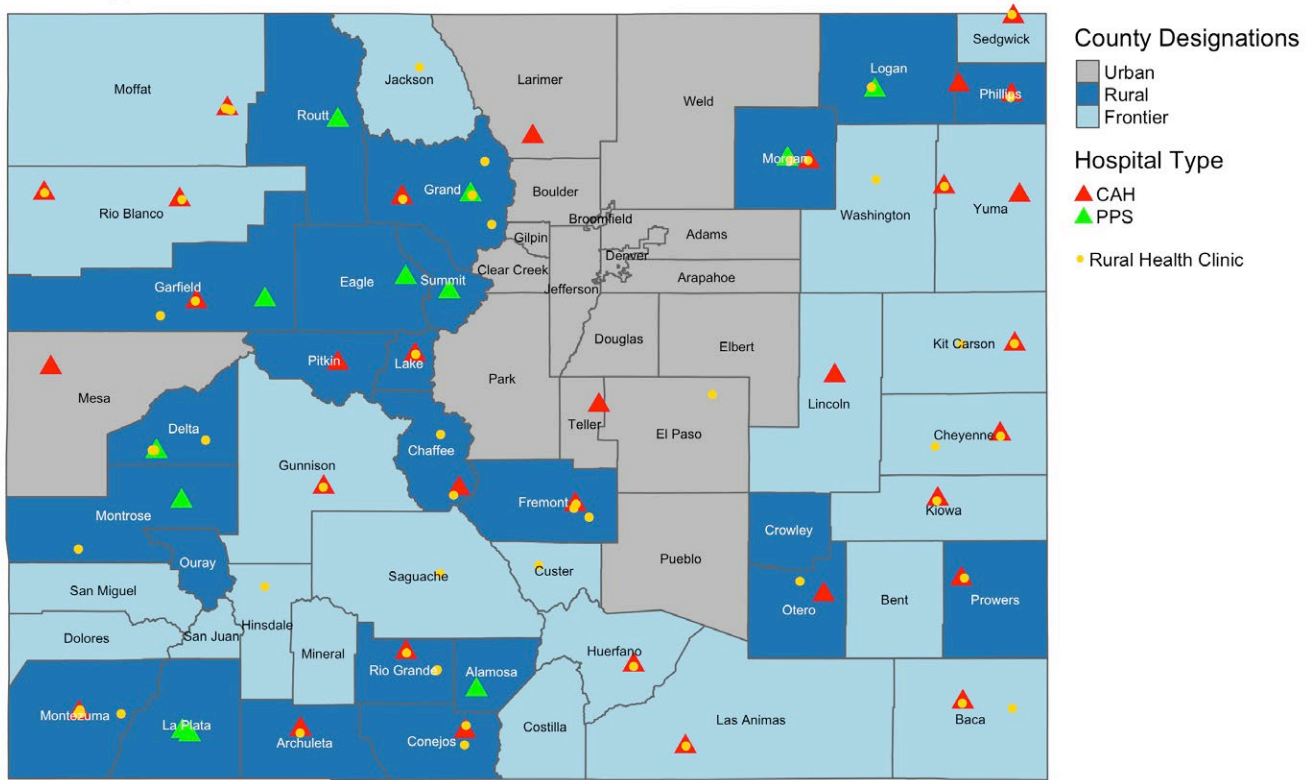
A “rural county” is a county that is located in a nonmetropolitan area in the state that either has no municipality within its territorial boundaries with 50,000 or more permanent residents based upon the most recent population estimates published by the United States Census Bureau or that satisfies alternate criteria for the designation of a rural area as may be promulgated by the Federal Office of Management and Budget.

FRONTIER COUNTIES

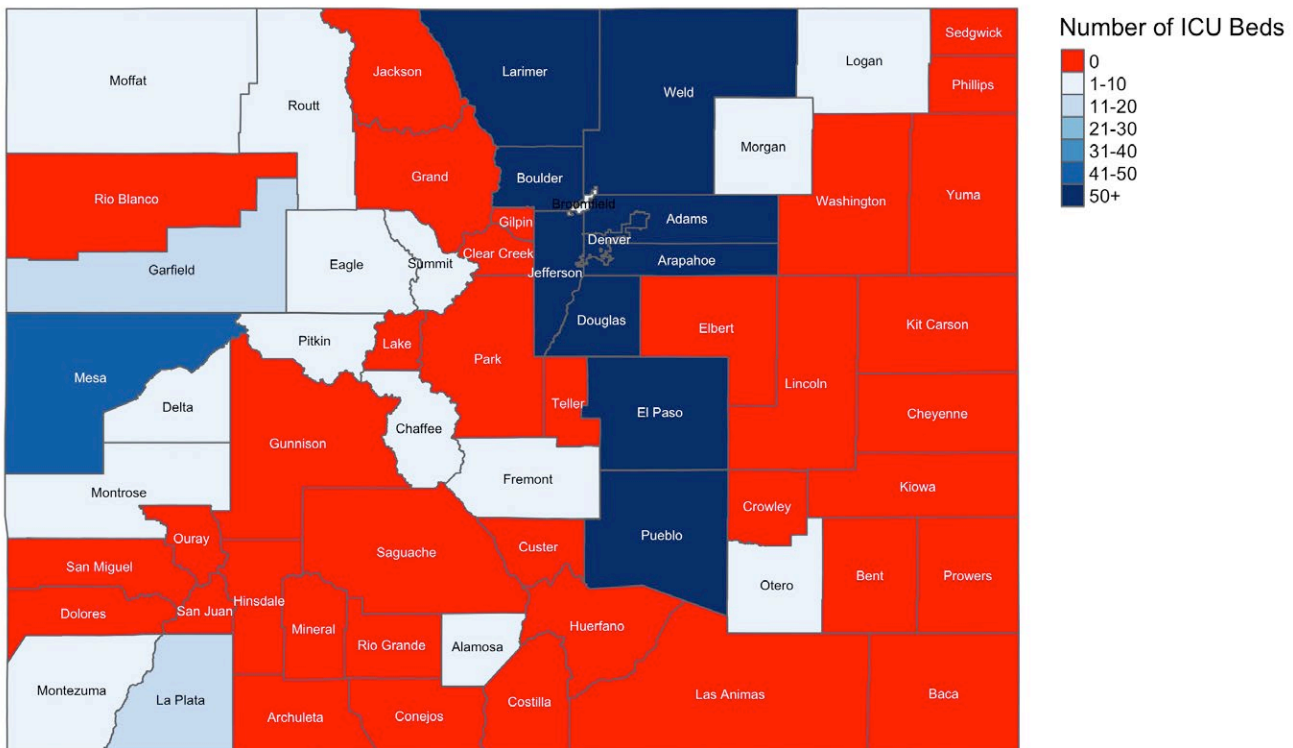
A “frontier county” is a county in the state that has a population density of six or fewer individuals per one square mile.

For additional information on the varying definitions of “rural” and “frontier,” please visit ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural

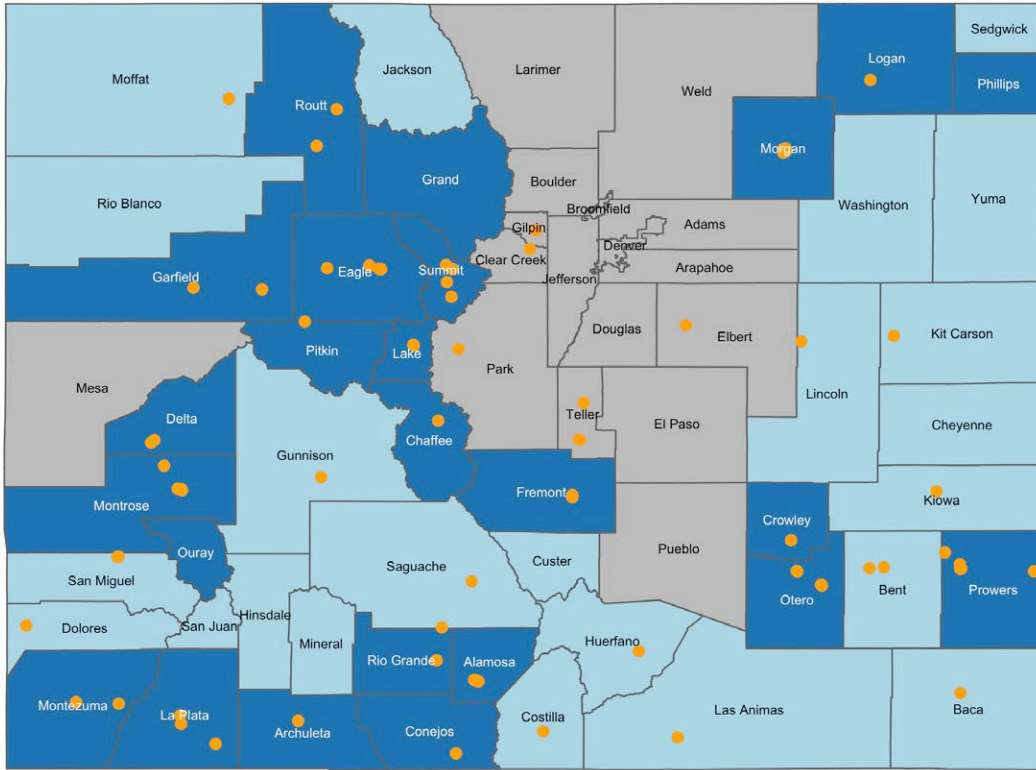
Hospitals and RHCs in Rural Colorado



Intensive Care Beds (2024)

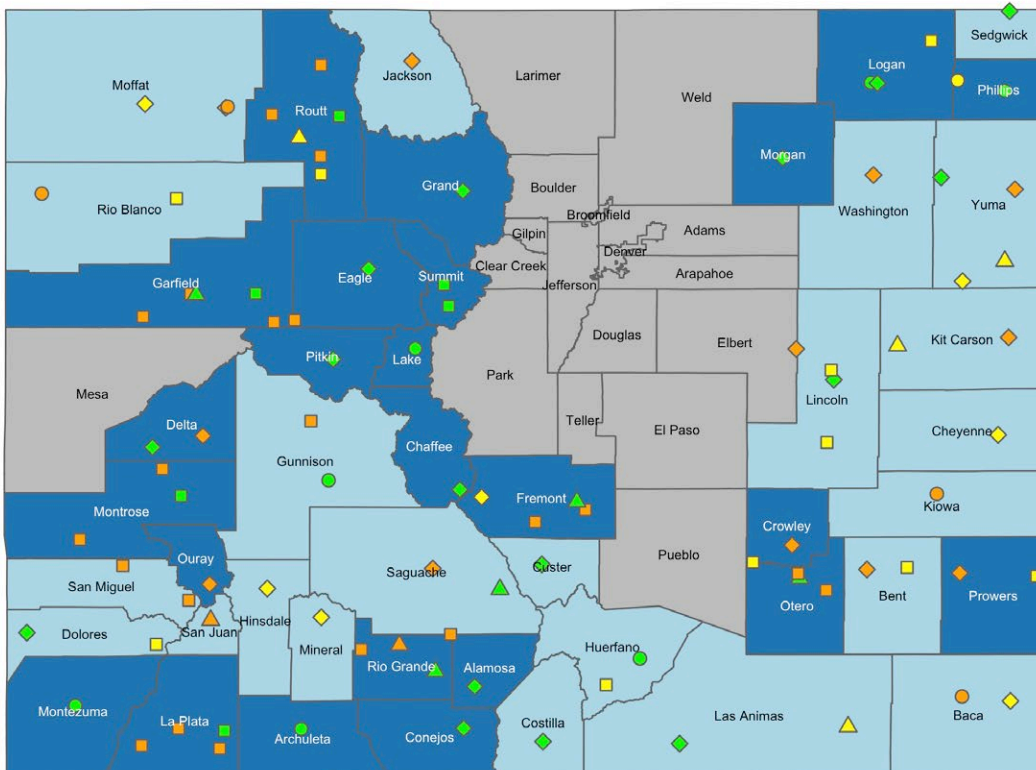


FQHCs in Rural Colorado



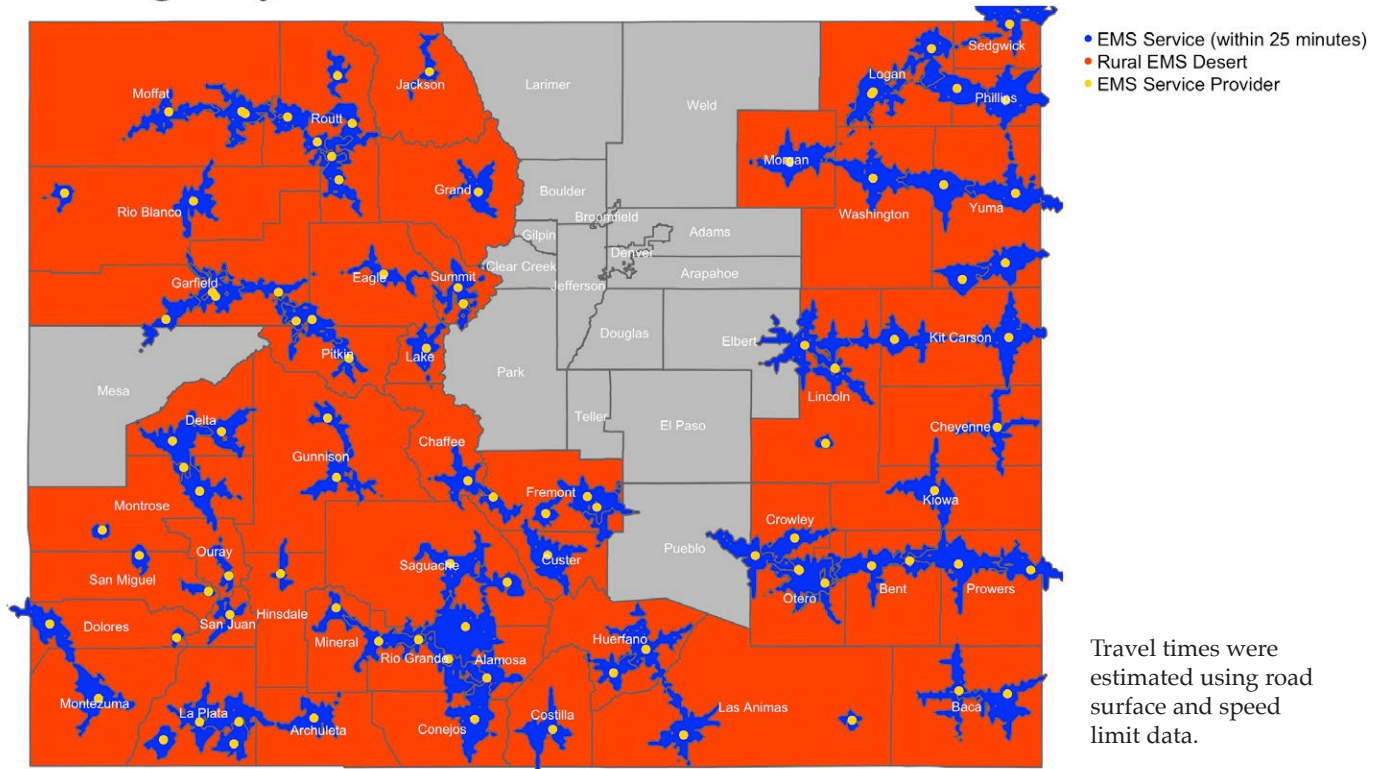
- County Designations**
- Urban
 - Rural
 - Frontier
- Federally Qualified Health Centers

EMS Agencies in Rural Colorado



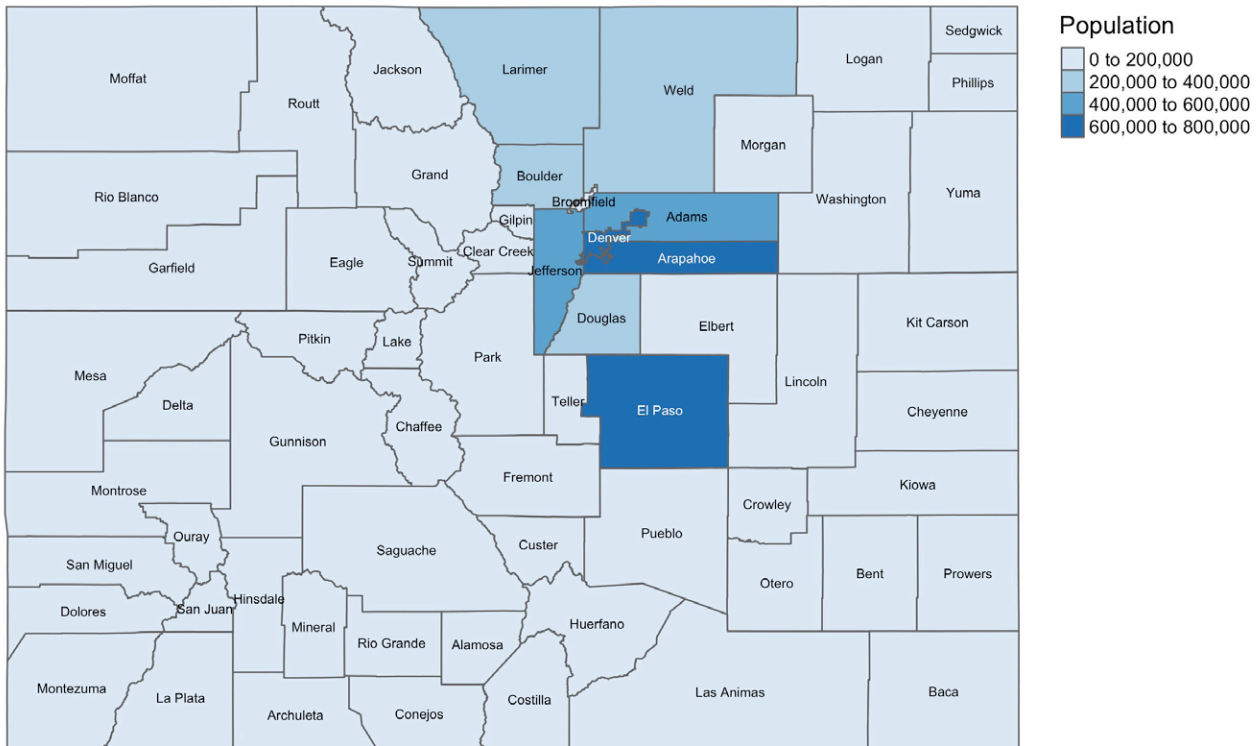
- County Designations**
- Urban
 - Rural
 - Frontier
- Organization Status**
- Paid
 - Mixed
 - Volunteer
- Organization Type**
- Hospital
 - Fire Department
 - ◆ Governmental, Non-Fire
 - ▲ Private, Nonhospital

Emergency Medical Service Deserts (2023)

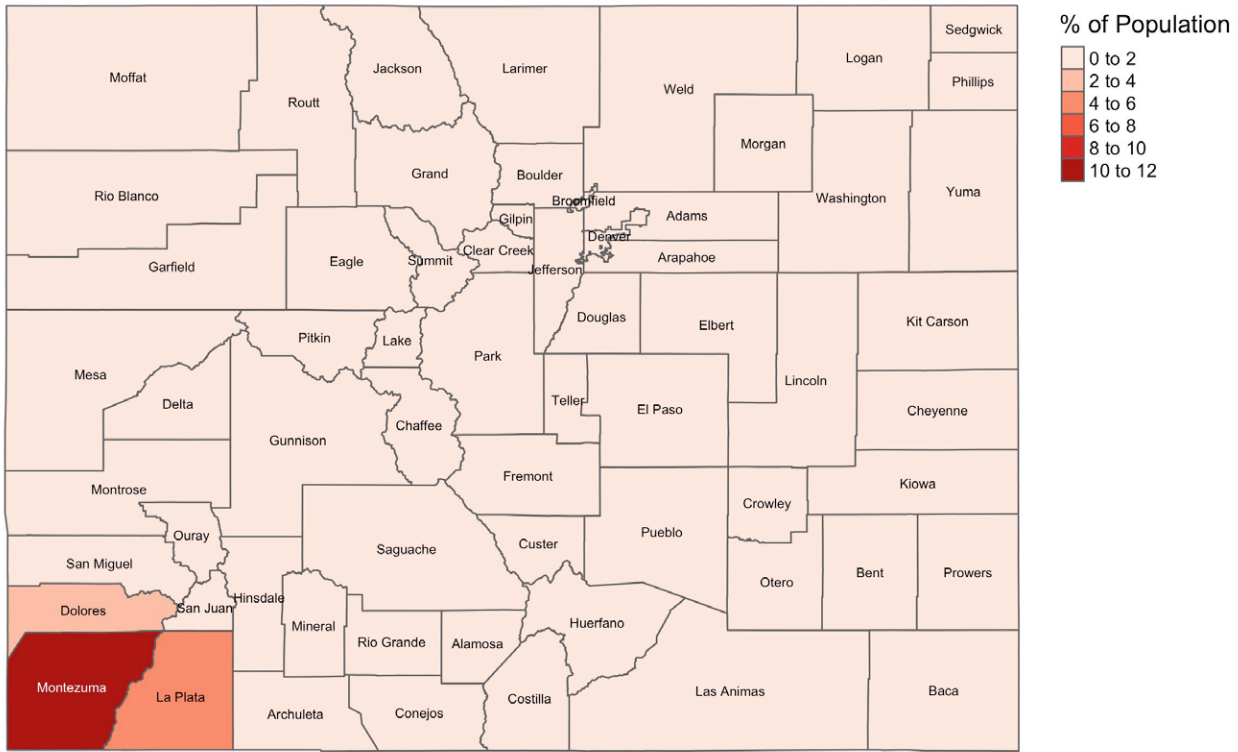


Travel times were estimated using road surface and speed limit data.

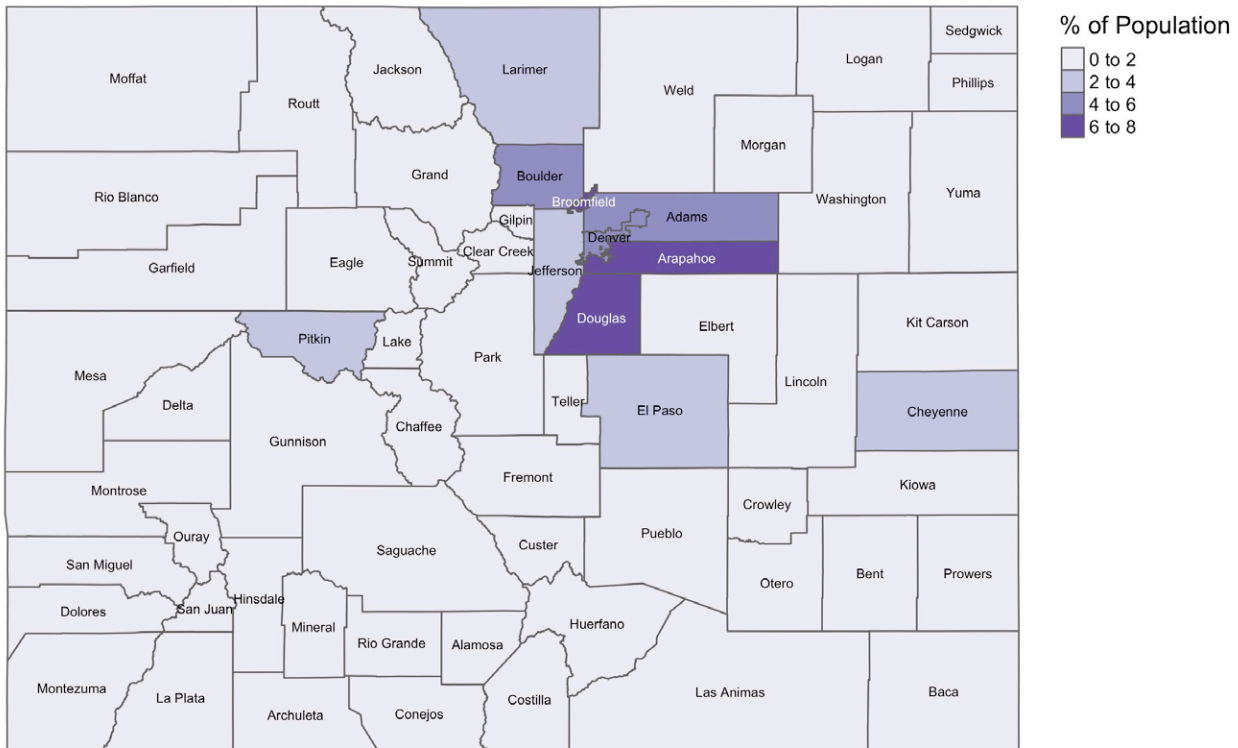
Population Estimates (2023)



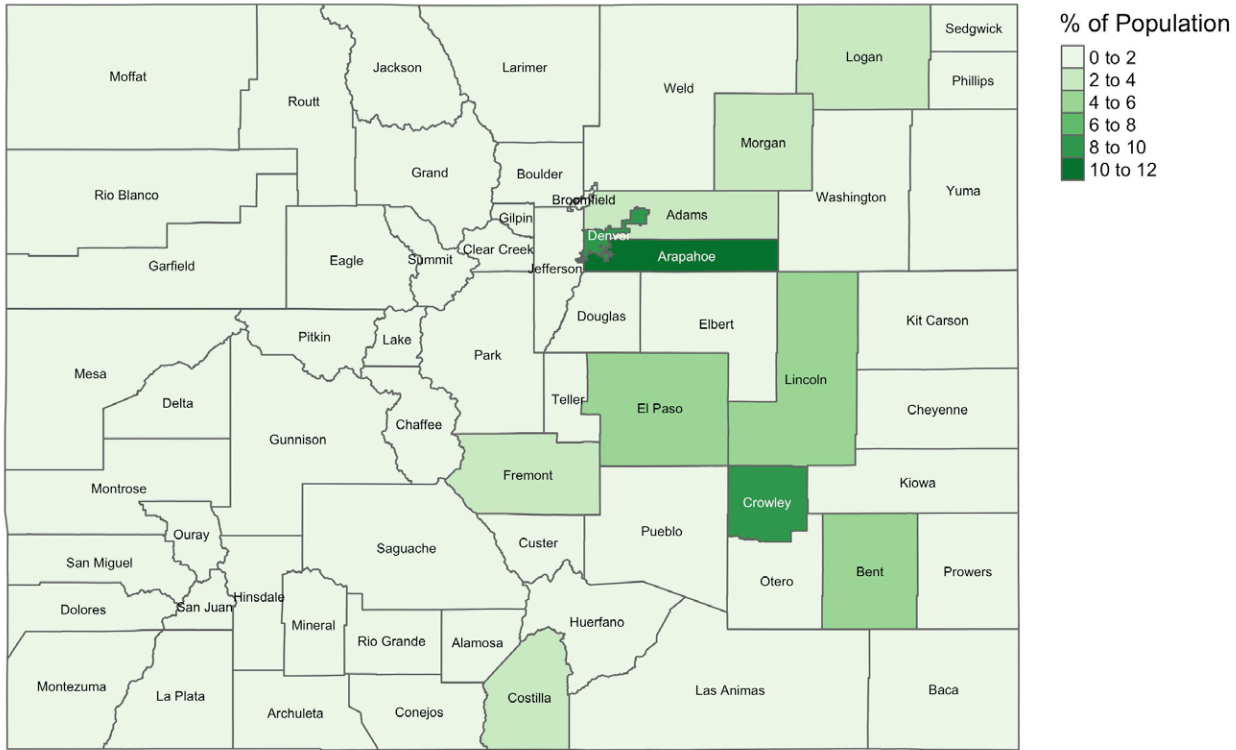
American Indian & Alaska Native Population (2022)



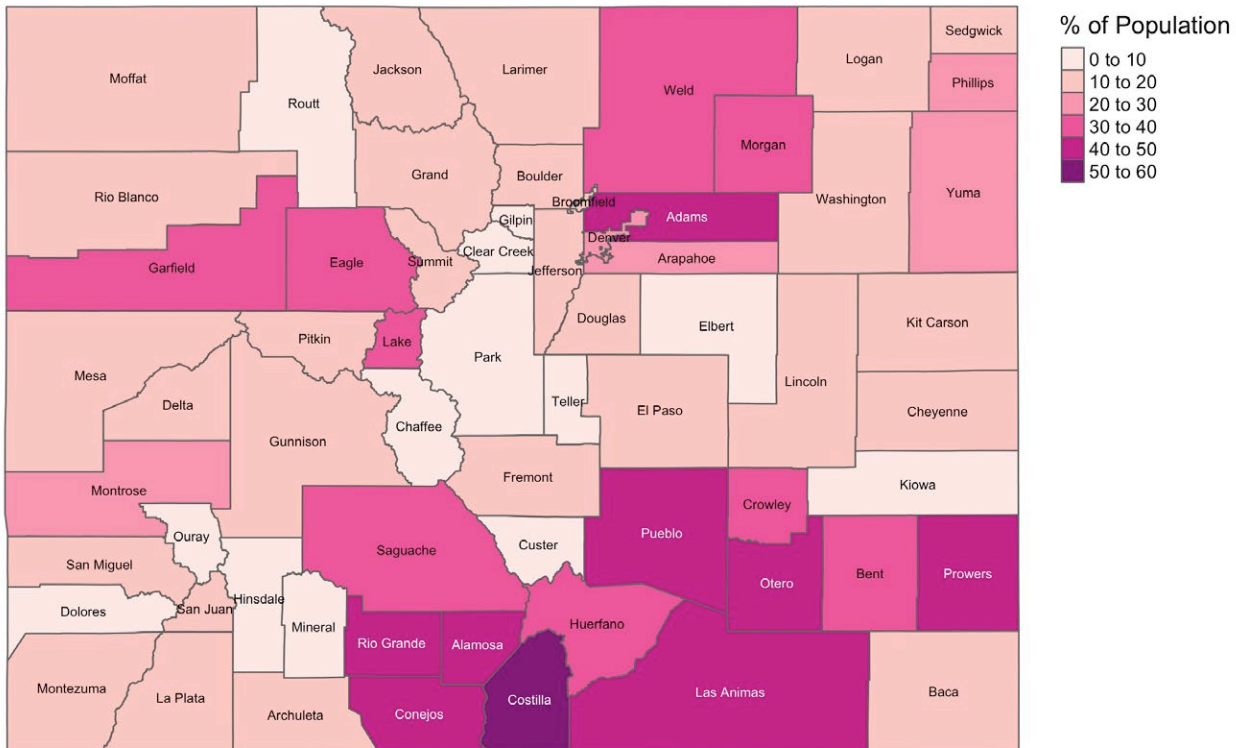
Asian Population (2022)



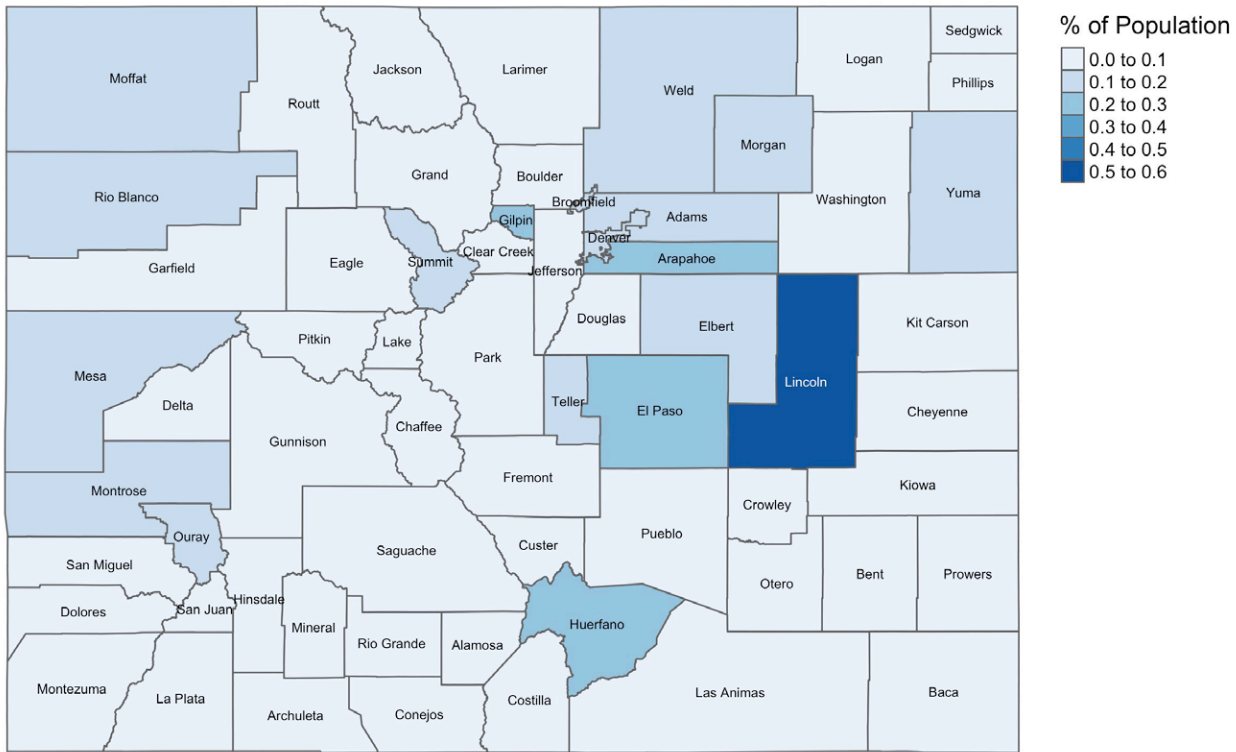
Black or African American Population (2022)



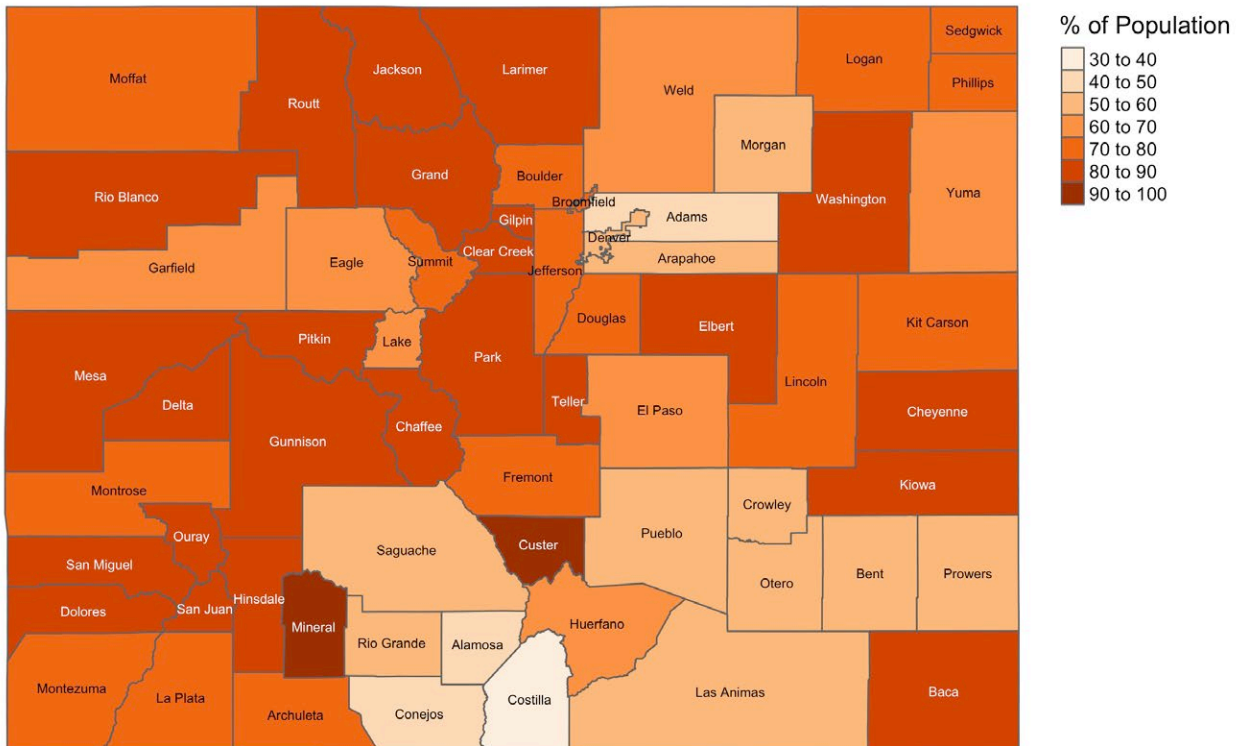
Hispanic Population (2022)



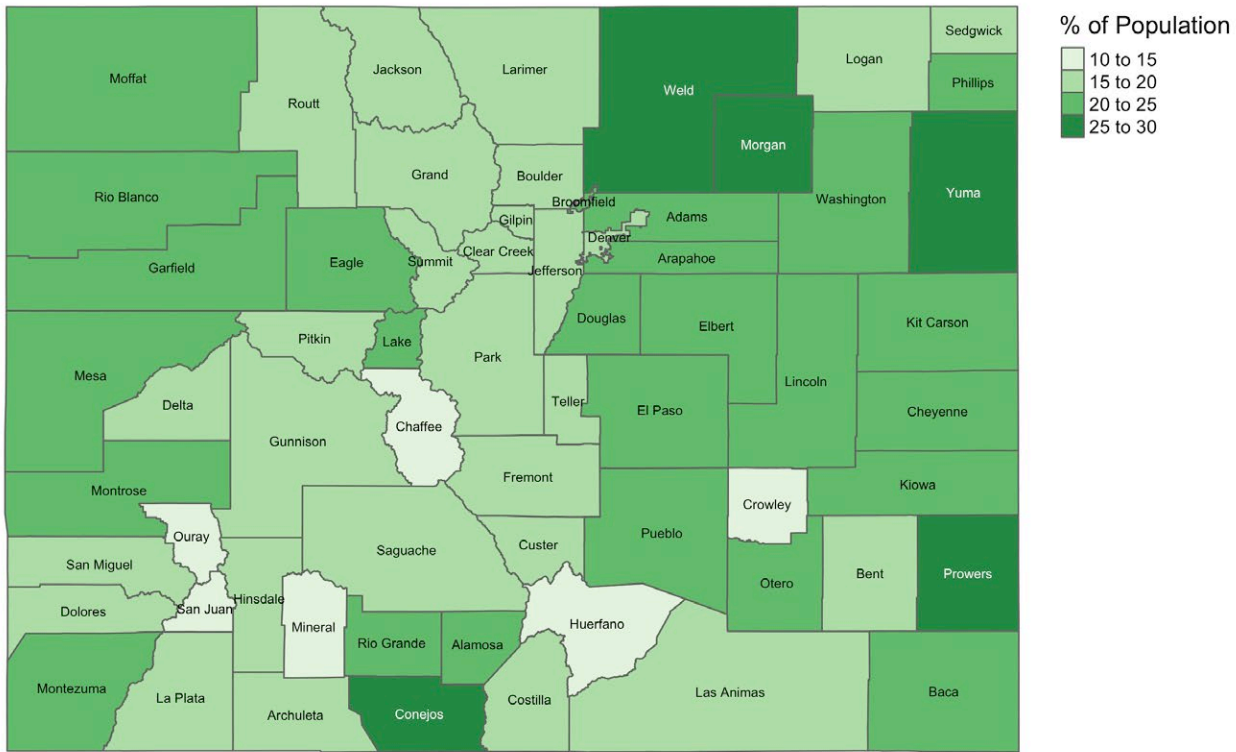
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Population (2022)



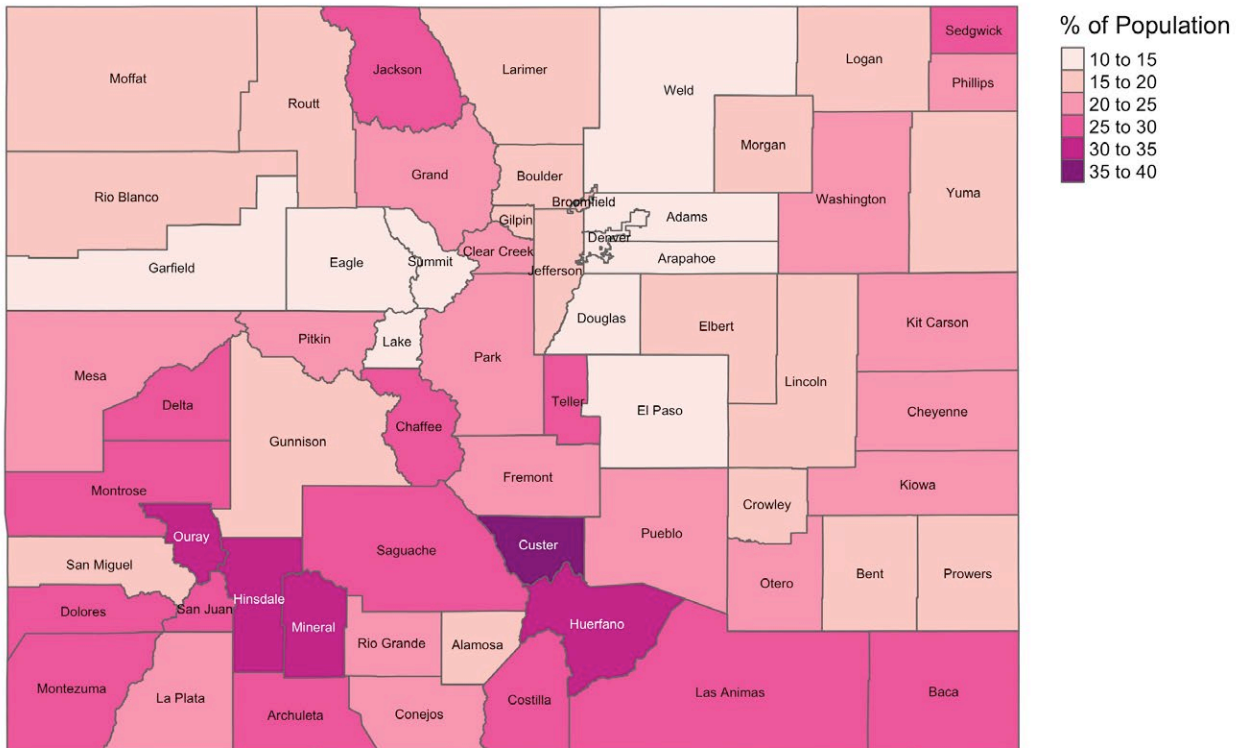
White Non-Hispanic Population (2022)



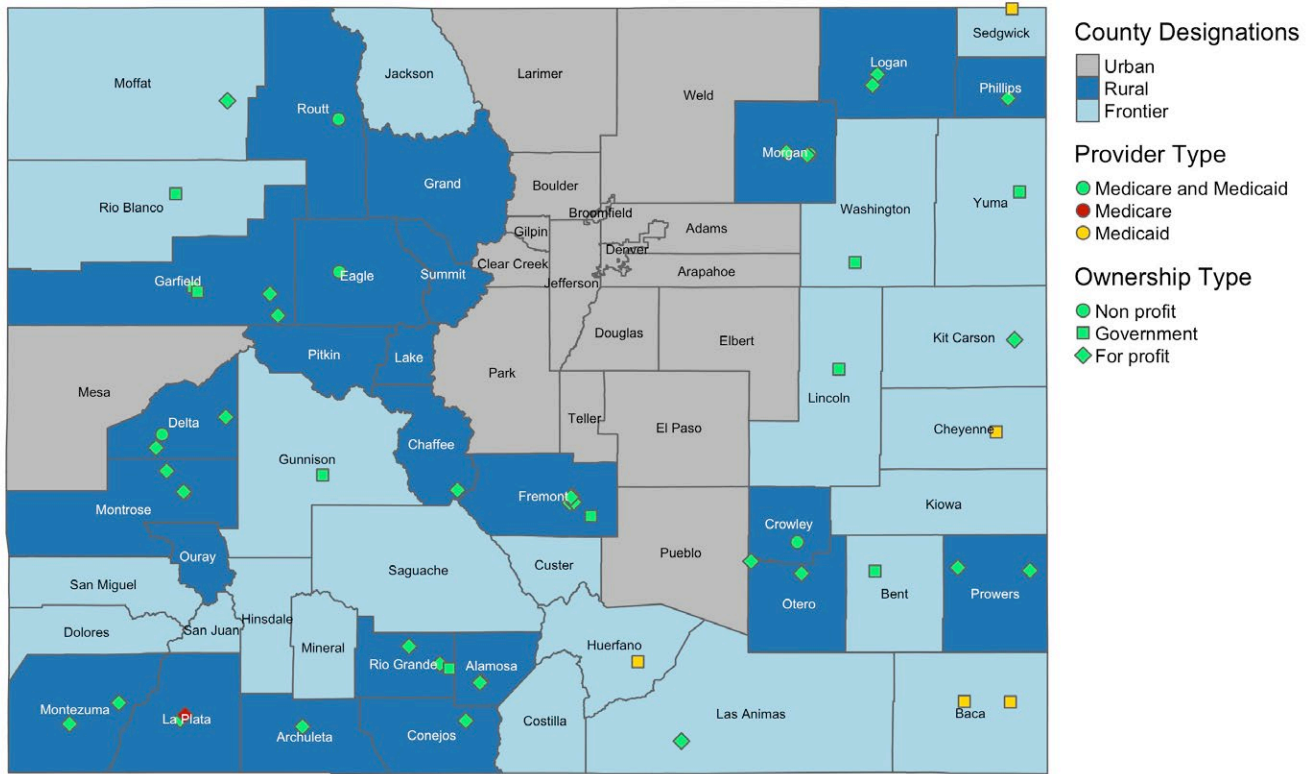
Population under 18 (2022)



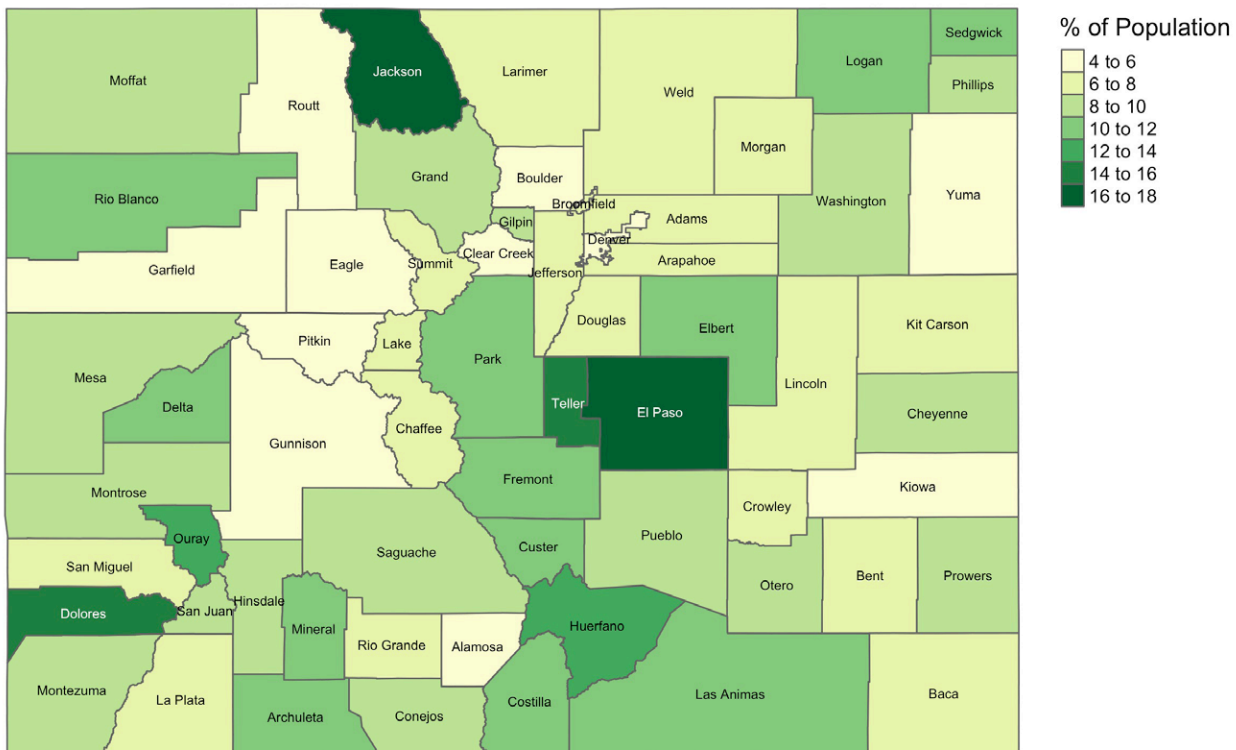
Population 65+ (2022)



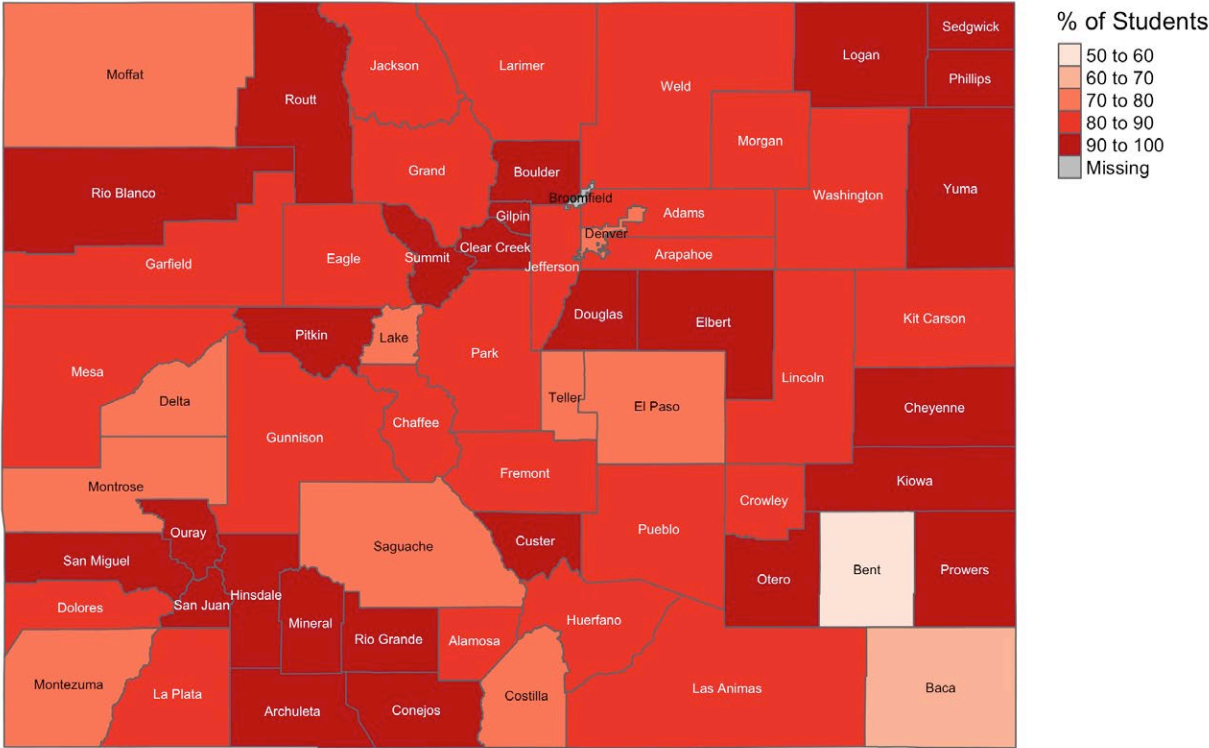
Nursing Homes in Rural Colorado



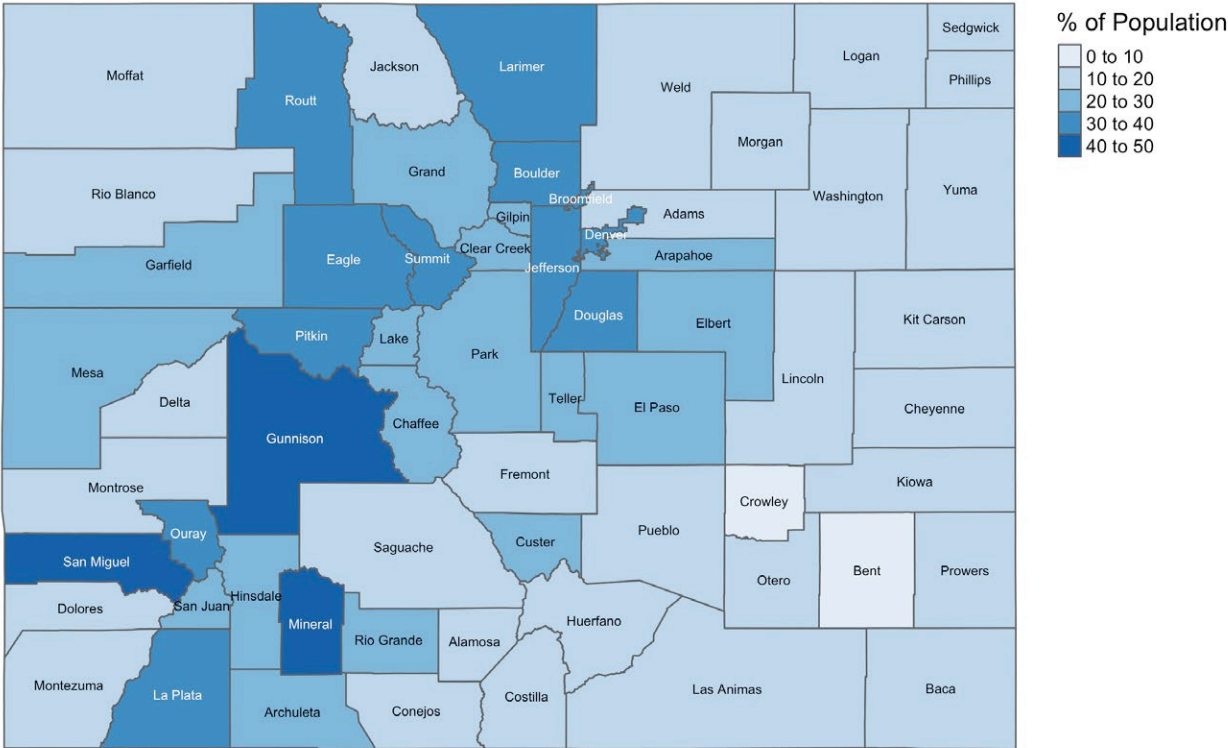
Veteran Population (2022)



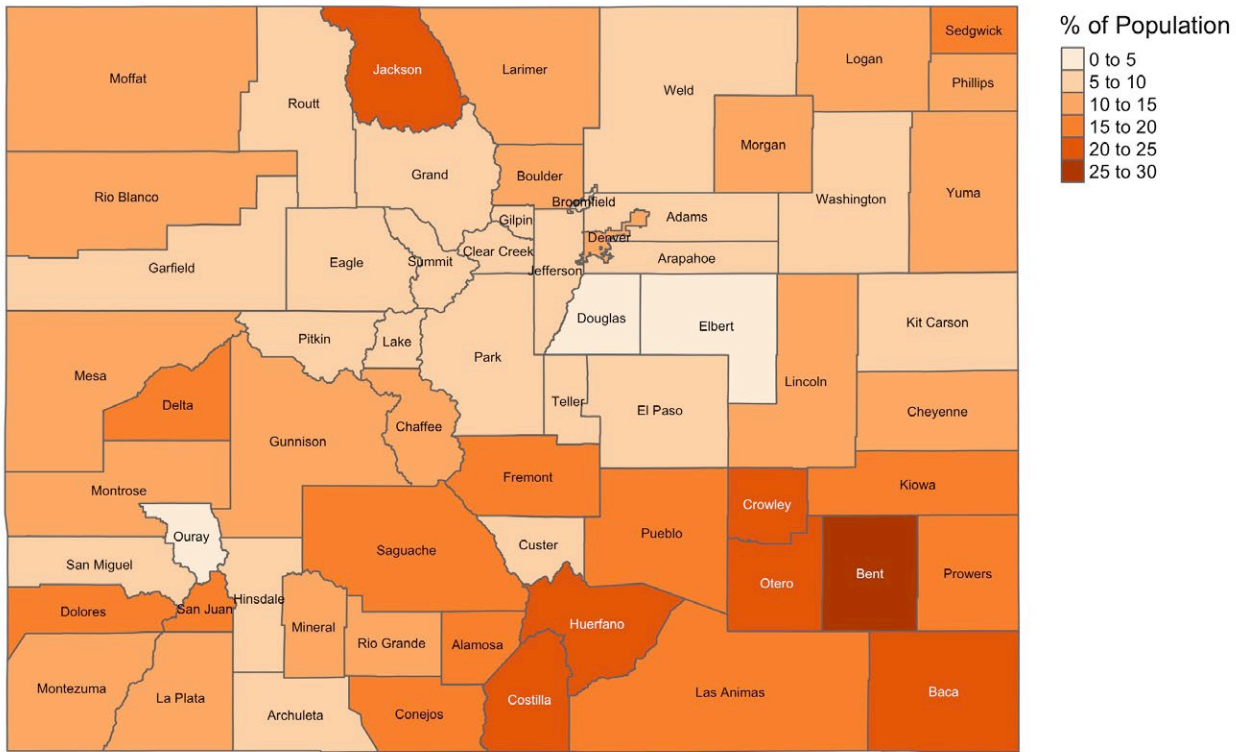
4-Year Highschool Graduation Rate (2023)



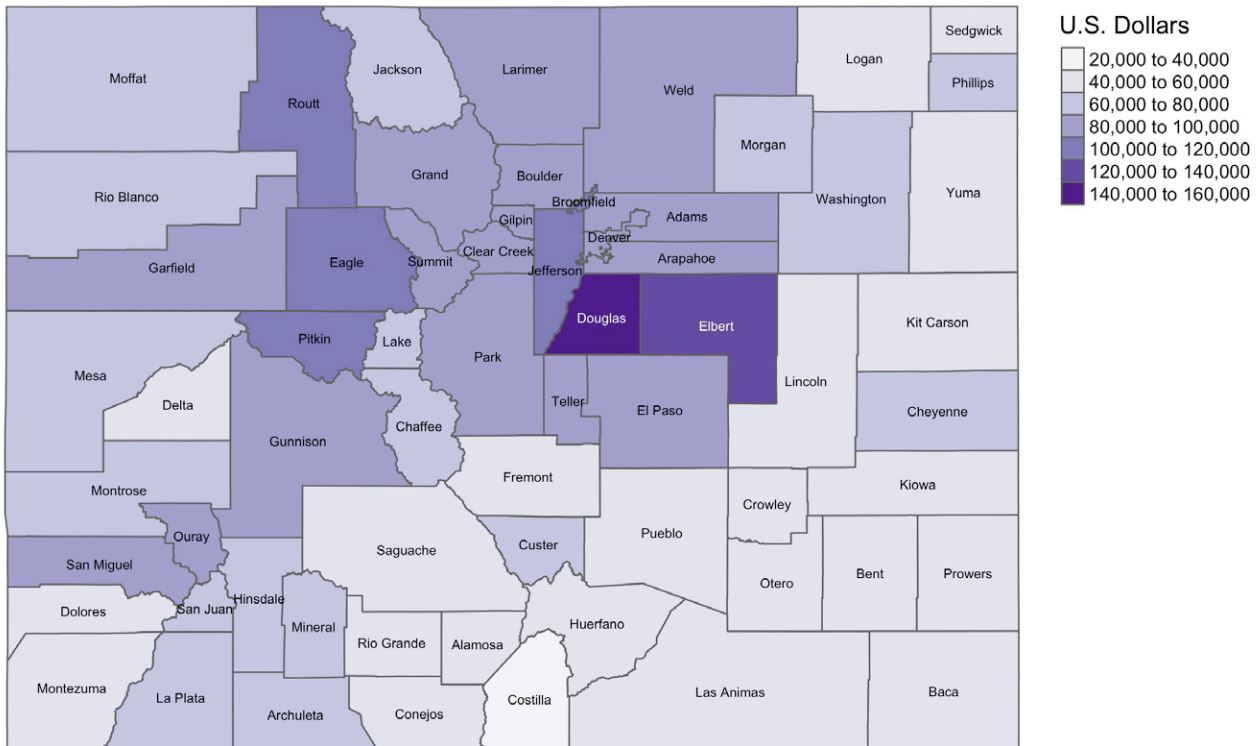
Bachelors Degree or Higher (2022)



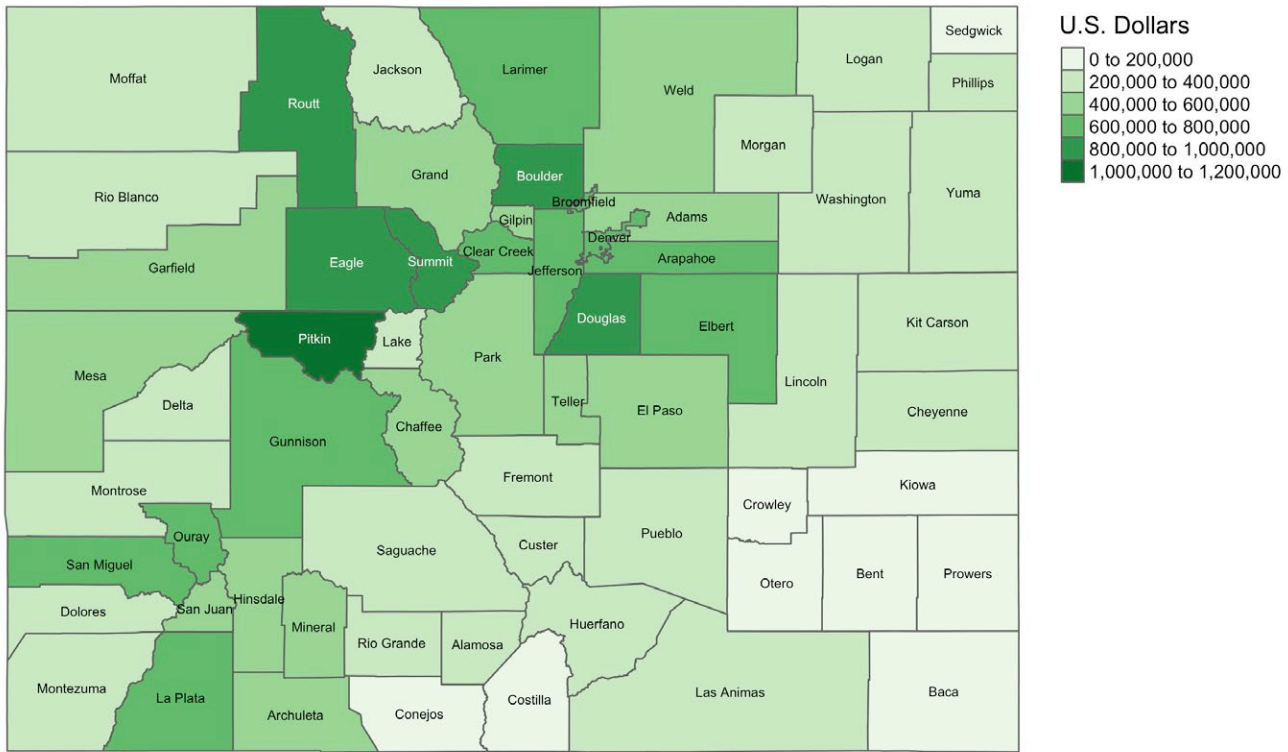
Population Experiencing Poverty (2022)



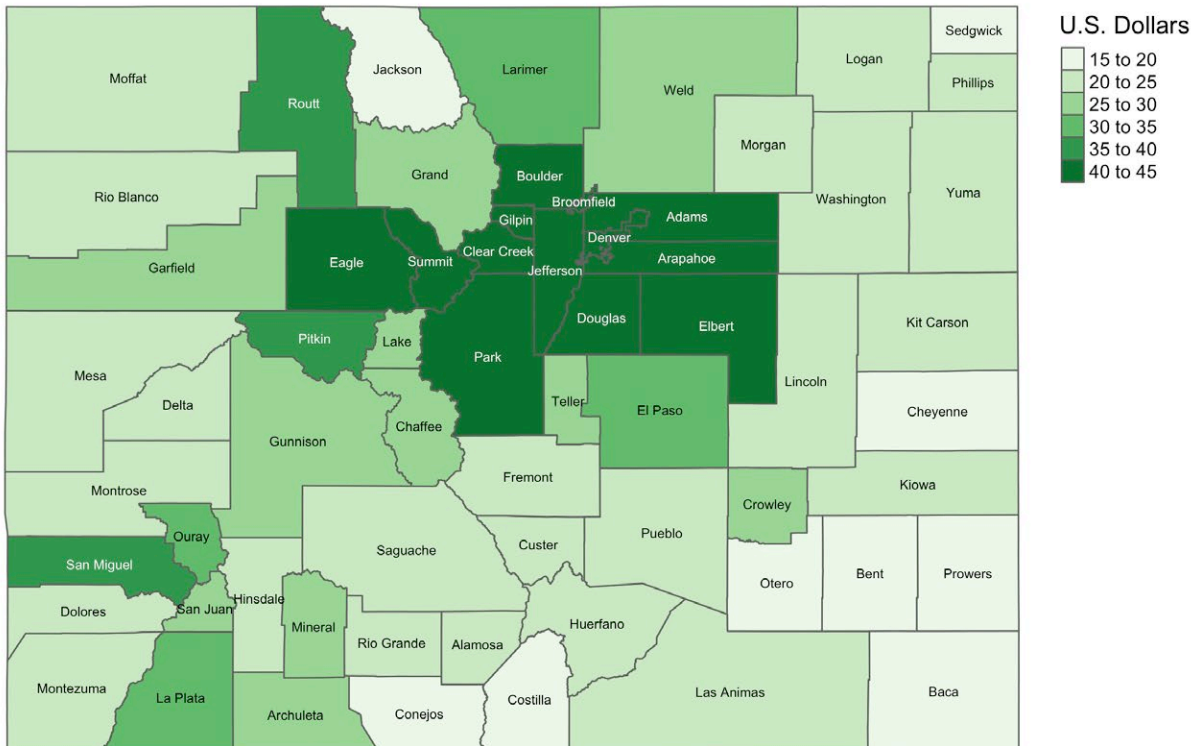
Household Median Income (2022)



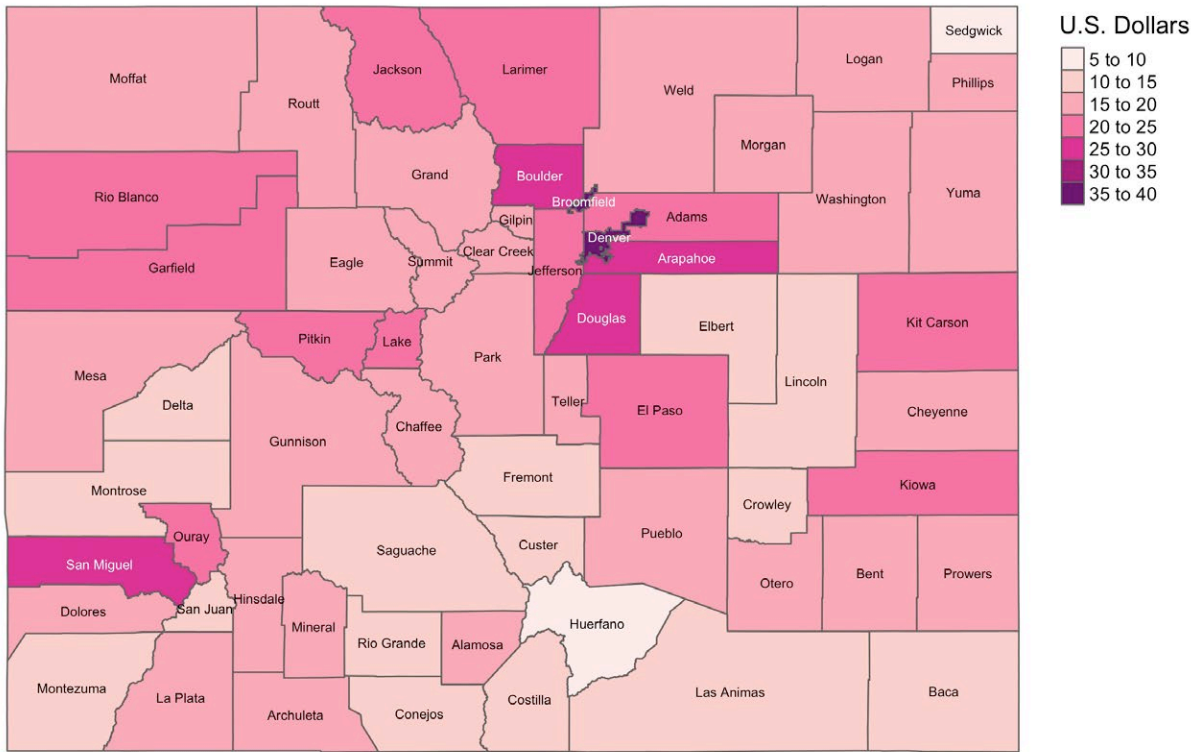
Median Home Price (Q1 2024)



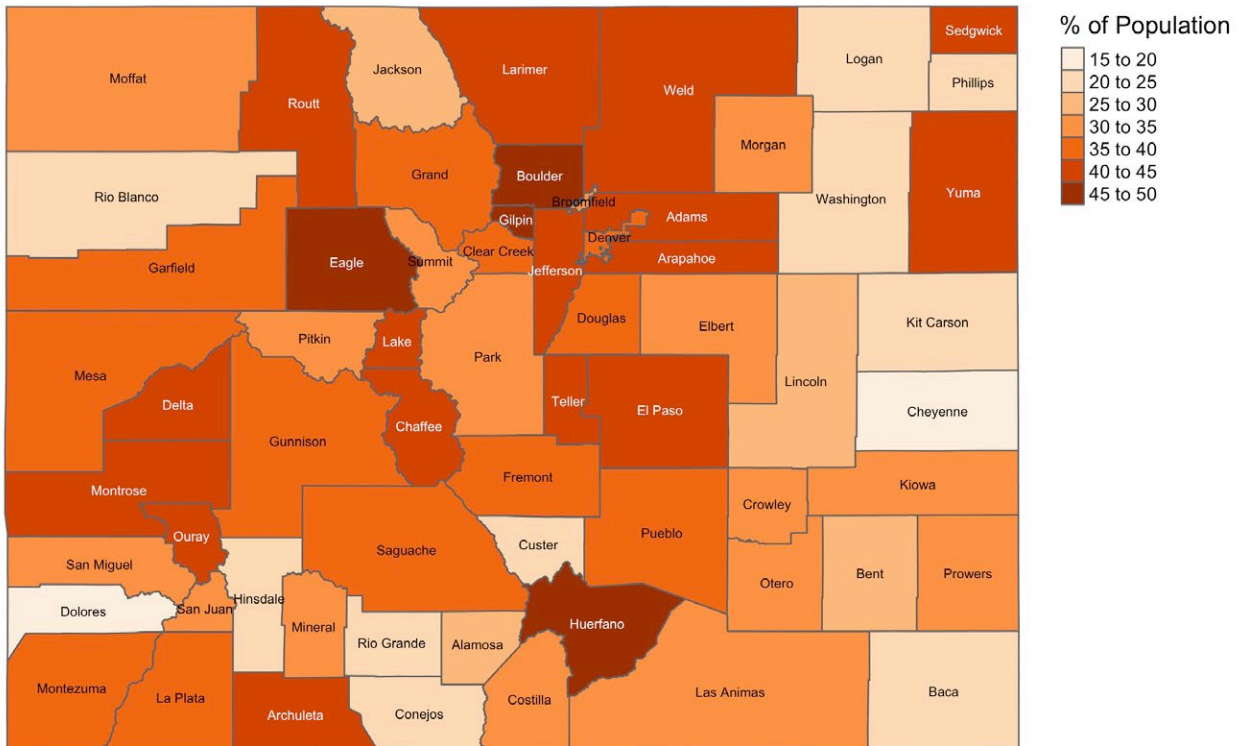
Hourly Wage Needed for a 2 Bed Rental (2024)



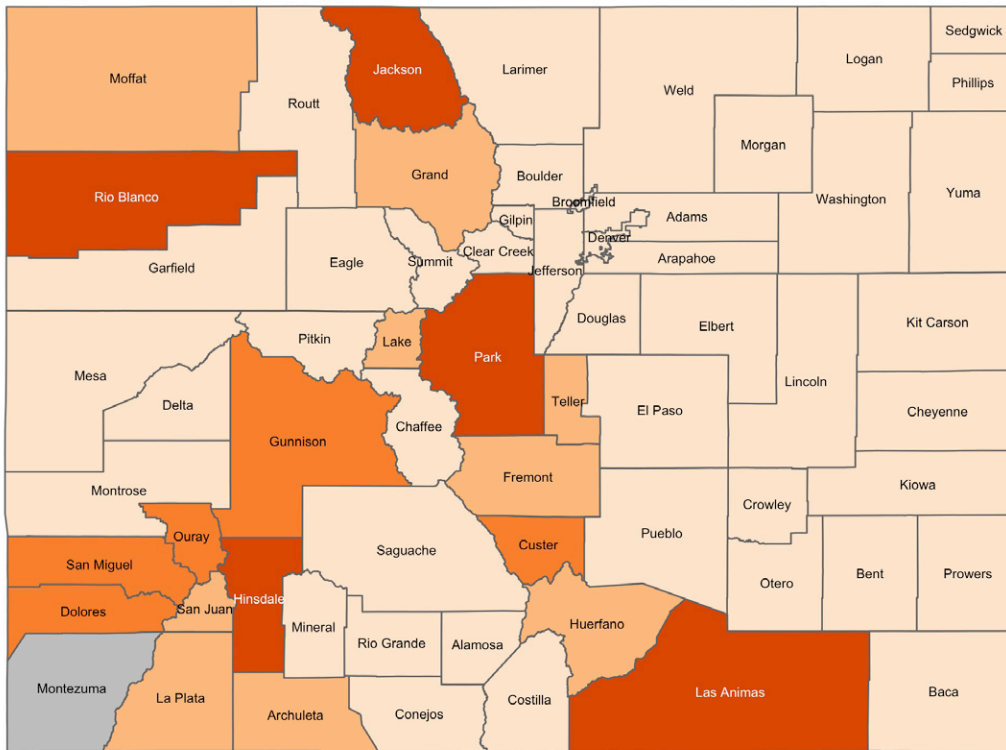
Average Renter Hourly Wage (2024)



Spending 35%+ of Income on Rent (2022)



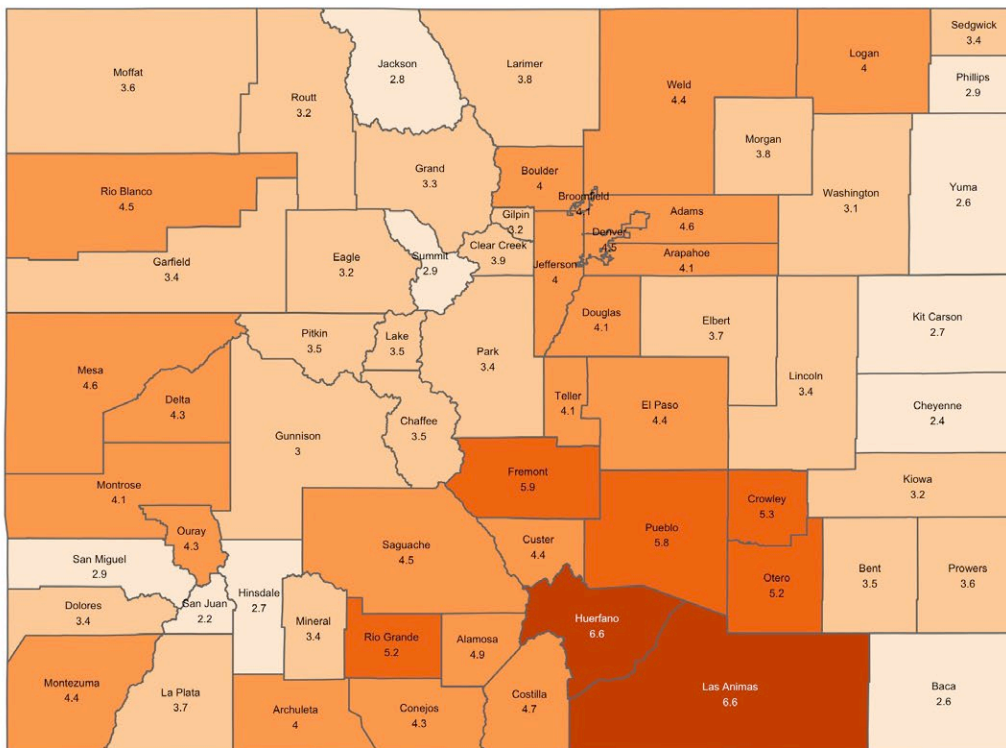
Colorado Broadband: Unserved (2024)



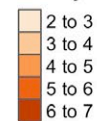
% No Access to 25/3 mps



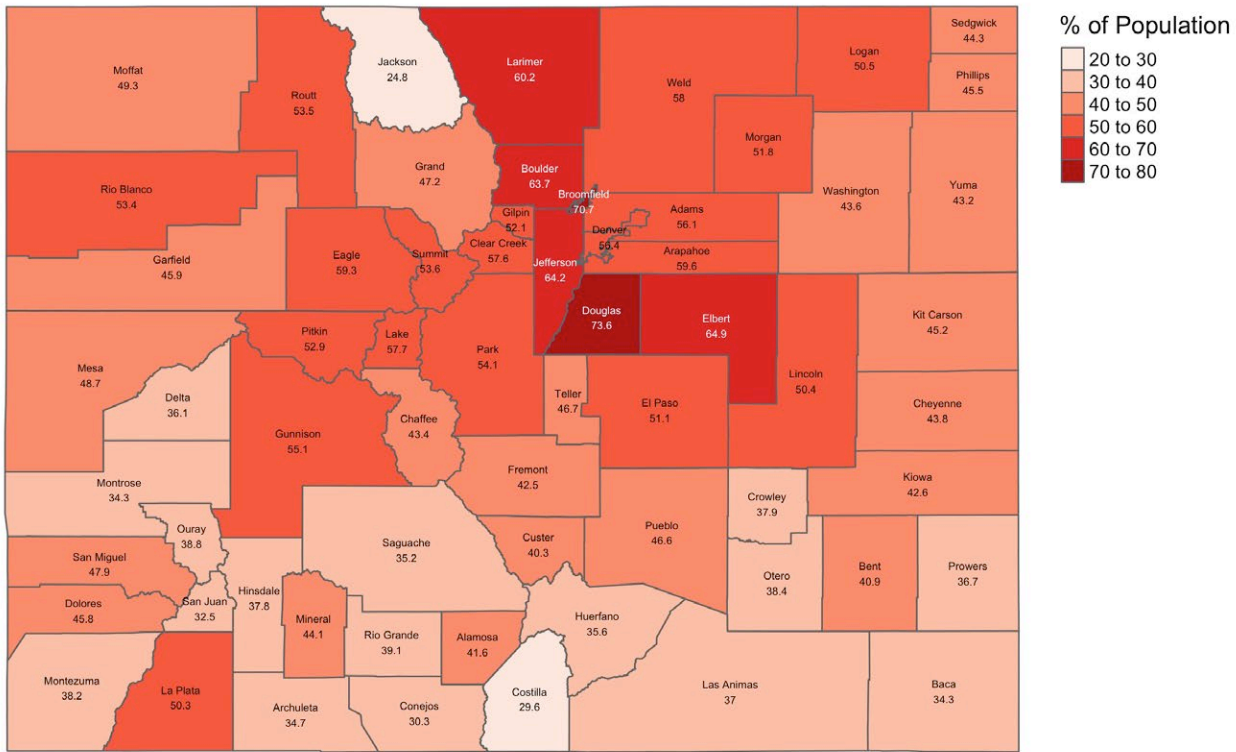
Unemployment (Jul 2024)



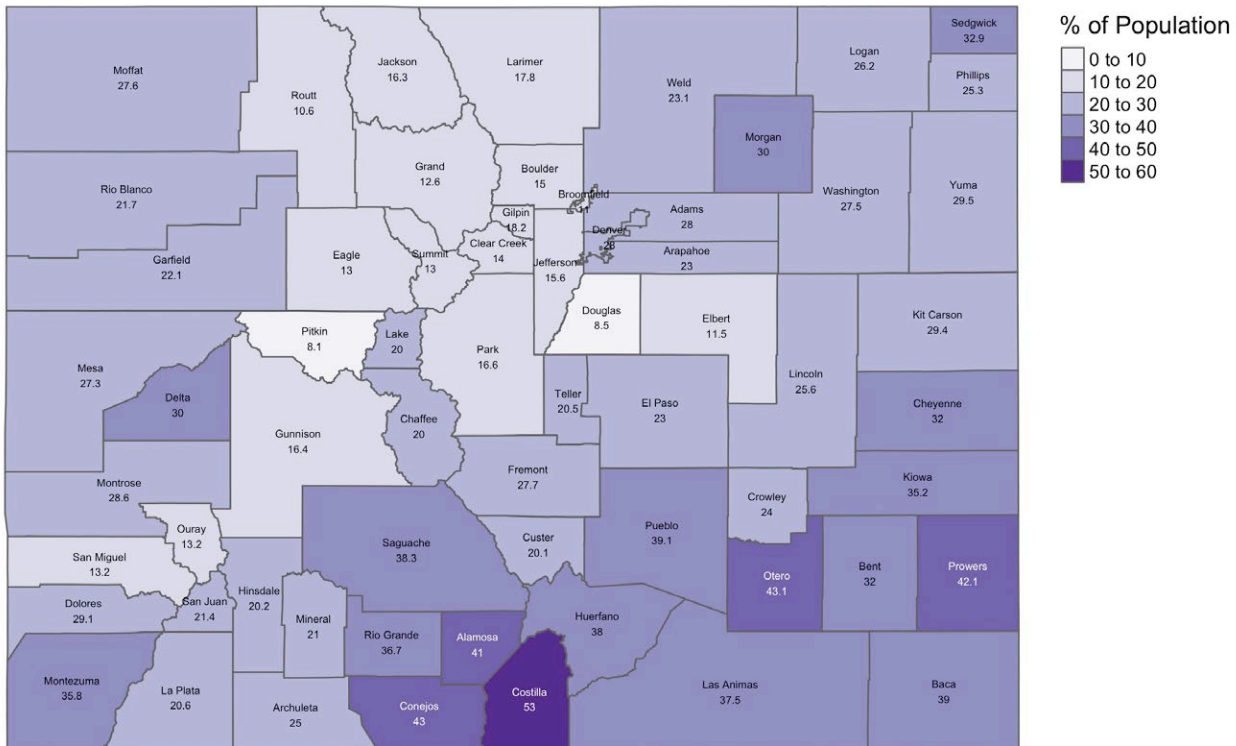
Unadjusted Rate (%)



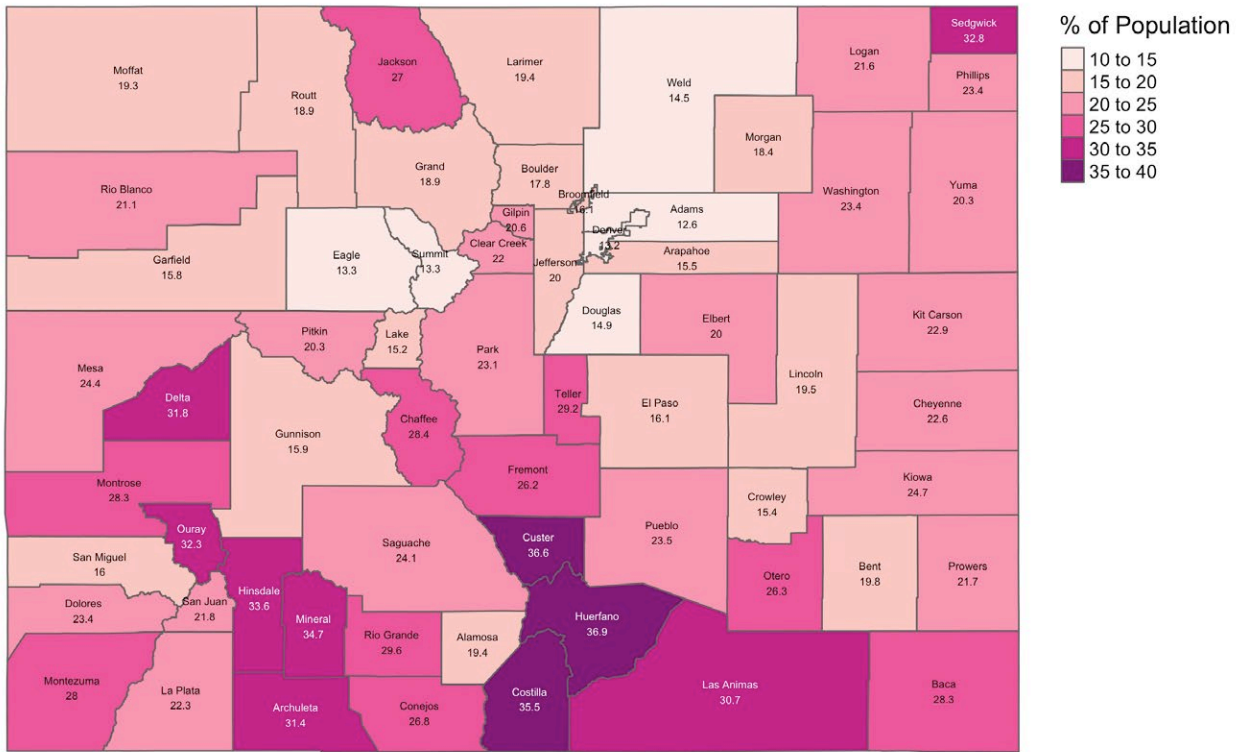
Employer Sponsored Insurance (2022)



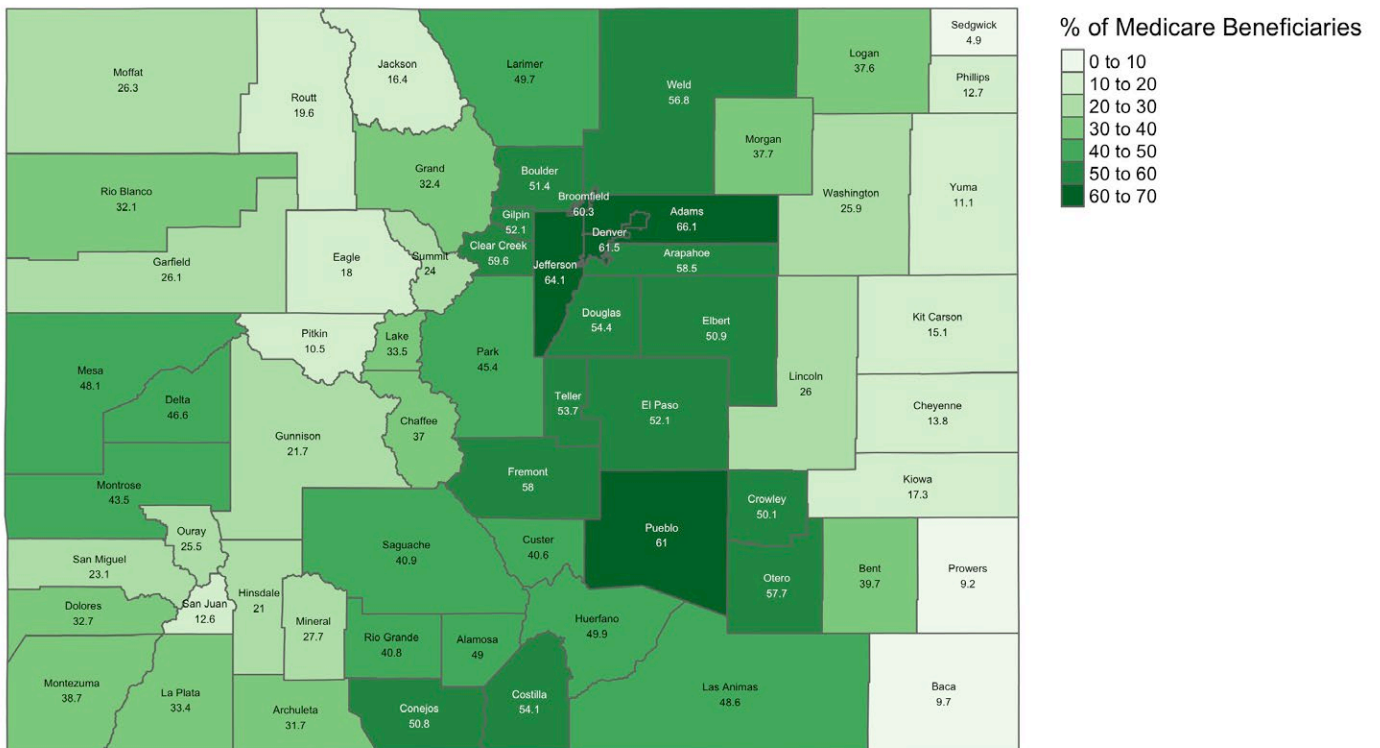
Medicaid (2024)



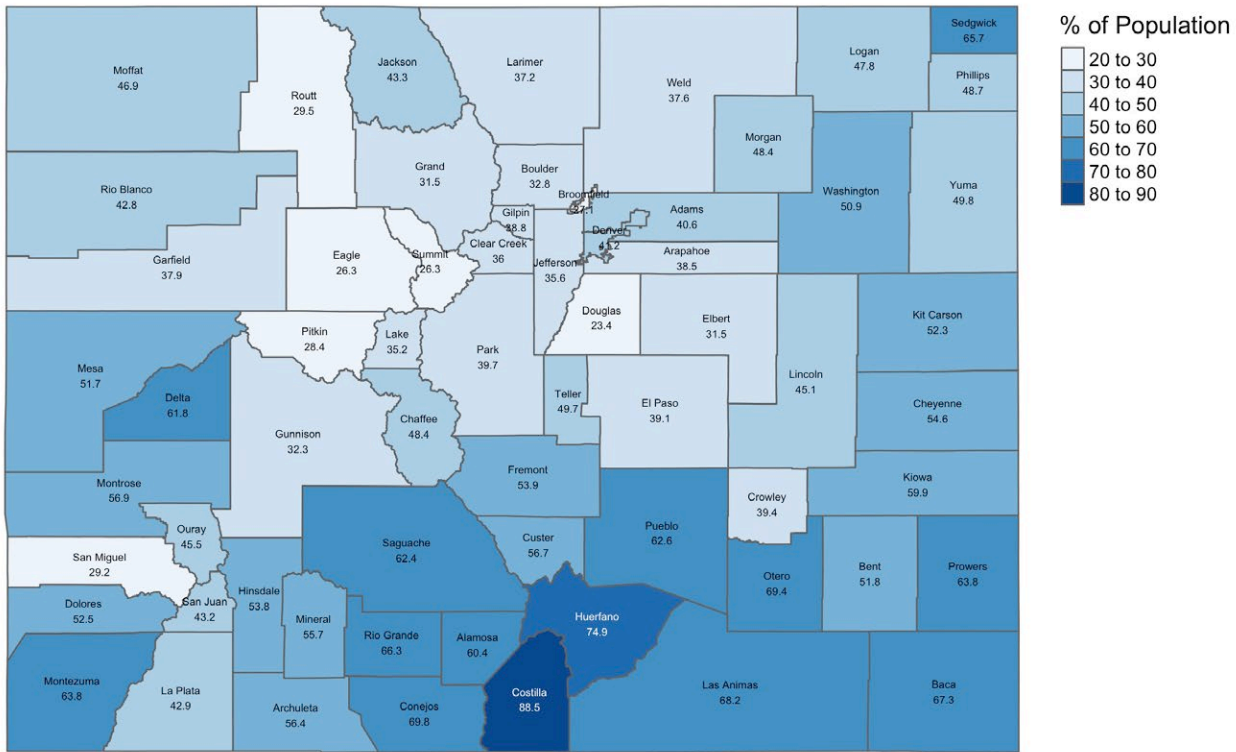
Medicare (2024)



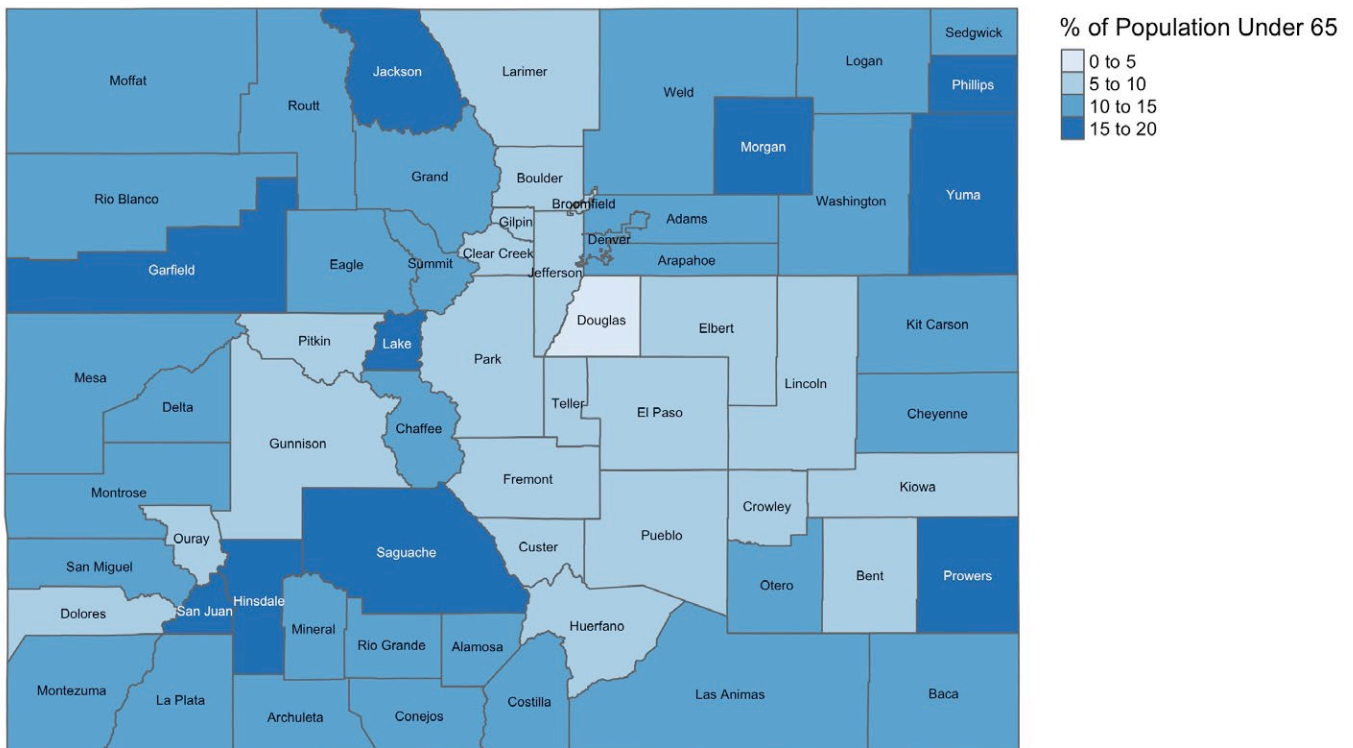
Medicare Advantage Penetration (2024)



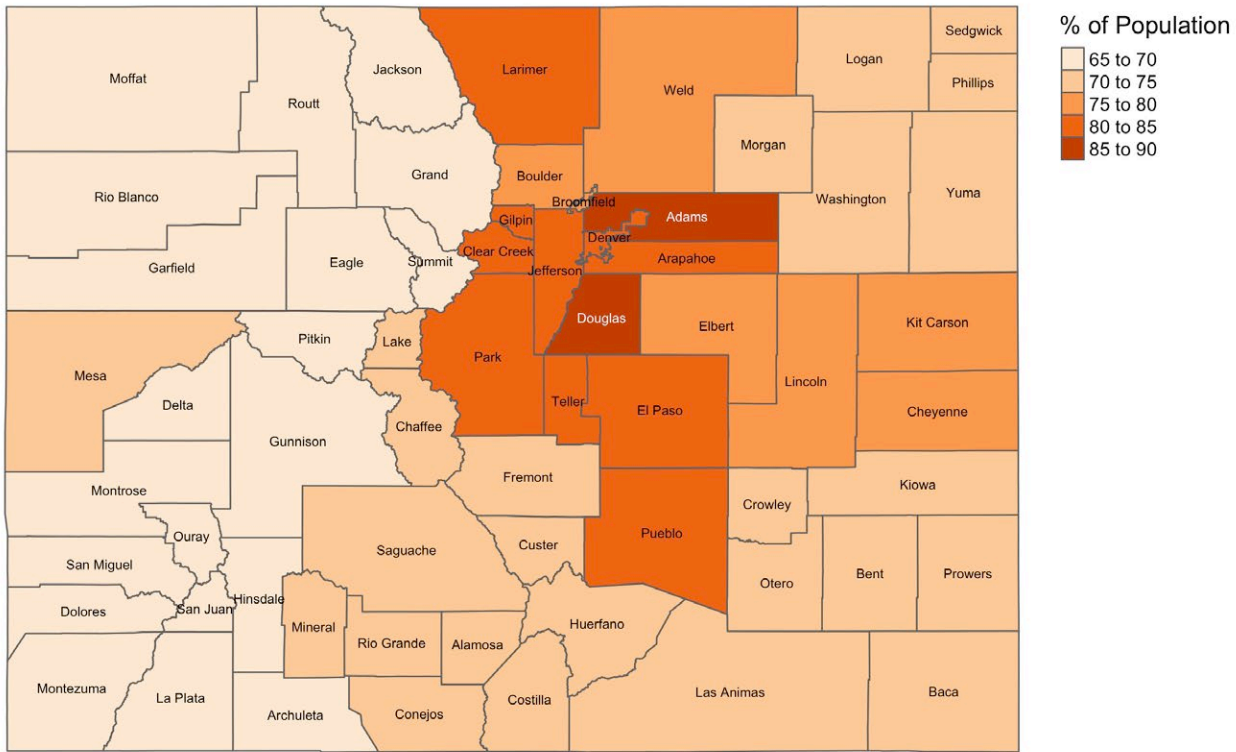
Medicare and Medicaid (2024)



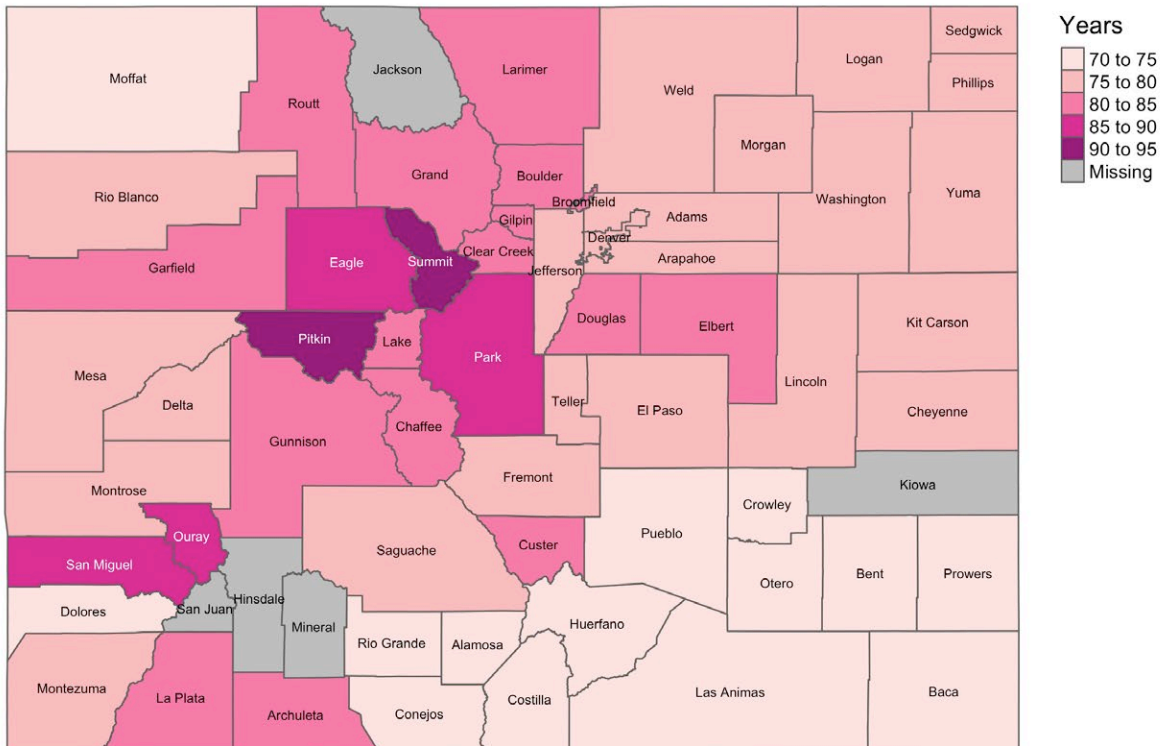
Uninsured under 65 (2022)



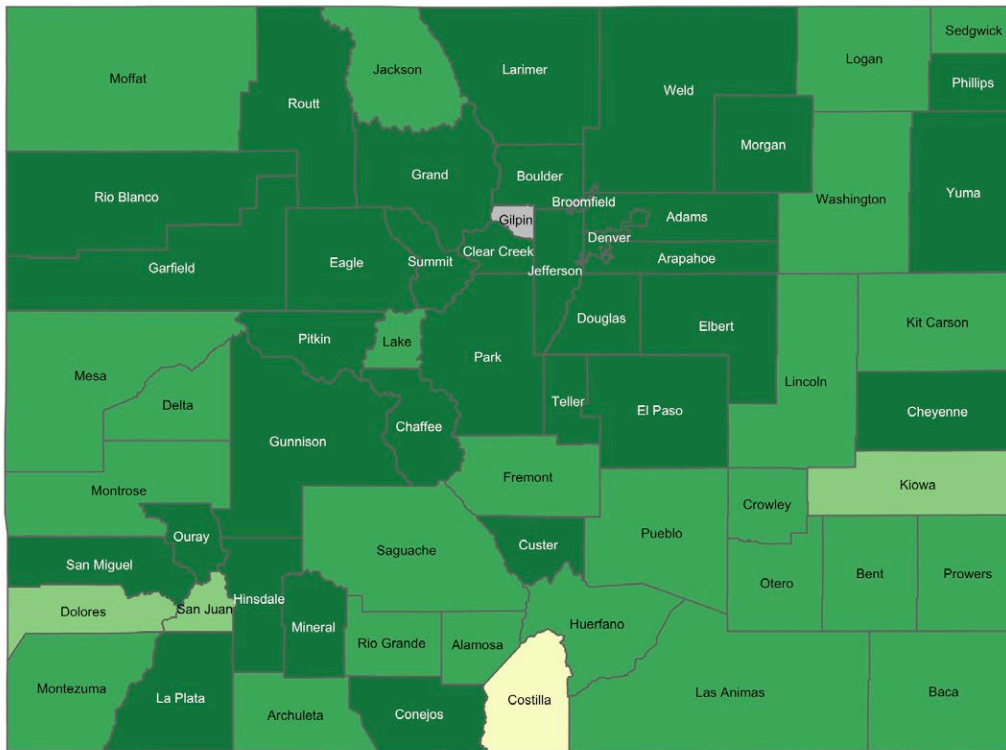
Dental Insurance within last year (2022)



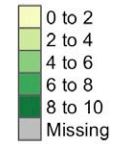
Life Expectancy (2022)



Environmental Food Index (2024)

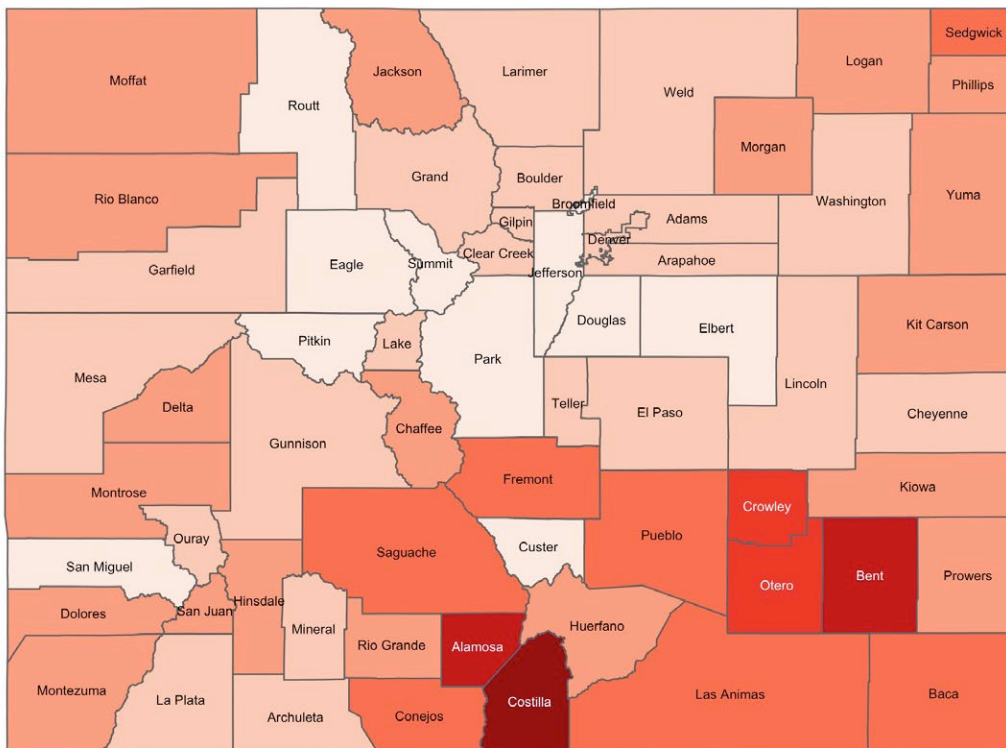


Index Score

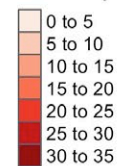


(The food environment index is a score reflecting factors (such as access to healthy foods and food insecurity) that contribute to a health food environment, ranging from 0 (worst) to 10 (best).

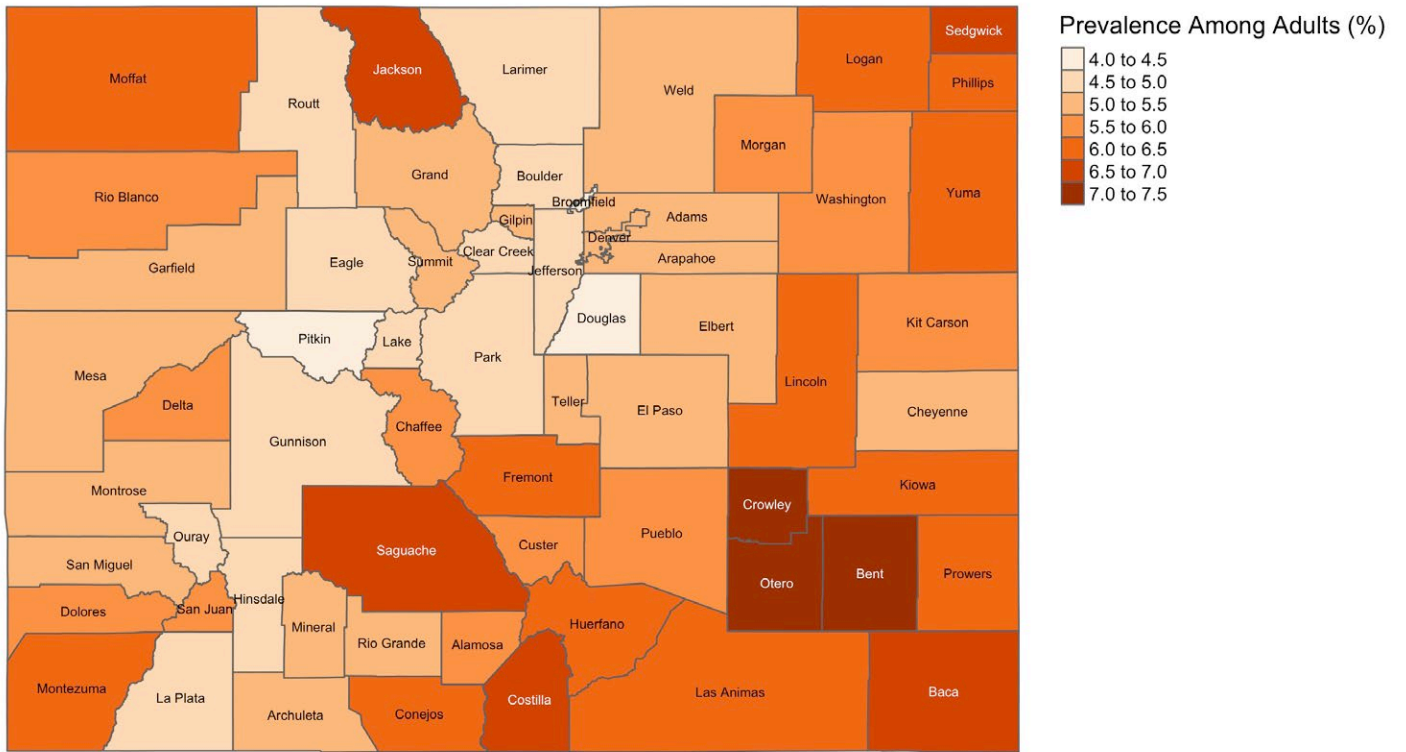
SNAP Benefits (2022)



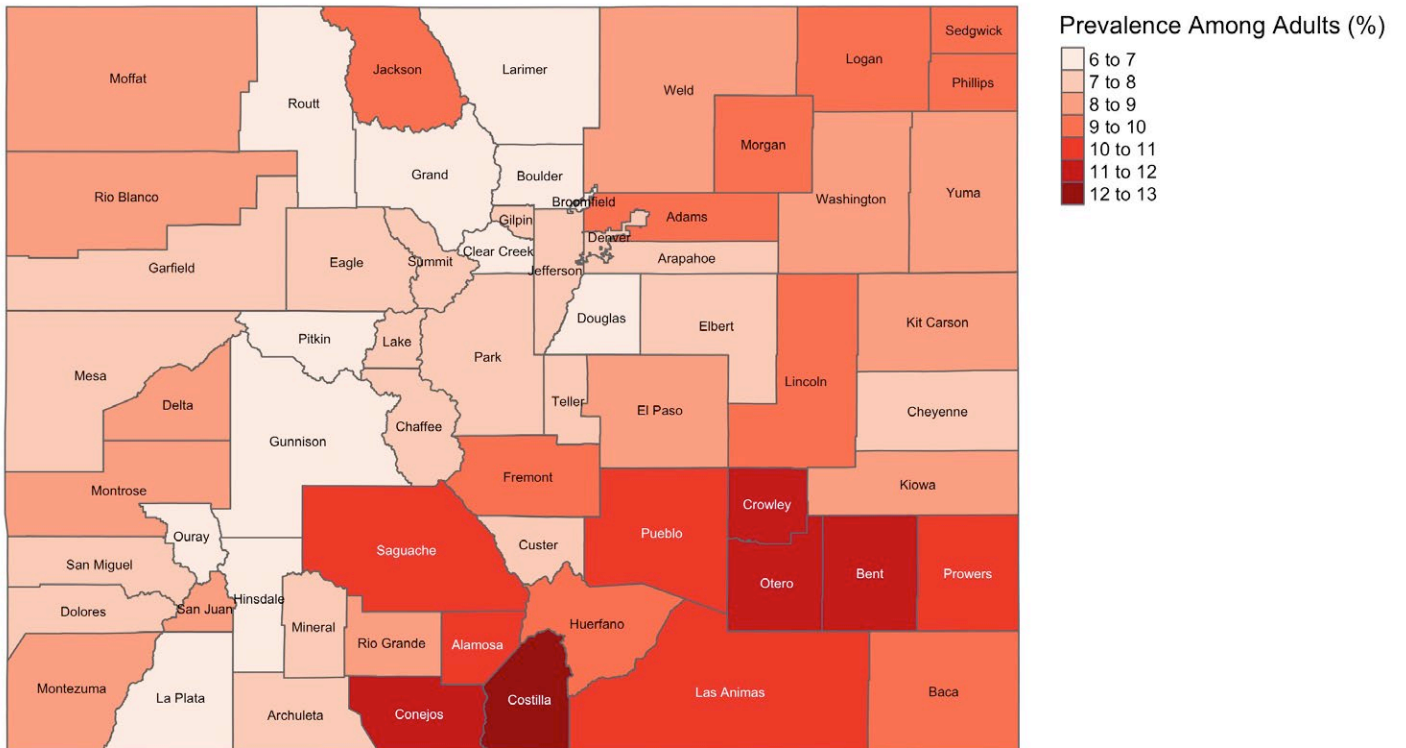
% of Population



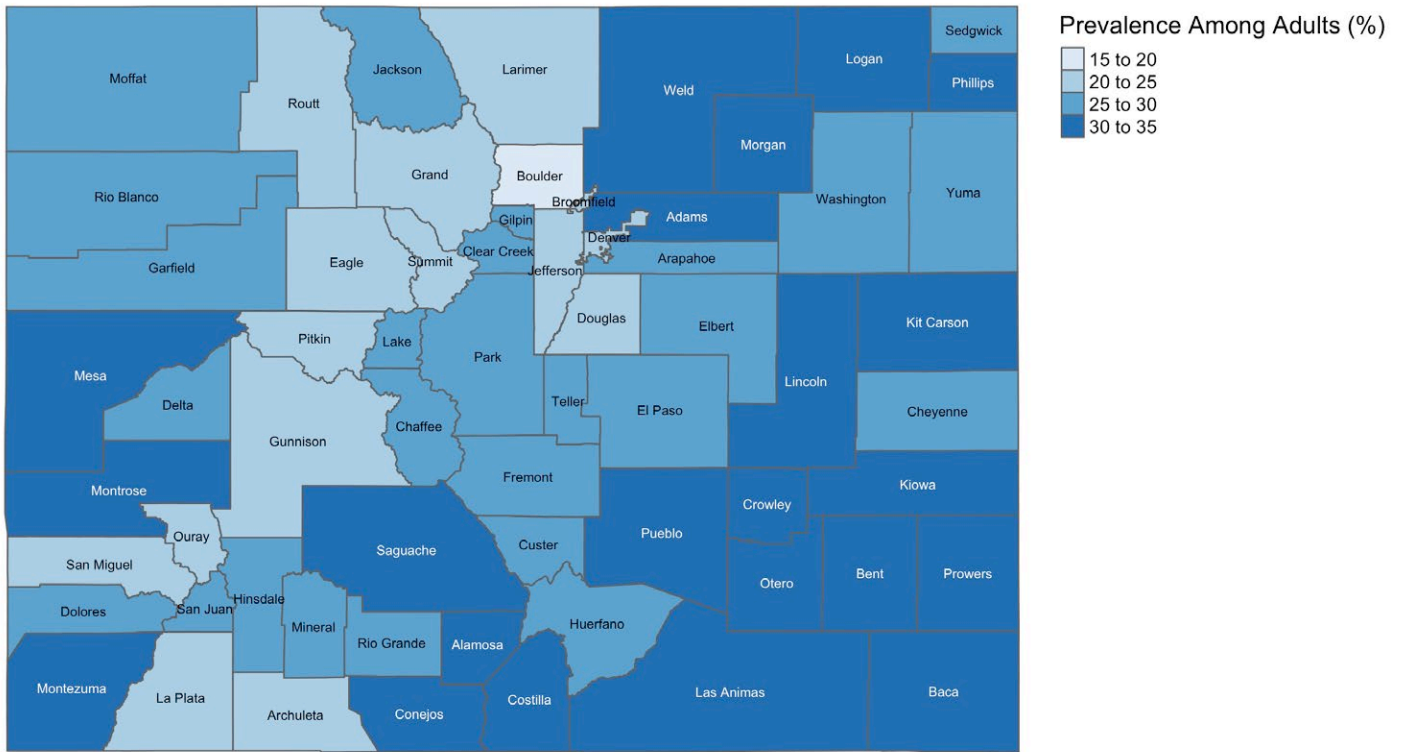
Coronary Heart Disease (2022)



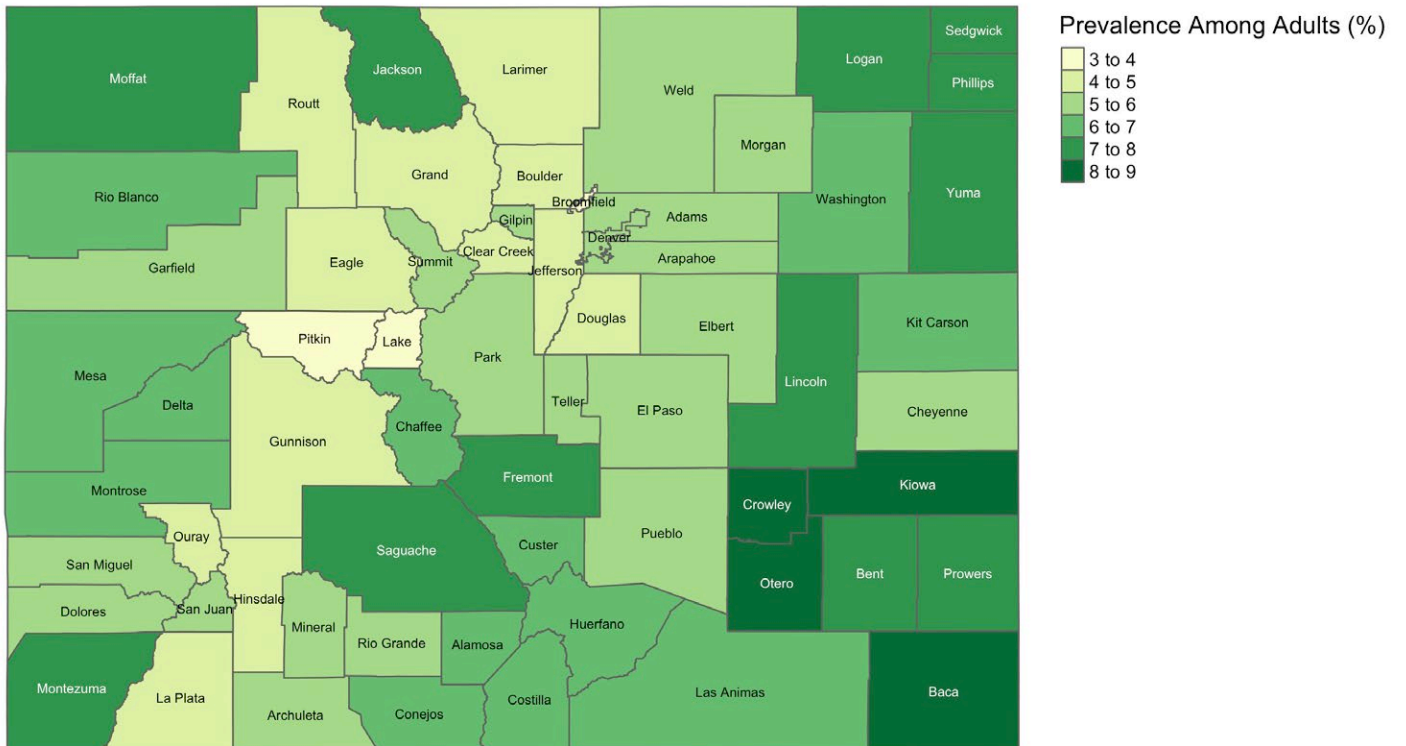
Diagnosed Diabetes (2022)



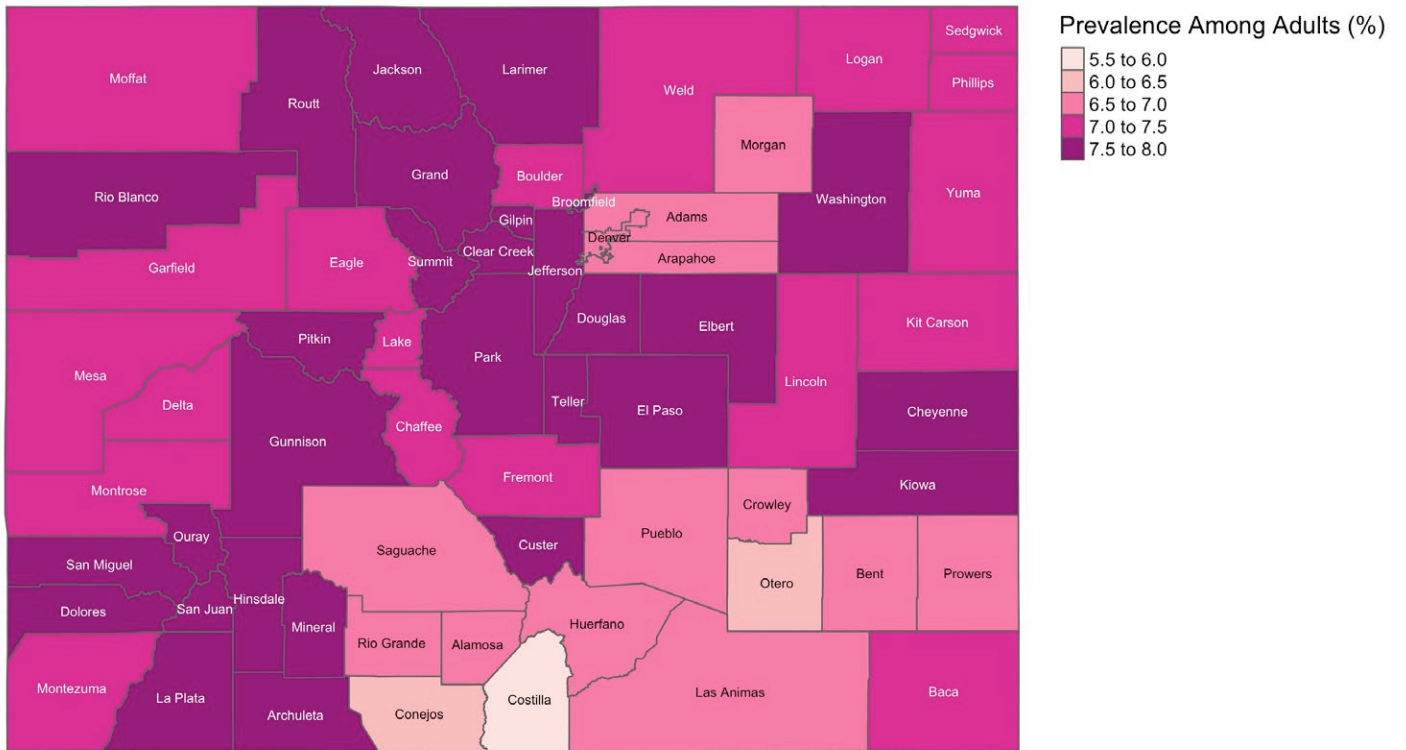
Obesity (2022)



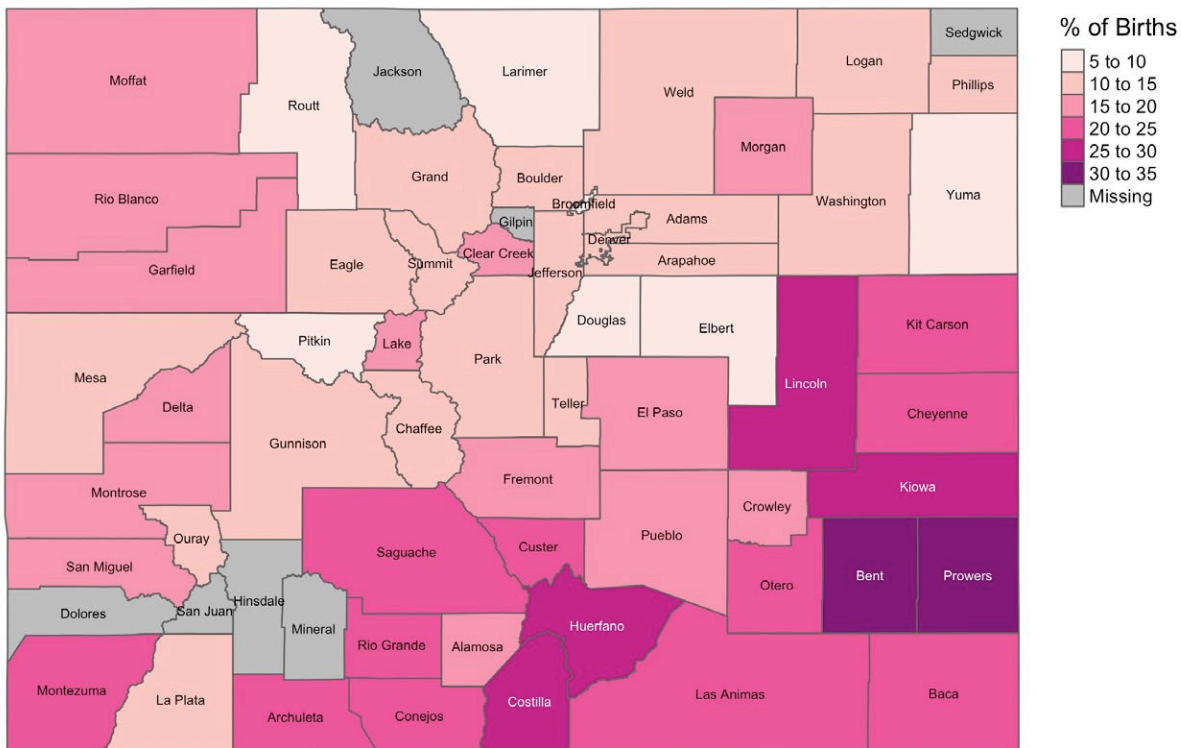
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (2022)



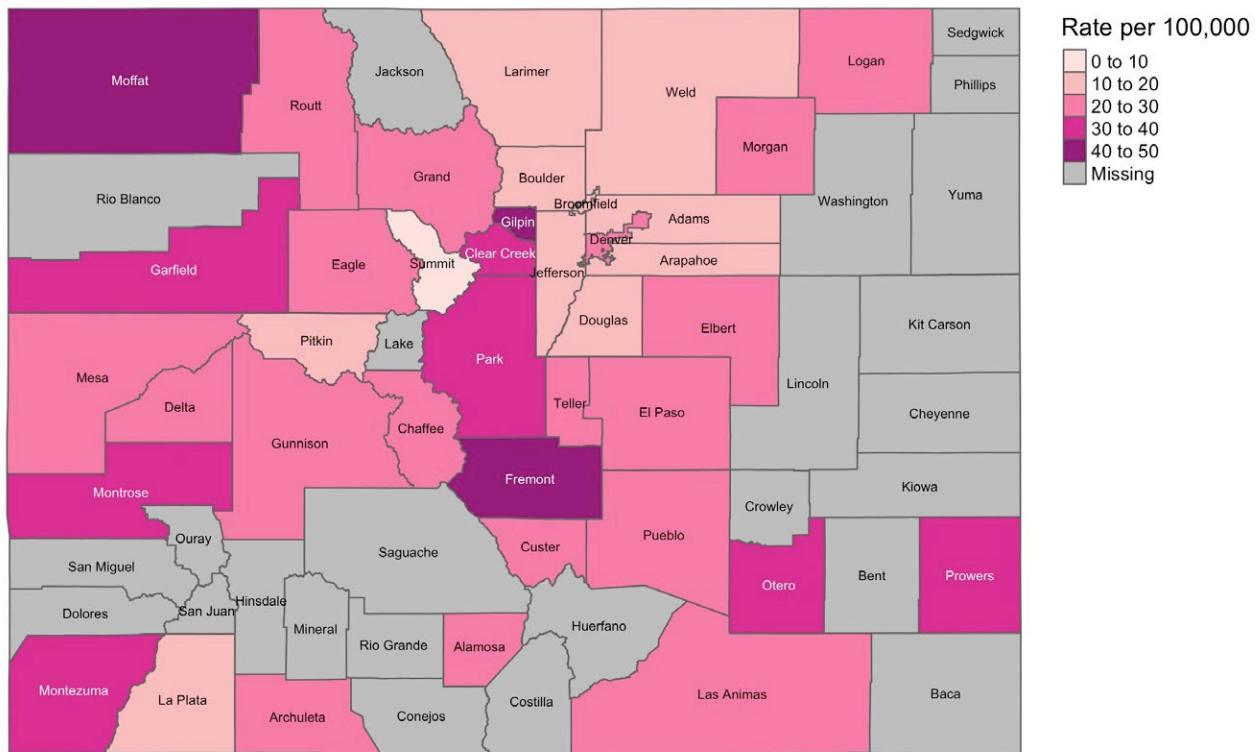
Cancer (2022)



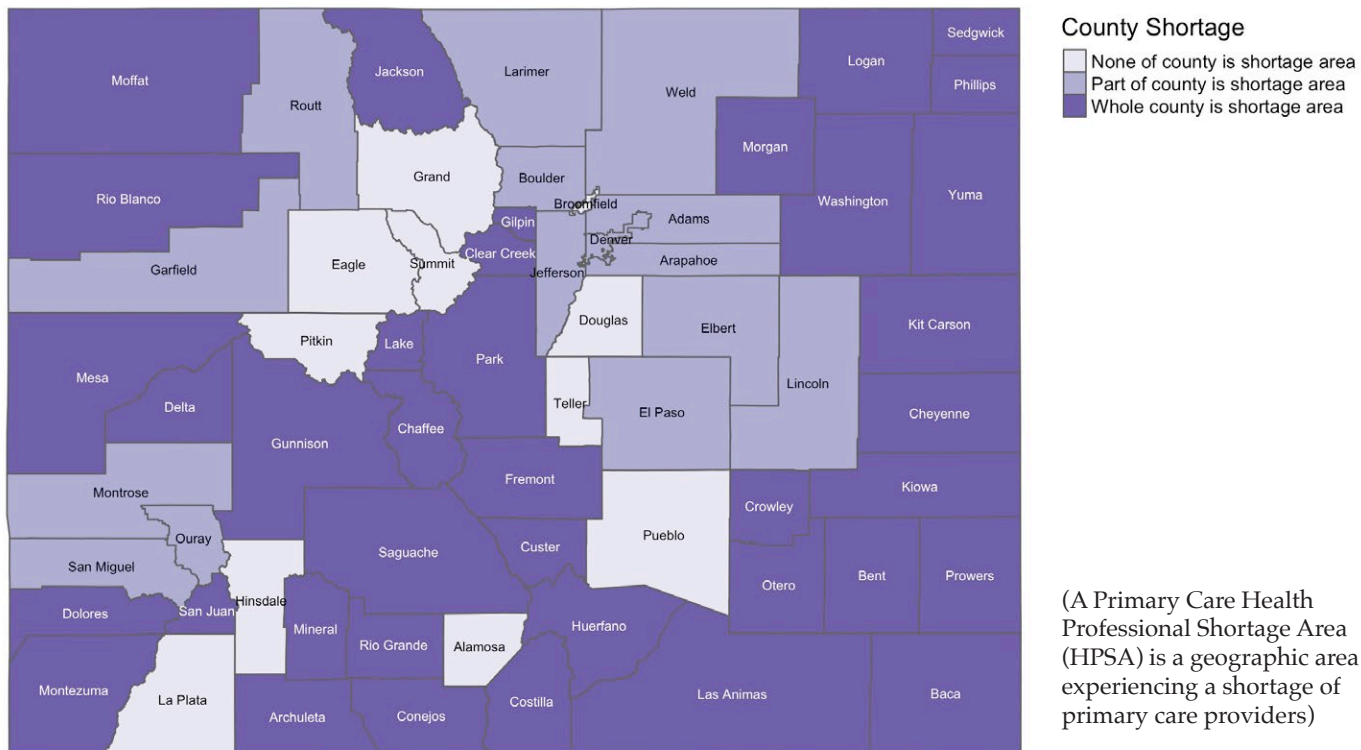
Inadequate Prenatal Care (2022)



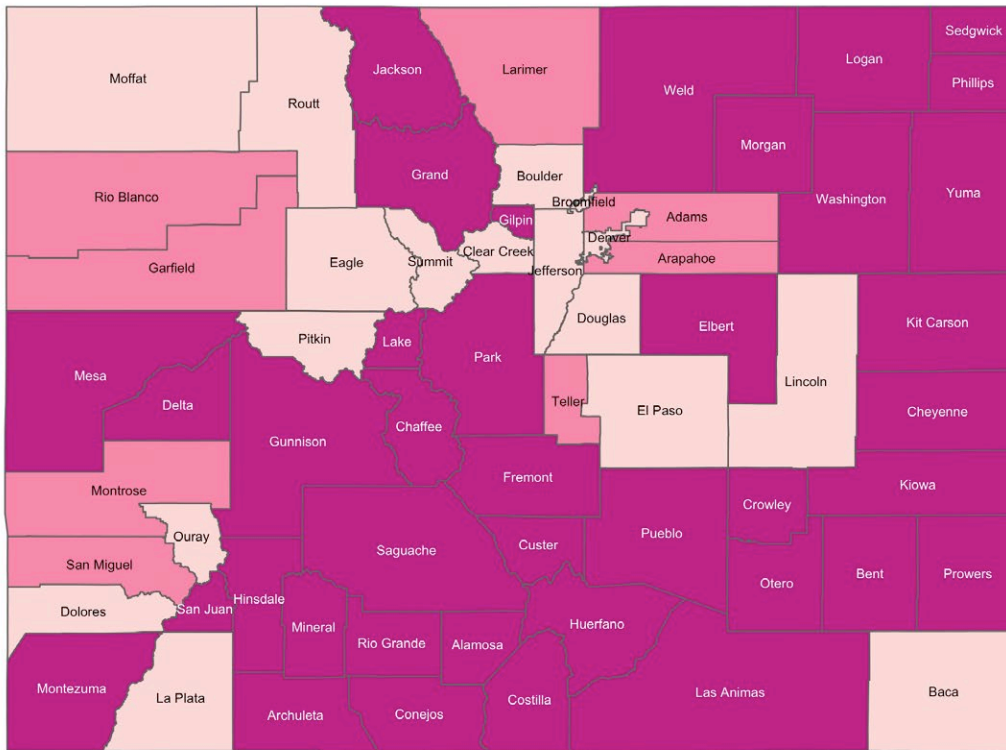
Age Adjusted Suicide Rate (2023)



Primary Care HPSA (2024)



Dental HPSA (2024)

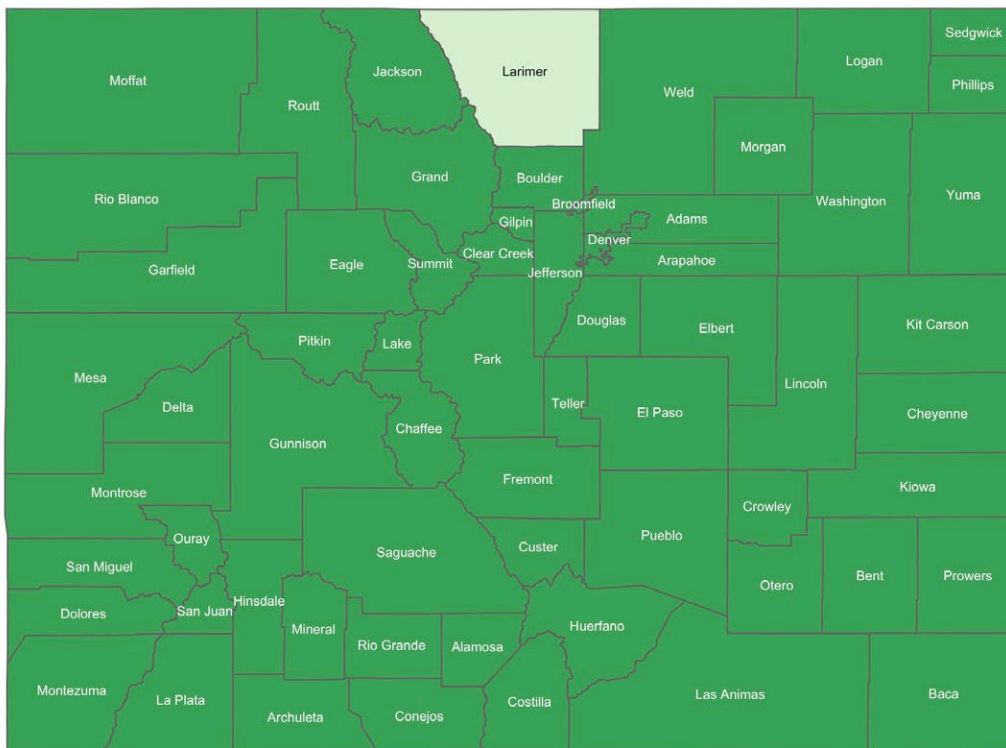


County Shortage

- None of county is shortage area
- Part of county is shortage area
- Whole county is shortage area

(A Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) is a geographic area experiencing a shortage of Dentists)

Mental HPSA (2024)

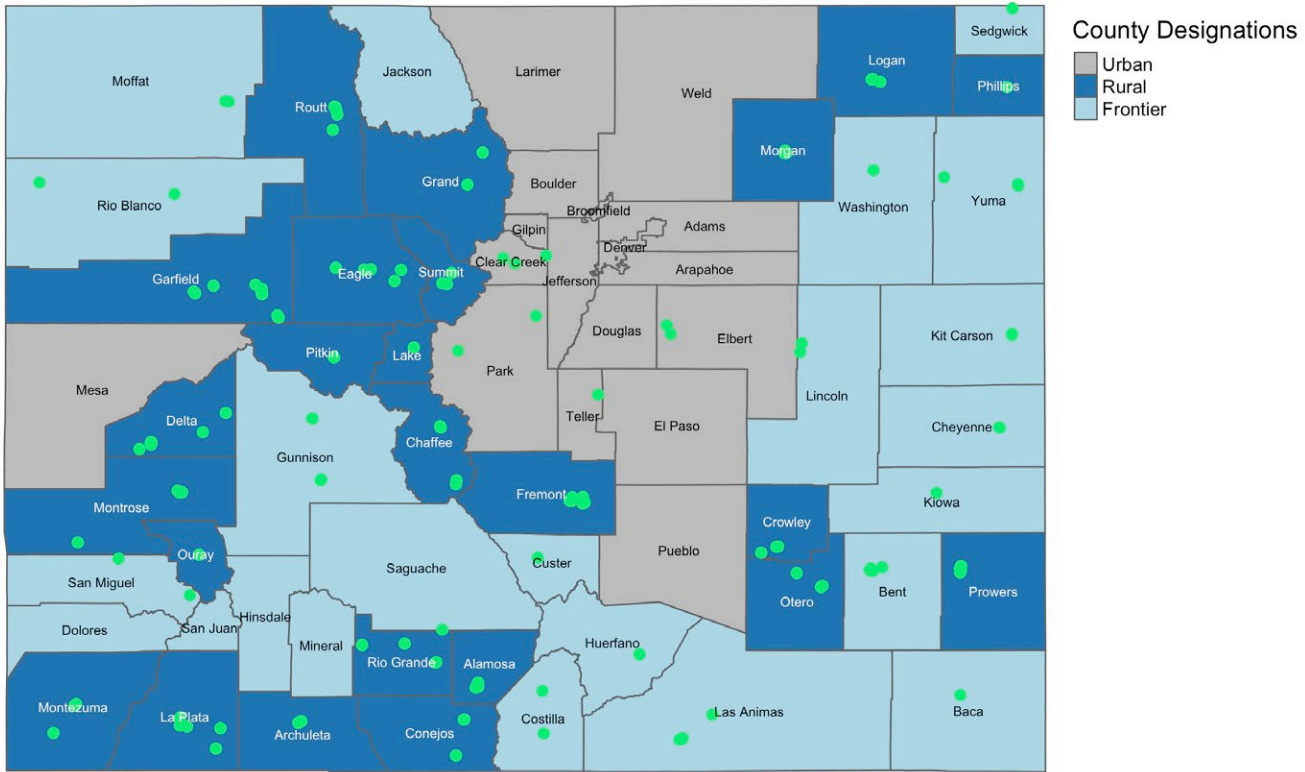


County Shortage

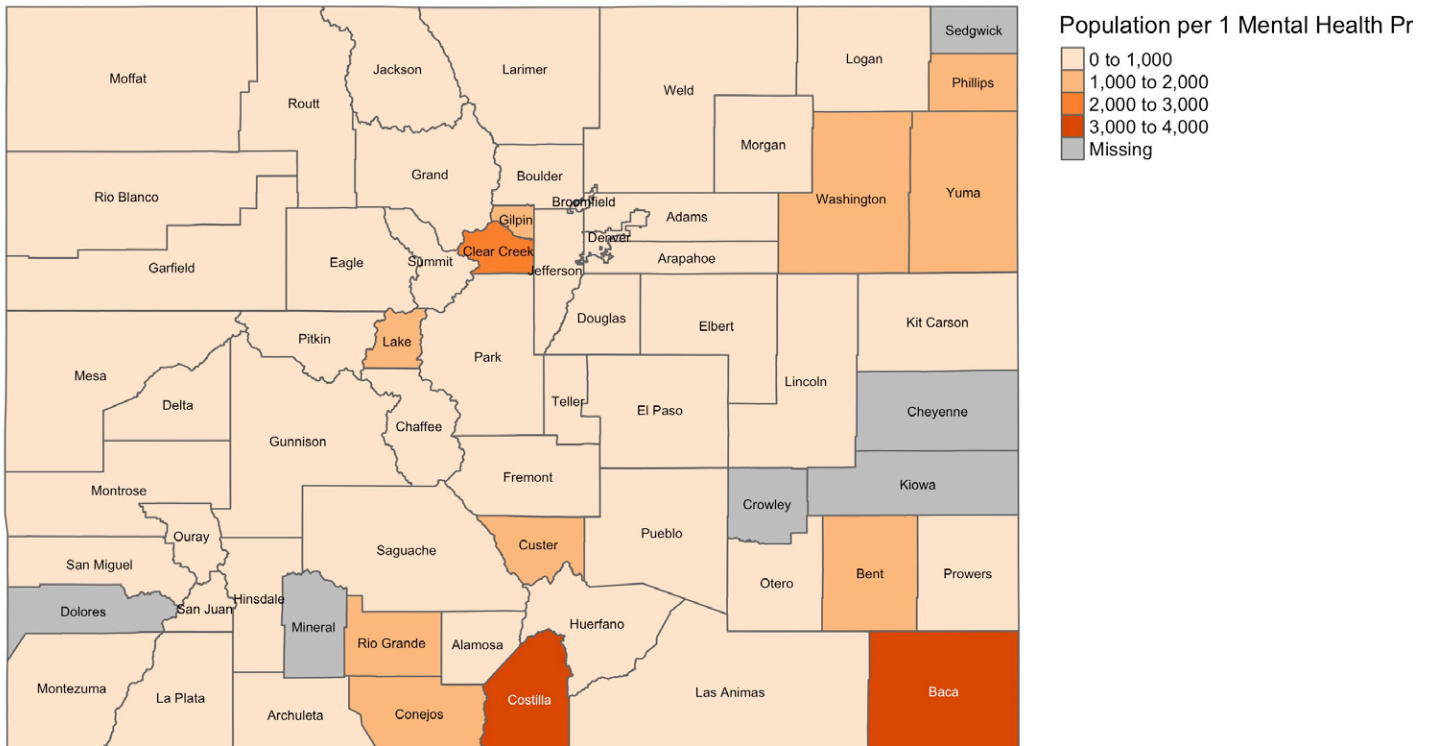
- None of county is shortage area
- Whole county is shortage area

(A Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) is a geographic area experiencing a shortage of mental health providers)

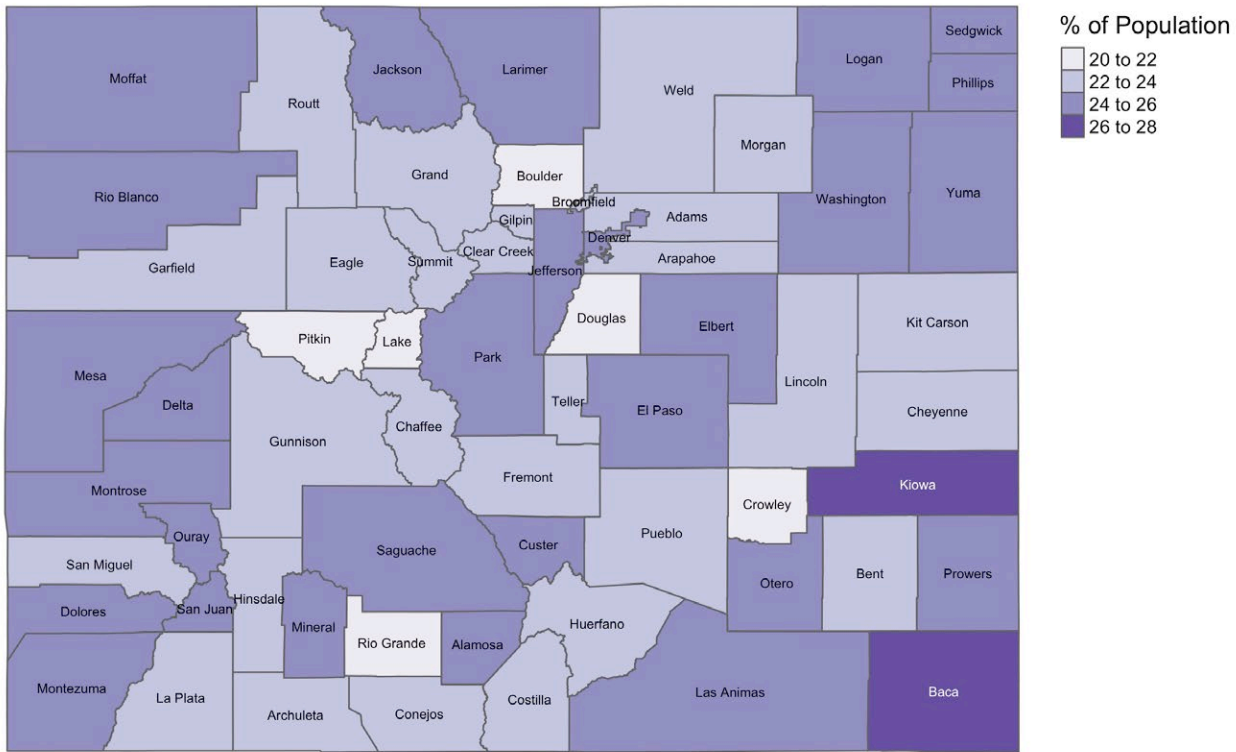
Substance Use/Mental Health Facilities



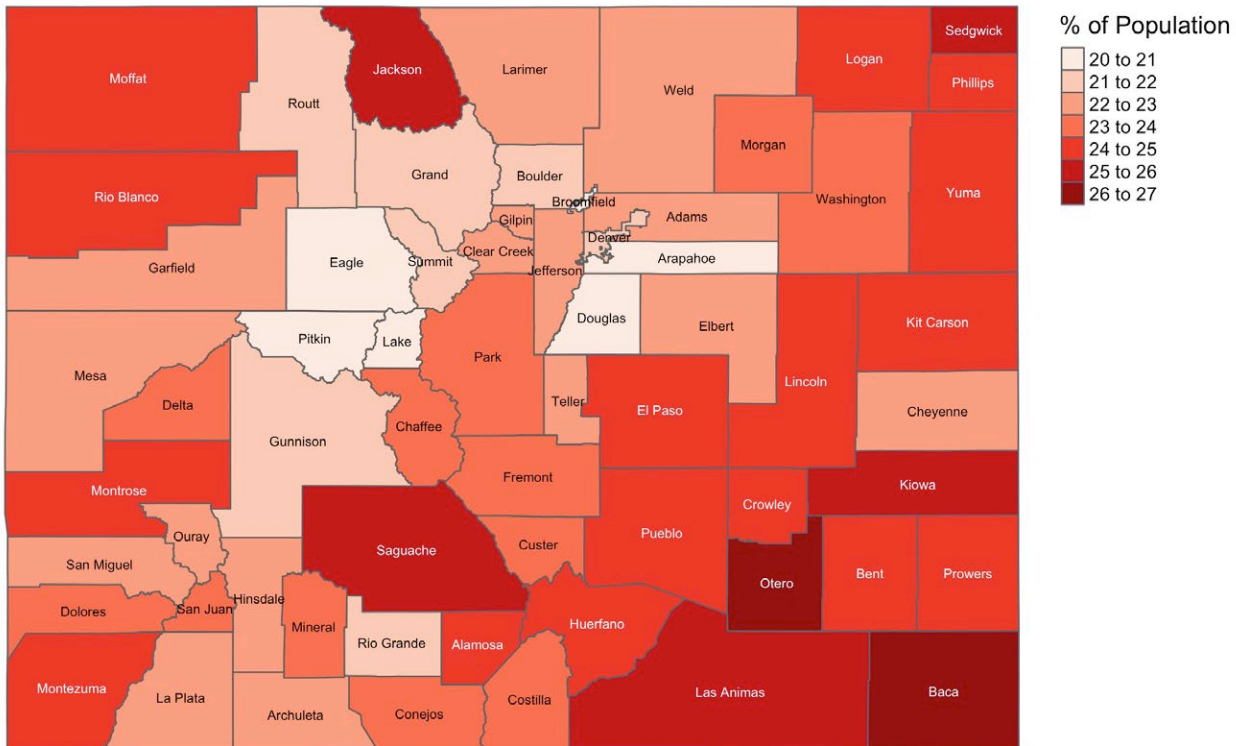
Mental Health Provider Ratio (2023)



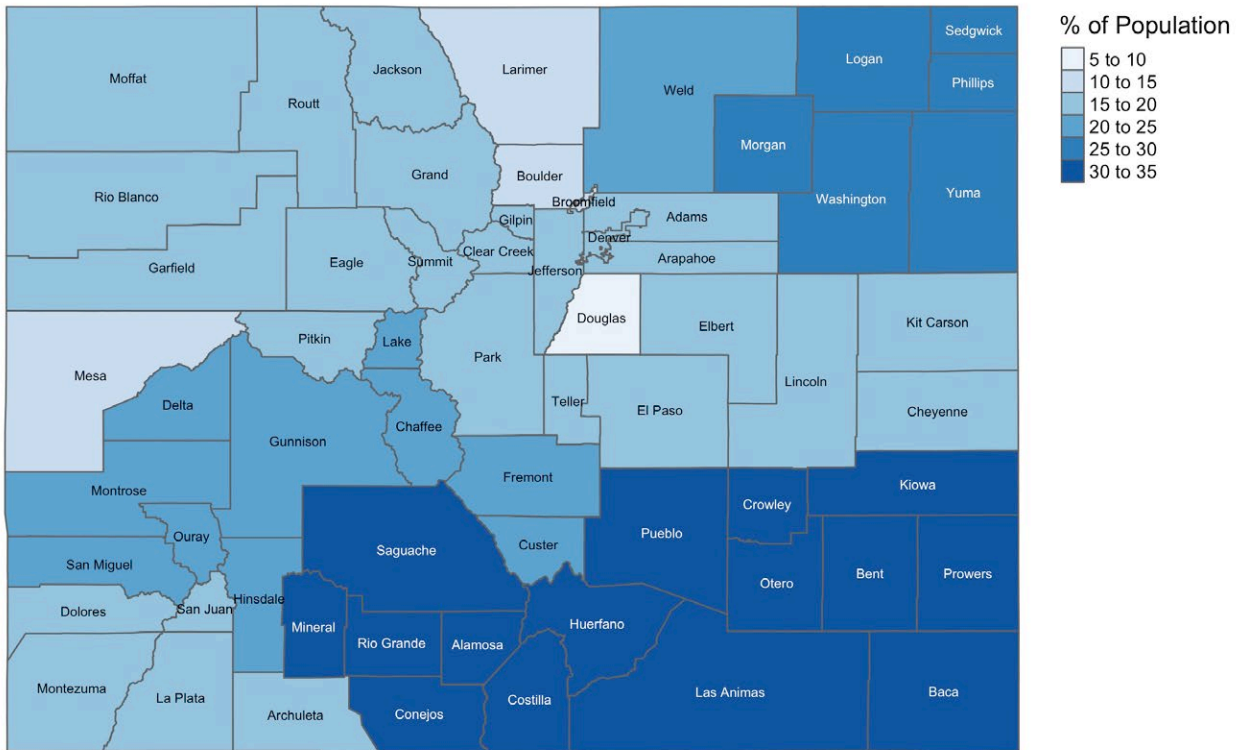
Depression (2022)



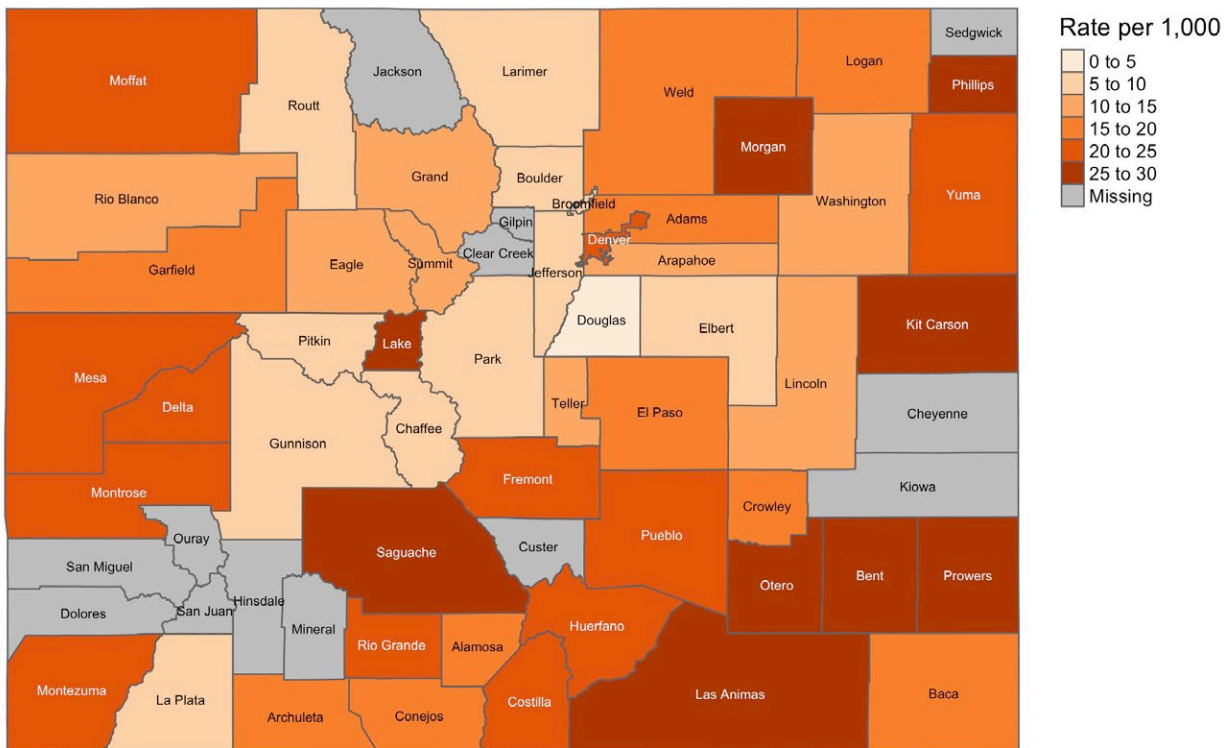
Arthritis (2022)



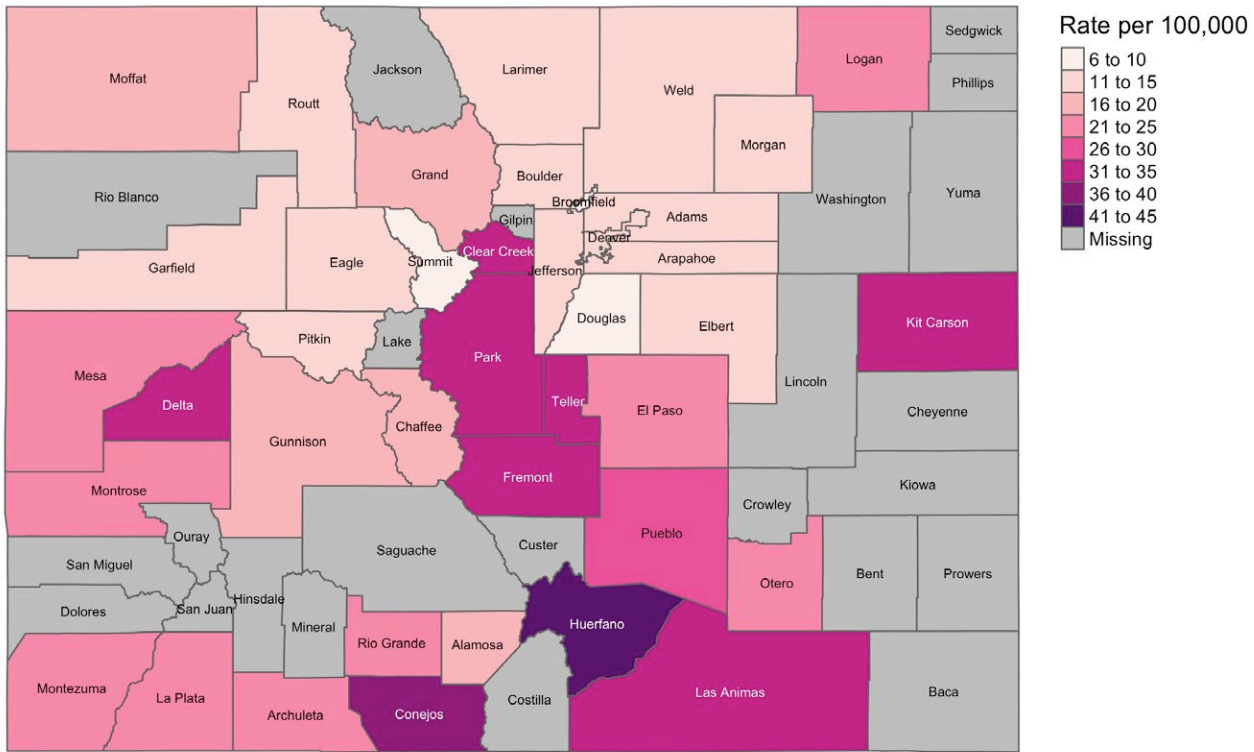
Fair or Poor Oral Health (2023)



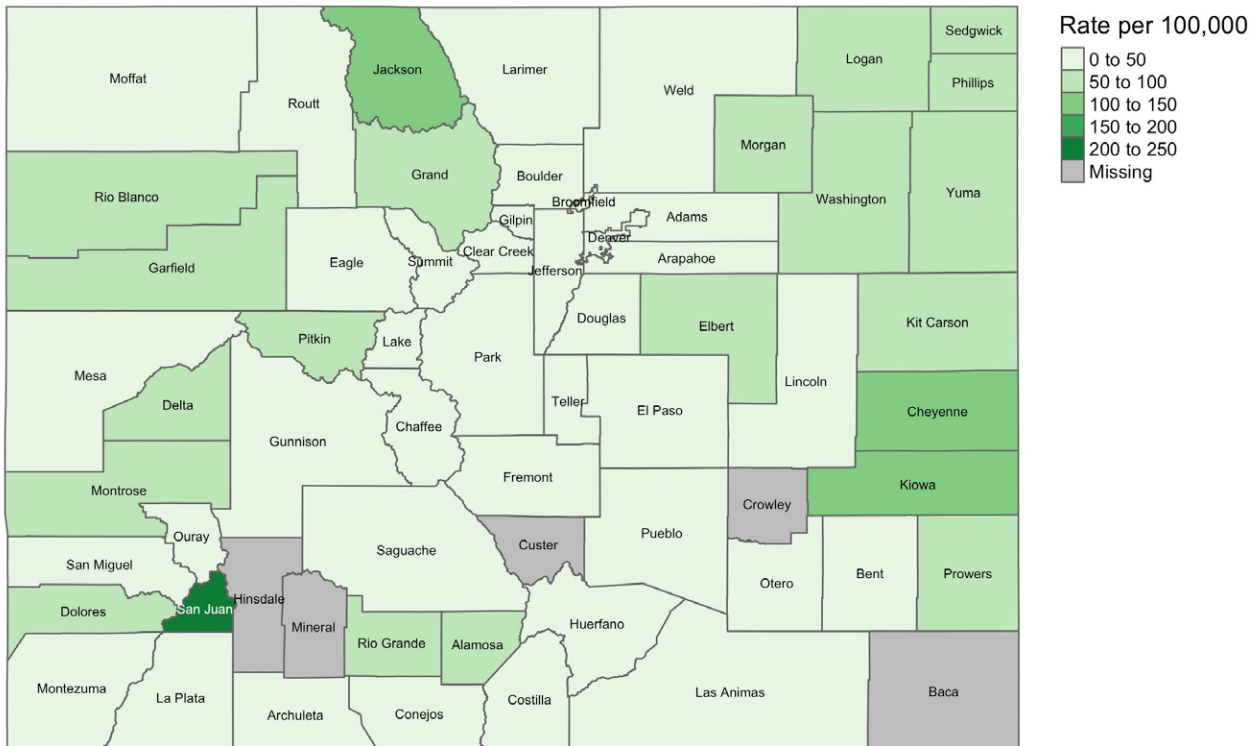
Teen Birth Rate (Females aged 15 to 19 in 2022)



Firearm Deaths (2021)



Work Related Hospitalizations (2018-2020)



CRHC works hard to make sure that each fact in the Snapshot of Rural Health comes from a reputable source.

To see a full list of citations, line by line, please reference coruralhealth.org/snapshot-data-2025.

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