Alabama’s Rural Health Landscape

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Definition of **Healthy Community**

The World Health Organization defines a healthy community as “one that is safe with affordable housing and accessible transportation systems, works for all who want to work, a healthy and safe environment with a sustainable ecosystem, and offers access to health care services focused on prevention and staying healthy”
Factors Driving Community Health

- **Individual Health Behaviors** – 30% of your health – diet, exercise, tobacco and drug use
- **Clinical Care** – 20% of your health – access to care, quality of care, workforce
- **Social and Economic Factors** – 40% of health – education, income, employment, housing, transportation.
- **Physical Environments** – 10% of health – water quality, mold, lead in homes, sanitation.
Social Determinants of Health

- Income and social status
- Social support networks
- Education and literacy
- Employment/working conditions
- Social environments
- Physical environments – housing, transportation
- Personal health practices and coping skills
- Gender
- Culture
Alabama’s Plantation Economy
Rural Health Challenges

- High incidence of chronic diseases
- Low health literacy rate
- Transportation barriers
- Shortage of physicians & aging physician workforce
- Hospital closures & loss of obstetrical services (only 17 of 46 rural hospitals deliver)
Solutions

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Telehealth Services
- Behavioral health
- Diabetes education
- Family planning
- Genetic counseling
- HIV/AIDS
- Maternal fetal medicine
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Opioid agonist therapy for pregnant women
- Pre/Post procedure consultations
- Sexual assault counseling
- STD education, counseling, partner tracing

Telehealth Partners
- ADPH Programs
- AIDS Alabama
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Alabama Health Action Coalition
- Auburn University
- Birmingham VA Medical Center
- Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System
- Children’s Hospital of Alabama
- Medical Advocacy and Outreach
- UAB Medical Center; UAB Genetics Department
- University of South Alabama

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