



# Data Snapshot

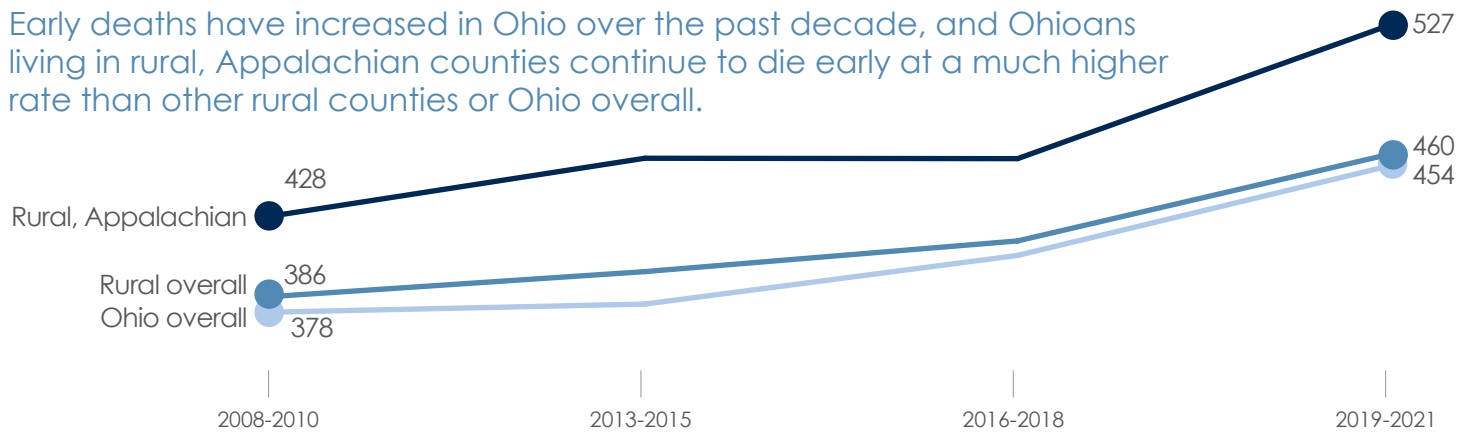
## Health in rural and Appalachian Ohio

Living in communities with access to opportunity and resources is a key contributor to Ohioans' health, well-being and economic security. There are many positive aspects of living in rural areas of Ohio, but the more than 2.3 million Ohioans who live in rural counties face a number of challenges that contribute to poor health outcomes. Using county types developed for the [Ohio Rural Health Improvement Plan](#), this data snapshot explores the drivers of health and health outcomes in rural Ohio.

### Premature age-adjusted mortality

Median number of deaths, by county type, among residents under age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)

Early deaths have increased in Ohio over the past decade, and Ohioans living in rural, Appalachian counties continue to die early at a much higher rate than other rural counties or Ohio overall.



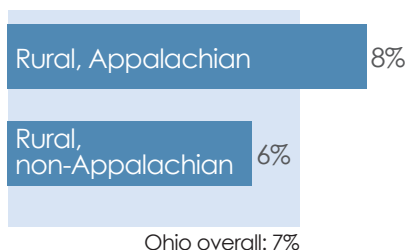
Source: HPIO analysis of data compiled by County Health Rankings

## Community conditions

Community conditions such as access to a vehicle, broadband internet and locations for physical activity (proximity to sidewalks, parks and gyms) can improve overall health and well-being. However, Ohioans living in rural counties, particularly rural Appalachia, are more likely to experience poor community conditions.

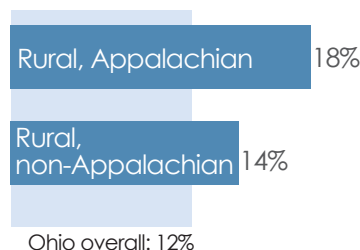
### Zero-vehicle households

Percent of households without access to a personal vehicle, 2018-2022



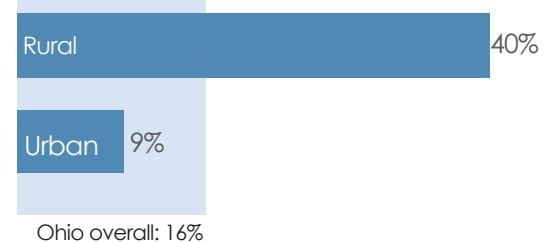
### Broadband access

Percent of households with no access to the internet, 2018-2022



### Access to exercise

Median percentage of the population, by county type, without access to locations for physical activity, 2023, 2022 and 2020



Source: HPIO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates

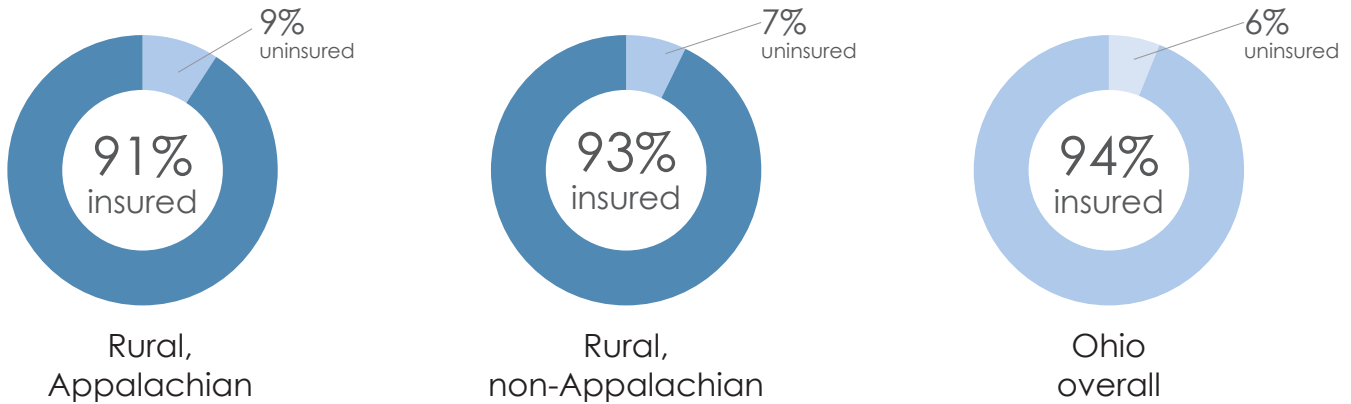
Source: HPIO analysis of data compiled by County Health Rankings

# ▶ Access to care

## Insurance

Percent of individuals who have health insurance, 2018-2022

Ohioans in rural counties are more likely to be uninsured compared to Ohio overall, but most people in rural counties have health insurance.



**Note:** Insurance coverage includes employment-based insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, direct-purchase coverage, TRICARE and VA and CHAMPVA coverage.

**Source:** HPIO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-year estimates

Despite high rates of insurance coverage, healthcare access remains a challenge for many due, in part, to a lack of providers. Rural counties overall have lower provider rates. And the 10 counties with the lowest rate of providers per capita are all rural or partially rural.\*

### Primary care providers

Primary care providers per 100,000 population, 2021

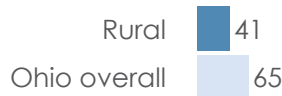


Counties with the fewest providers per 100,000 population, 2021

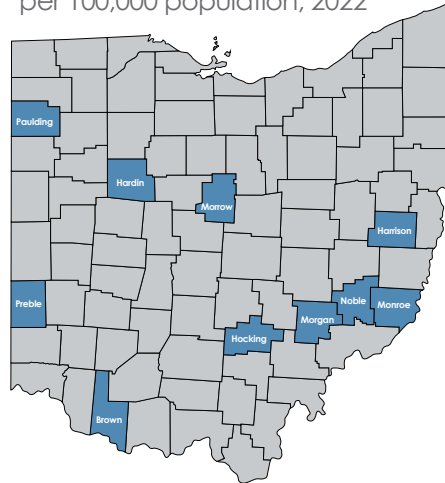


### Dental providers

Dental providers per 100,000 population, 2022



Counties with the fewest providers per 100,000 population, 2022

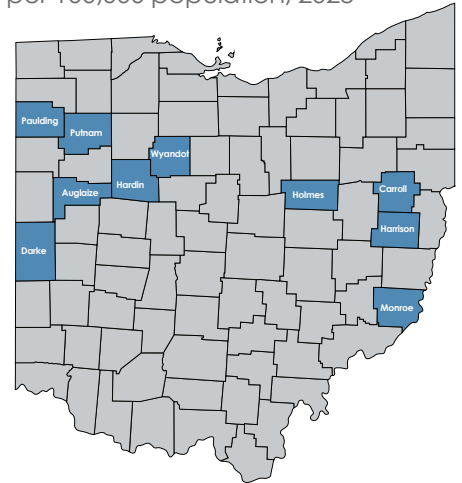


### Mental health providers

Mental health providers per 100,000 population, 2023



Counties with the fewest providers per 100,000 population, 2023



\*Partially rural is defined in the [Ohio Rural Health Improvement Plan](#) as a county of less than 50,000 people with at least one urban cluster within or adjacent to it.

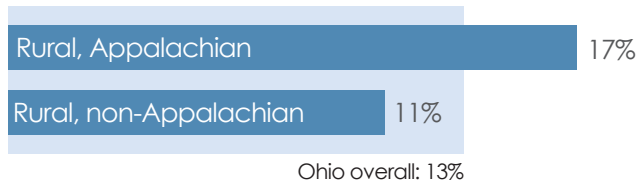
**Source:** HPIO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022, and data compiled by County Health Rankings

## ► Poverty and chronic stress

Poverty rates are higher in rural, Appalachian counties and for communities of color in rural Ohio. Poverty creates barriers to health through factors such as food insecurity, housing instability and chronic stress.

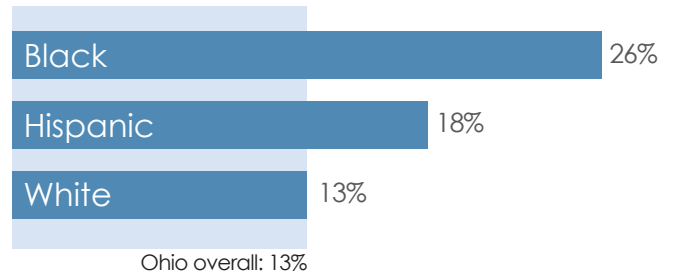
### Poverty

Percent of individuals whose income in the last 12 months was below the federal poverty level, 2018-2022



### Poverty by race

Percent of individuals in rural counties whose income in the last 12 months was below the federal poverty level, by race, 2018-2022

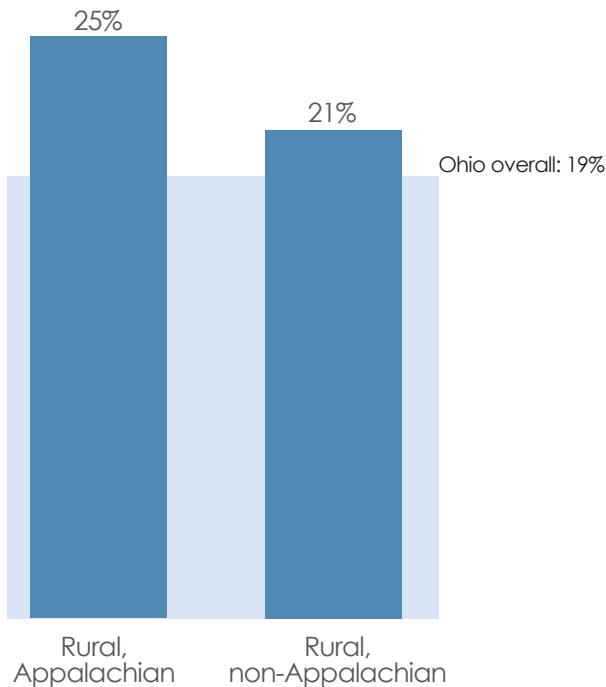


Source: HPIO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates

The trauma and stress associated with poverty puts Ohioans with lower incomes at higher risk of tobacco use and associated harms, as well as mental distress. The higher poverty rate in rural, Appalachian counties is echoed in higher smoking rates and rates for mental distress.

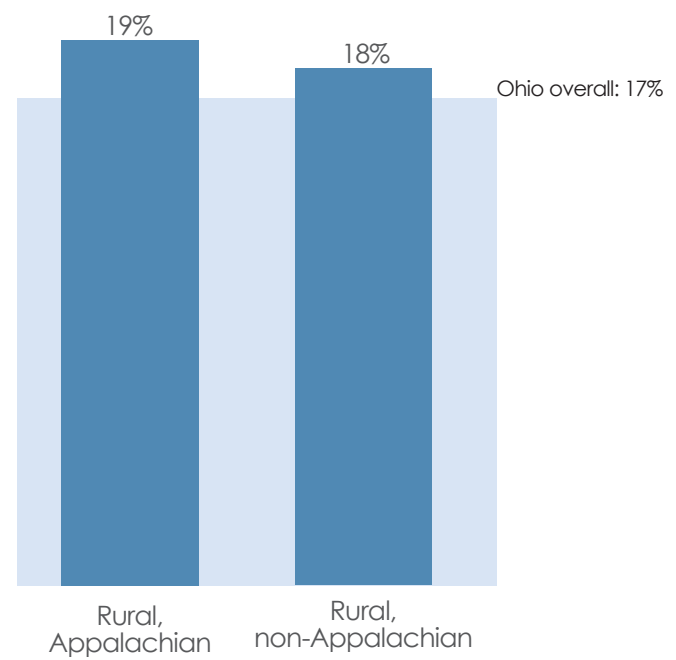
### Current smoking

Median percentage, by county type, of adults who are current smokers (age-adjusted), 2021



### Frequent mental distress

Median percentage, by county type, of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month (age-adjusted), 2021



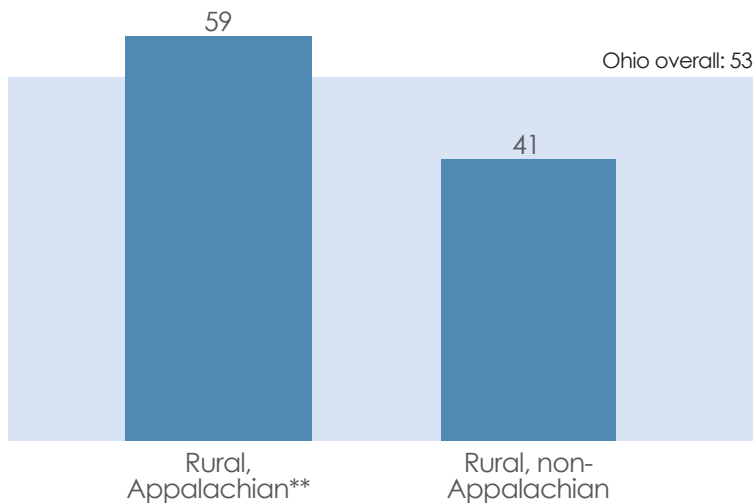
Source: HPIO analysis of data compiled by County Health Rankings

## ▶ Health outcomes

Challenging community conditions and gaps in access to care contribute to disparities in leading causes of death, including suicide, overdose and heart disease, for Ohioans in rural counties, particularly those in rural Appalachia.

### Drug overdose or suicide mortality

Number of people who died from drug overdose or suicide, all ages, per 100,000 population, 2023\*



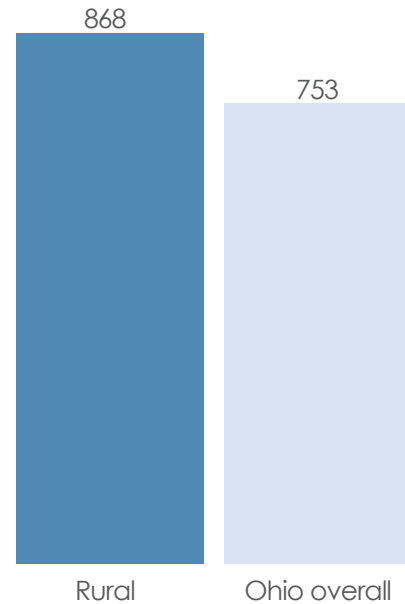
\*2023 data is preliminary

\*\*Data for suicide in Monroe county is marked as missing

Source: HPIO analysis of Ohio Department of Health, Mortality files; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-year estimates

### Heart disease mortality

Number of people who died from heart disease, all ages, per 100,000 population, 2021, 2022 and 2023\*



## ▶ Resources

There are many effective strategies that state and local leaders can use to ensure that Ohioans living in rural areas have access to the resources and environments needed to promote health and well-being. The resources below outline many of those strategies.

- **Ohio Rural Health Improvement Plan** contains strategies to improve healthcare access in rural Ohio.
- **County Health Rankings: What Works for Health** provides comprehensive evidence-based strategies that can address health needs highlighted in this snapshot.
- **The National Rural Health Association's Rural Community Health Initiative** promotes innovative, community-level programs in rural areas and provides grant-writing support and resources for community leaders to implement healthcare access strategies in their hometowns.