Small Towns, Big Solutions: The Future of Health Care for Rural Texas

BOB MORROW, MD, MBA – SOUTHEAST TEXAS MARKET PRESIDENT BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF TEXAS
Who We Are

16+ Million Members

FOURTH Largest U.S. Health Insurer

Health

Connectivity

Dental

Pharmacy

Life

Health IT

Disability

Vision
WHY RURAL HEALTH MATTERS?

Membership

1,000,000 Rural Members and
250,000 Blue Card Members

Demographic Issues

Declining populations and a disproportionate number of elderly

Economic Problems

Financial instability, limited resources

Health Status and Behaviors

Sicker with emergent and chronic illnesses

Limitations on Access to Care

Hospital closures, provider shortages and higher rates of uninsured residents
Welcome to King County

- Population 282
- 60 miles to nearest hospital
- EMT services only
Our Greatest Assets

**FOOD**
Nearly $13B in food production

**FIBER**
Over $2B in cotton production

**FUEL**
One-third of nation's crude oil supply

SOURCES:
- Texas Ag Stats. Texas Department of Agriculture, 2019, www.texasagriculture.gov/About/TexasAgStats.aspx
Our Greatest Needs

POVERTY
Texas ranks 39th nationally in population under the poverty line.

EDUCATION
<40% of high school graduates are considered "college-ready".

INFRASTRUCTURE
Nearly 20% of Texas roads are in poor condition.

Our Greatest Needs

WHAT INFLUENCES A PERSON’S HEALTH?

ZIP CODE is likely a stronger predictor of your health outcomes than GENETIC CODE.

20%

Clinical Care

Social Determinants

80%

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDoH)

- ZIP codes
- Transportation
- Housing
- Food
35 counties have no physician

185 counties have no psychiatrist (=size of KS)

147 counties have no OB (=size of NE)

138 rural hospital closures since 1960

In some areas, nearly one in three residents are uninsured

Texas among 17 states that opted out of Medicaid expansion
LEVERS FOR OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

ENHANCING ACCESS TO CARE
- Physician workforce
- Transportation

INNOVATION & PARTNERSHIP
- New technology
- New Partnerships

EXPANDED HEALTH LITERACY & NAVIGATION
- Education and outreach
- Community engagement

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE SERVICES
- Expand offerings and early detection
- Target and incentivize community providers
“Rural health needs moonshots, not band-aids.”

- Dr. Dan McCoy, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas President
Rural Health Initiative

BCBSTX and Texas A&M Health Science Center Collaboration

- Tackling Distance
- Right-Sized Access
- Empowering Communities
What Happens to Population Health after Hospital Closure?
Reestablishing Access to Care after Hospital Closure
Using Collaboration to Preserve Access
Managing Chronic Disease in Rural Areas
From Dallas to Guthrie and beyond
Thank you!

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