

# Introduction to Population Health in the Rural United States

## ~Syllabus Fall 2020~

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MD ID 6550 (Medical Students)  
 Syllabus - Academic Year 2020-2021  
 Credit Hours: 1.0

### Contact Information

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### Course Information

#### Course Background & Description

Developing a broad understanding of rural populations and their health-related issues, challenges and determinants is important for all physicians but especially for those who intend to enter a rural or remote practice. Rural and remote medical practice encompasses a broader and deeper skill set from many specialties because rural practitioners must respond to a wide range of serious medical conditions. Furthermore, rural physicians are more likely than their urban peers to take on local leadership roles related to health and health care and thus require a diverse professional skill set. By participating in this course, medical students examine rural populations through the lens of public health to build a foundation of knowledge, attitudes and attributes that are essential for medical students to contextualize subsequent and more advanced rural health education.

#### Course topics include:

- Rural Population Health – An Overview
- State of the Utah Rural Health Workforce
- Statistics & Data – Sources & Applications for Rural Community Health
- Wilderness, Industry & Agriculture – The Impact of Recreation & Occupation on Rural Community Health
- Healthcare Access in the Rural Southwest
- Oral Health Challenges in Rural Populations
- Food, Nutrition & Hunger – Rural Perspectives
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse in a Rural Context
- Ethical Challenges in Rural Health
- Community in Context – The Life of a Rural Practitioner

#### Course Goals

As a result of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- List some of the most common ways that rural, remote and underserved populations are defined or categorized.
- Describe unique aspects of rural population health and compare/contrast to urban/metropolitan population health, including health disparities.
- Define some of the common epidemiologic measures or metrics used to describe rural population health.
- Show familiarity with common conditions that affect rural communities, including oral health, medical emergencies and trauma, mental health & substance abuse and nutrition.

- Discuss relevant distal, intermediate and proximal determinants (i.e., social determinants) of population health in rural areas, including policy, access, geography/transportation, poverty and insurance/payment.
- Describe how culture, lifestyles, industry, recreation and economies interface with and impact health and health service delivery in rural areas
- Discuss the status of human resources for health in the rural Southwest U.S., including Utah, and describe challenges and opportunities for improving these resources.
- List several local, State and Federal organizations and resources that exist to support rural health and health systems and describe their function or role.
- Show familiarity with available resources and data relevant to describing and measuring rural population health.
- Identify common ethical issues that face rural practitioners and describe how ethical concepts and principles can be utilized to navigate ethical conundrums.

## Course Format & Schedule

### Timeline

- Fall Semester 2020
- The course is taught in 9, 2-hour classroom-based modules and 1, 3-hour documentary screening followed by a panel-lead discussion
- Location:
- Class Time: Tuesday evenings, 5:30-7:30 PM
- Class Dates: 10 evenings classes (may not be consecutive)
  - 8/25/20: Rural Population, an Overview
  - 9/8/2020: Mental health & Addiction in a Rural Context
  - 9/22/2020: Oral Health Among Rural Communities
  - 10/6/20: Wilderness, Industry & Agriculture – The Impact of Recreation & Occupation on Health
  - 10/13/20: State of the Rural Health Workforce
  - 10/27/20: Food, Agriculture, Nutrition & Hunger: A Rural Perspective
  - 11/10/20: Statistics & Data – Sources & Applications for Rural Community Health
  - 11/17/20: Healthcare Access in the Rural Southwest
  - 12/1/20: Community in Context – The Life & Practice of a Rural Physicians

### Educational and Instructional Modalities

- Multi-media presentations
- Required & Supplemental Readings
- Peer-to-Peer Education through small group activities integrated into lectures
- Expert Panel Q&A

### Role of the Student in this Course

- Students will complete all required readings and be able to display understanding of the information via passing scores on multiple choice quizzes
- Students will display understanding and the ability to integrate concepts, ideas and information related to the course by successful completion of homework assignments with satisfactory scores
- Students will actively participate in group discussion and display the ability to relay information via oral presentations

### Required Textbook(s)/Readings

- There is no required textbook for the course.
- Required readings and multimedia are noted on the syllabus and in the course Canvas page.
- Students are required to read [Heirs of a General Practice by John McPhee](#) during the course of the semester.

## Assessment & Grading

### Assessments

Assessment Name	Weight toward Final Grade	Course Goal Assessed	Due Date
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Multiple Choice Quizzes (MCQ)	70% Eight (8) MCQ administered during class. One (1) low score dropped. (7 MCQ x 10% each = 70%)	Review and comprehension of required readings and multimedia sources	Quizzes are given at random at the start of each class
Summarizing & Communicating Issues in Rural Health: The Op-Ed Article	30%	Display a deep understanding of a rural health issue by locating, organizing, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing and communicating a message about a particular issue.	Final day of the Course

### Grading Criteria

Students who achieve an overall course score of at least 70% for quizzes and the op-ed assignment will receive a grade of PASS for the course.

### Grading System

Students will receive a final letter grade of PASS (P), or FAIL (F) for this course.

**PASS:** A student who achieves the criteria, will be assigned a grade of PASS for the course.

**FAIL:** A student who fails to achieve the criteria for PASS, will be assigned a grade of FAIL for the course.

## Student Feedback

Student feedback is an important aspect of curriculum quality improvement. Thus, students are expected to complete all assigned feedback surveys specific to a course by the due date.

## Standard Policies

Please refer to the Student Handbook (on the Student Affairs website) for these policies:

- Accommodations**
- Addressing Sexual Misconduct**
- Attendance policy**
- Dress Code**
- Examination and Grading Policies**
- Grade or Score Appeal**
- Professionalism, Roles & Responsibilities**
- Mistreatment**

## Alternate Name and/or Personal Pronoun

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as 'Preferred' first name (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, we will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, group projects, etc. Please advise us of any name or pronoun changes (and please update CIS) so we can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun will be respected.

## Center for Disability & Access Services

The School of Medicine seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for all medical students. The Center for Disability and Access (CDA) provides accommodations and support for the educational development of medical students with disabilities. Medical students with a documented disability and students seeking to establish the existence of a disability and to request accommodation are required to meet with the CDA Director for recommended accommodations. The CDA will work closely with eligible students and the Academic Success Program to make

arrangements for approved accommodations. The School of Medicine and CDA maintain a collegial, cooperative, and collaborative relationship to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations for students with disabilities.

Steven Baumann EdD, School of Medicine Senior Director of Academic Success Program, serves as the liaison between the School Of Medicine and the CDA.

Contact Information:

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University of Utah Center for Disability and Access  
Olpin Student Union Building, Room 162 Phone (Voice/TDD): (801) 581-5020  
<http://disability.utah.edu>

## Course Topics

### 1. Rural Population Health – An Overview

- 8/25/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - David Sandweiss, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Director of SOM Rural and Underserved Medicine Pathway
- Required Reading
  - [The Rural Health Workforce: Data & Issues for Policymakers – What is Rural & Why Do Definitions Matter?](#)
  - [Singh G & Siahpush M. Widening Rural-Urban Disparities in All-Cause Mortality & Mortality from Major Causes of Death in the USA, 1969-2009. Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine 2013; 91\(2\): 272-292.](#)
  - [Alva O Ferdinand. Social Determinants of Health: Implications for Rural America. Rural Healthy People 2020; Volume 2: 95-108.](#)
  - [Health Coverage & Care for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Kaiser Family Foundation Issue Brief, October 2013](#)
  - Overview: Heirs of General Practice by John McPhee
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Define common metrics for identifying and classifying rural, remote, urban/metropolitan and medically underserved populations
    - Describe the similarities and differences in factors affecting health outcomes between rural and urban populations
    - Describe age-, ethnicity- and gender-adjusted rates and causes for mortality and morbidity in rural populations
    - Describe the proximal, intermediate and distal determinants of some common rural population health disparities
    - Discuss relevant issues related to the health of American Indians in the United States

### 2. Mental health & Addiction in a Rural Context

- 9/8/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructors
  - Elizabeth Howell, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Julian Thorne, MD Psychiatry Resident
- Required Readings
  - [Rural Substance Abuse Treatment](#)
  - [Mental Health And Mental Disorders: A Rural Challenge](#) (pp. 55-72; Healthy Rural People 2020)
  - [Healthy Outcomes Integration Team – Integrating Mental Health Treatment Planning And Coordinated Healthcare Services To Rural Residents](#)

- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Describe the burden of mental health issues in rural areas, including substance abuse and suicide
    - Discuss issues related to the accessibility, availability and acceptability of mental health services in rural populations
    - Describe workforce challenges in providing rural mental health services
    - List some of the strategies a rural community or healthcare facility can pursue to minimize the challenges of accessing and providing mental health services in a rural area

### 3. Oral Health Among Rural Communities

- 9/22/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - Wyatt R. Hume, DDS, PhD, Dean at University of Utah School of Dentistry, and AVP of Academic Affairs and Education
- Required Readings
  - [Crisis in Rural Dentistry](#)
  - [Rural America's Dental Health Care Needs](#)
  - [Integrating Oral Health and Primary Care in the Changing Health Care Landscape](#)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Describe the burden of the most common oral disease in rural populations, including associations between oral health and physical health
    - List some of the distal and intermediate determinants of oral health in rural populations, including access points, provider reimbursement issues, oral health workforce issues, oral health care systems and as well as individual and population-level factors
    - Discuss strategies to improve oral health in rural communities, including enhanced integration of medical/clinical care and oral health care and novel oral health funding mechanisms

### 4. Wilderness, Industry & Agriculture – The Impact of Recreation & Occupation on Health

- 10/6/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructors
  - Jeff Robison, MD, Assistant Professor/Director of Global Health Fellowship, Pediatric Emergency Medicine
  - Matt Fuller, MD, Assistant Professor/Director of Global Health Fellowship, Division of Emergency Medicine
- Required Readings
  - [Rural Access To Quality Emergency Services](#) (Rural Health People 2020, Vol. 1, pp. 25-32)
  - [Injury And Violence Prevention In Rural America](#) (Rural Healthy People 2020, Vol. 2, pp. 87-91)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Appreciate the range of occupational and recreational activities prevalent in Utah
    - Describe how occupation can impact an individual's health status
    - List the common occupational health issues associated with industries common to Utah
    - Describe emergency and occupational health resources available to assist physicians caring for rural or remote populations

### 5. State of the Rural Health Workforce

- 10/13/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - Rita Osborn, Director – Utah Center for Rural Health
- Required Reading
  - [Utah Medical Education Council – Utah's Physician Workforce 2016](#)

- [Utah: Projecting Primary Care Physician Workforce 2010-2030. Robert Graham Center.](#)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Define metrics useful for gauging the state of human resources for rural health.
    - Compare and contrast issues related to the rural health workforce in the U.S. versus non-rural settings
    - Describe the status of the health care workforce in rural Utah, including physicians, advanced practitioners (e.g., nurse practitioners or physician assistants), pharmacists, nurses and physical and occupational therapists.
    - Discuss gaps or needs to address challenges to the rural health workforce in Utah.
    - Describe resources and initiatives to improve the education, training, recruitment and retention of rural health workforce practitioners.

#### 6. Food, Agriculture, Nutrition & Hunger: A Rural Perspective

- 10/27/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - Julie Metos, PhD, MPH, RD, Associate Chair, Department of Nutrition & Integrative Physiology
- Required Readings
  - [Nutrition and Weight Status in Rural Areas](#) (pp. 33-41; Healthy Rural People 2020, Vol.1 )
  - [Rural Hunger in America: Get the Facts – Food Research & Action Center](#)
  - [National Rural Health Association Policy Brief – Food & Nutrition](#)
  - [Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity in Rural America – Center for Rural Affairs Brief](#)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Define household food insecurity and the concept of a food desert
    - Discuss the burden of food insecurity in rural communities and compare and contrast with urban or metropolitan communities
    - Describe the distal, intermediate and proximal determinants of food insecurity in rural areas, including agricultural policies (e.g., U.S. Farm Bill), poverty, transportation & geography, age & education and food availability
    - Describe strategies and programs at the local, State and National level to address food insecurity and nutrition, including SNAP, WIC, school food programs and senior food programs
    - Discuss the links between nutrition, physical activity and obesity in rural areas

#### 7. Statistics & Data – Sources & Applications for Rural Community Health

- 11/10/2020
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructors
  - Jorie M. Bulter, PhD – Research Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine; Adjunct Assistant Professor, Biomedical Informatics; Adjunct Assistant Professor, Psychology
  - Bryan S. Gibson, PhD, DPT, Assistant Professor, Biomedical Informatics; Research Instructor, Internal Medicine; Adjunct Assistant Professor, Physical Therapy & Athletic Training
  - Randall W. Rupper, MD, MPH, Professor, internal Medicine, Division of Geriatrics
- Required Reading
  - TBD in discussion with instructor
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Describe the available data sources relevant to understanding the health status of rural populations
    - Explain how data regarding the health of rural populations are collected and disseminated.
    - Identify and utilize rural health data sources to describe important aspects of the health status of rural populations in Utah.

#### 8. Healthcare Access in the Rural Southwest

- 11/17/20
- Location

- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - Ashley Moritz, Director - Utah State Office of Primary Care & Rural Health
- Required Reading
  - [Access to Rural Health Care – A Literature Review & New Synthesis. Rural Policy Research Institute; August 2014; pp. 1-25.](#)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Describe various metrics utilized to assess health care access
    - List the most common barriers to and disparities in accessing health care services among rural populations
    - Describe initiatives at the local, State and National level to improve access to health care services among rural populations

#### 9. Ethical Challenges in Rural Health

- **Date (YES)**
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Instructor
  - Gretchen Case, PhD, MA, Chief, Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities, Division of General Internal Medicine
- Required Reading
  - [Maintaining Ethics in a Rural Setting](#)
  - [Health Care Ethics in Rural Life- Stigma, Privacy, Boundary Conflicts Raise Concerns](#)
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, the learner should be able to:
    - Discuss how the rural context influences ethical issues regarding patient confidentiality and boundary conflicts, disease stigma and the privacy of information.
    - Describe some of the common economic issues that rural providers face with providing health care to patients lacking financial resources.
    - Describe ethical concepts and principles that practitioners can utilize when navigating common ethical conundrums common to rural practices

#### 10. Community in Context – The Life & Practice of a Rural Physicians

- 12/1/20
- Location
- 5:30-7:30 PM
- Panelists
  - TBD
- Required Reading
  - *Heirs of a General Practice* by John McPhee
  - Screening of *The Provider*, followed by discussion
- Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)
  - As a result of participating in this class, from the perspective of a rural practitioner the learner should be able to:
    - Discuss some benefits and challenges of a rural medical practice
    - List some recommendations from rural practitioners regarding medical student preparation for a rural practice
    - Describe how rural medical practice has evolved or changed in the last decade or two