

A vibrant red Colorado wildflower, likely a penstemon, is the central focus, growing from a rocky, grassy hillside. The background shows a vast, open landscape with rolling hills and a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and rural environment.

# SNAPSHOT OF RURAL HEALTH IN COLORADO 2025

 **COLORADO  
RURAL HEALTH  
CENTER**

*The State Office of Rural Health*



# COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CENTER

*The State Office of Rural Health*

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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# The Snapshot Team



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# Demographics of Colorado

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**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)

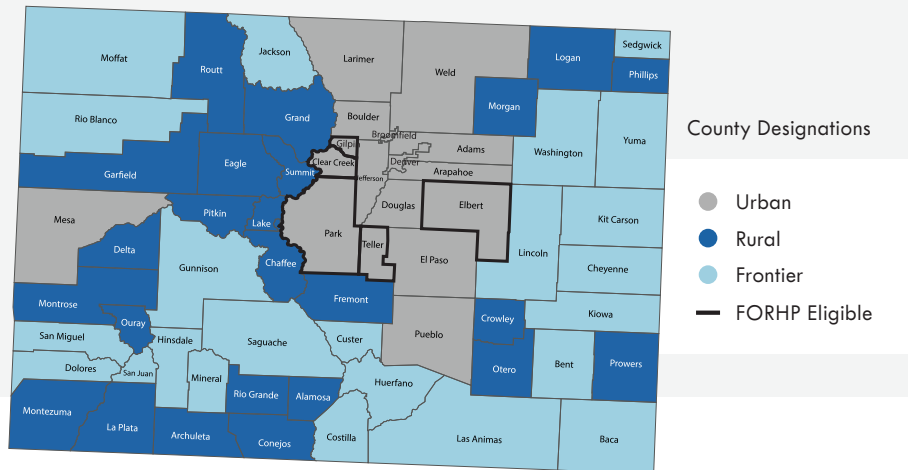


**RURAL:** A non-metropolitan county containing no municipalities over 50,000 residents.

**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

**19,000**

net migration in 2023



↑ by 4,000 from 2022



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



# 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

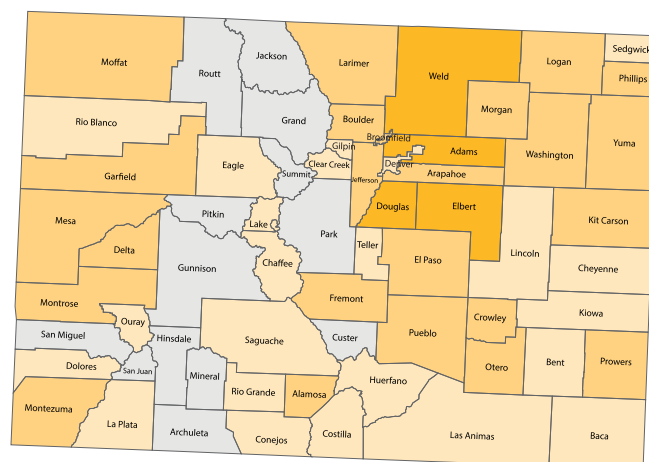
Urban Colorado in 2022

**5,026,969**

total household population

**2.28**

housing unit ratio

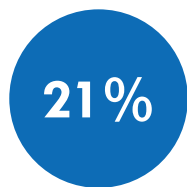


Housing Unit Ratio

- 0.6–1.5
- 1.6–2
- 2.1–2.5
- 2.6+



# Age, Race, & Ethnicity



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

**36.6%**

Custer

**33.6%**

Huerfano

**33.5%**

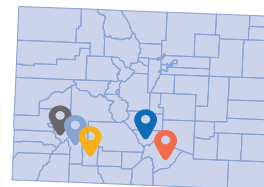
Mineral

**32.6%**

Hinesdale

**31.5%**

Ouray



## RACE AND ETHNICITY OF RURAL COLORADO IN 2022

**1.4%**



Black or African American

**1.0%**



Asian

**1.5%**



American Indian & Alaska Native

**0.1%**



Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander

**72.1%**



Non-Hispanic White

**22.4%**



Hispanic



of Coloradans were born outside of the U.S.



of Colorado residents were born in a state other than Colorado

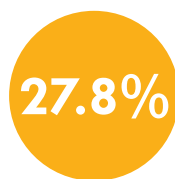
## COLORADO IS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE STATE



**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



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

### Minority Population Growth (2020-22)

**5,765**

in rural Colorado



**63,213**

in urban Colorado



# 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

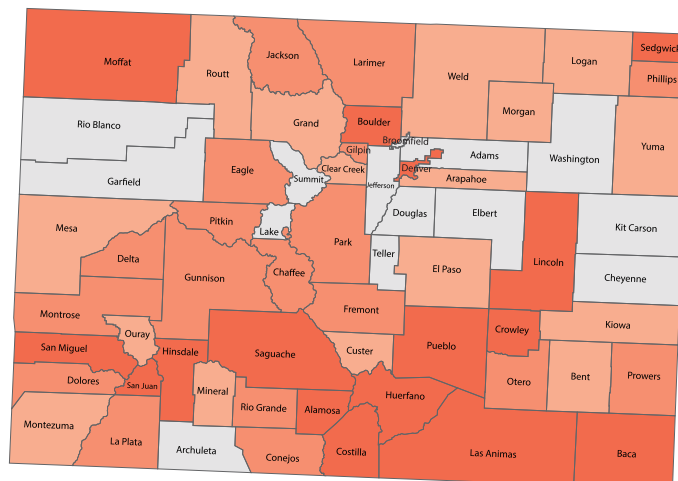
**6.3** in Lincoln County



On average, higher income households

**earn 4.4x more** than lower income households

**3.3** in Rio Blanco County



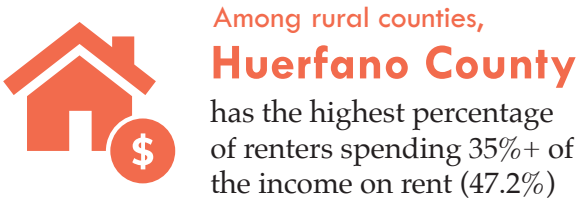
Income Inequality Ratio

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

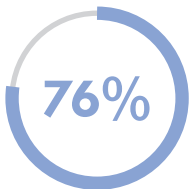


# Colorado's Housing Crisis is Escalating

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.



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



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	
<b>18.5%</b> Northeast Colorado (Morgan, Logan, Washington, Yuma, Phillips, Sedgwick)	<b>22.1%</b> Pueblo
<b>15.9%</b> Central and Eastern Denver Metro Area	<b>11.3%</b> San Luis Valley

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



### 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



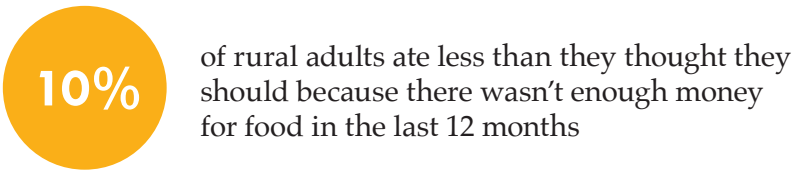
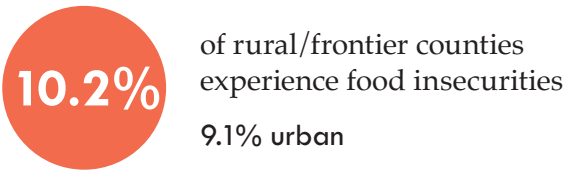
Food index scores vary throughout Colorado with index scores as low as **1.6 in Costilla**

## SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) IN RURAL AREAS

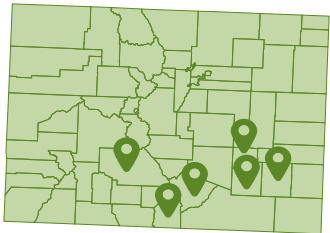
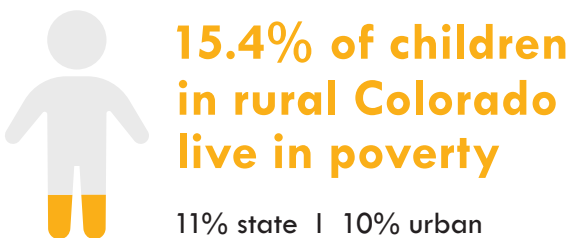
### Percent of households on SNAP



### Highest rates of households on SNAP by county

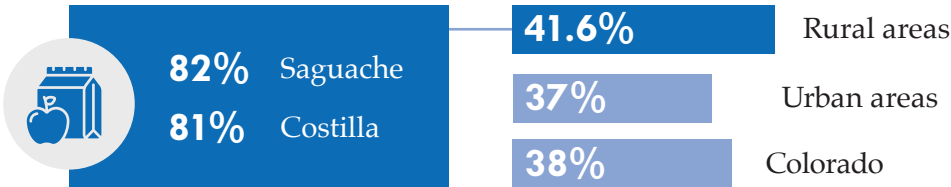


## CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS



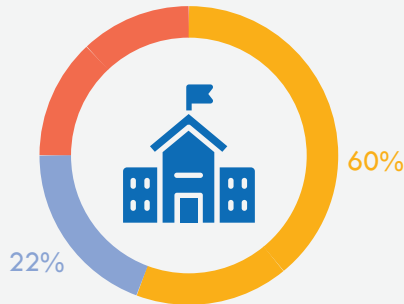
Costilla, Otero, Crowley, Saguache, Heurfano, and Bent **all have ~1 in 3** children living in poverty

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

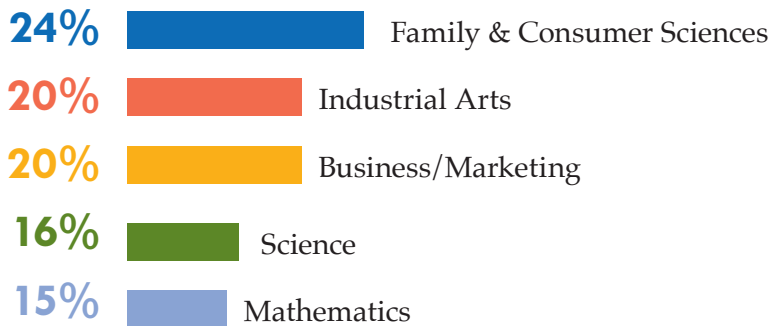
**RURAL:** K-12, 1,001-6,500  
enrolled students

## Education in Colorado

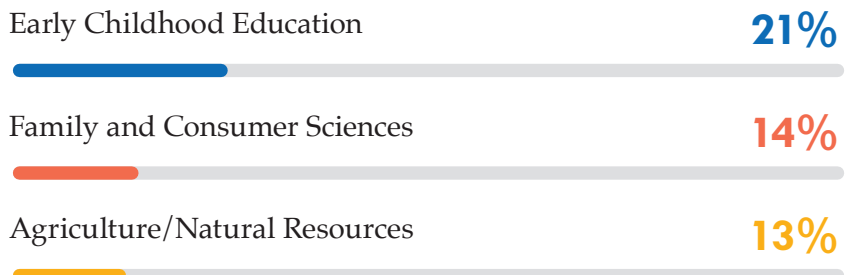
The 2023-2024 Educator Shortage Survey showed that small rural and rural districts had the highest percentage of positions filled through a shortage mechanism or left unfilled.

### 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

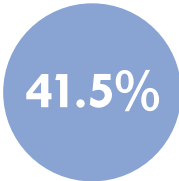


# Education Enrollment, Health & Funding



**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

## DIVERSITY IN RURAL SCHOOLS 2023-24

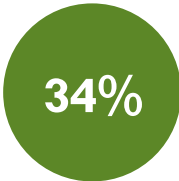


**44.1%**

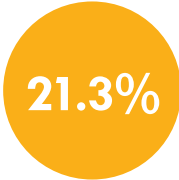
of students attending rural schools (PK-12)

**36.4%**

of students attending small rural schools (PK-12)



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

## 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**



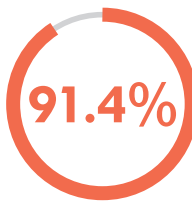
San Juan has the **highest at \$29,624 per student**

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



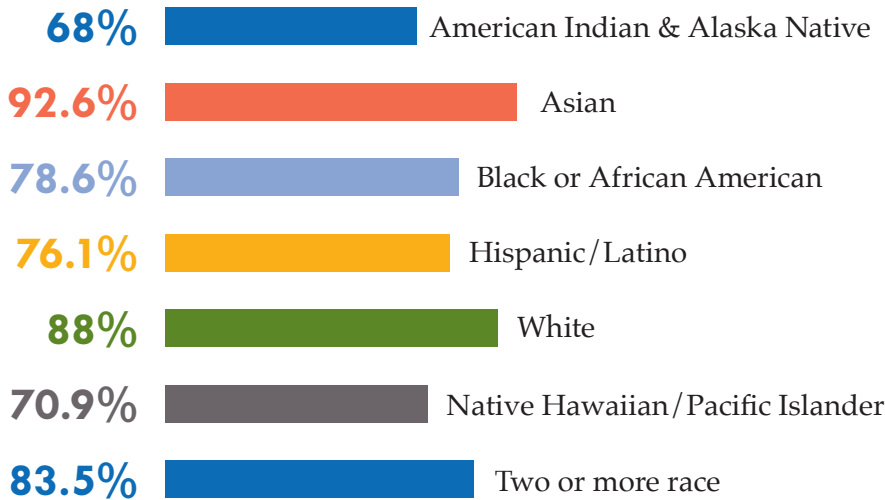
of the population over 25 in rural Colorado has completed high school

**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

97%	96%	95.6%	95%	95%
Rio Blanco	Routt	Conejos	Custer	Ouray

### THE 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES BY RACE IN 2023



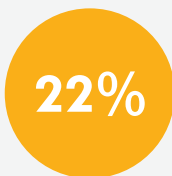
### ADVANCED COURSE OFFERINGS

**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





# 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**

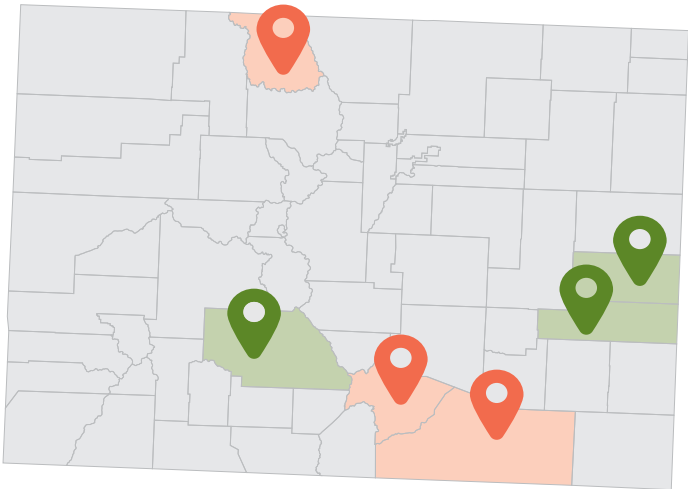


Post pandemic unwind (2023-July 2024), Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment **decreased by 546,000 people**

**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

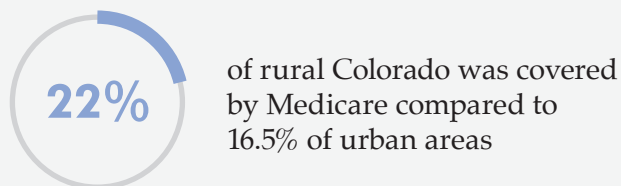


**28 rural counties** experienced a decrease in Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment from 2020-24

Counties with Highest Enrollment Drops

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

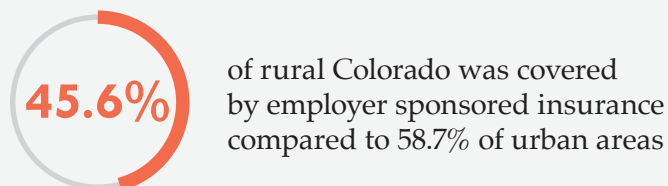
## MEDICARE COVERAGE IN 2023



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



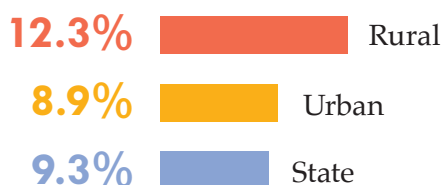
## EMPLOYER SPONSORED COVERAGE IN 2022



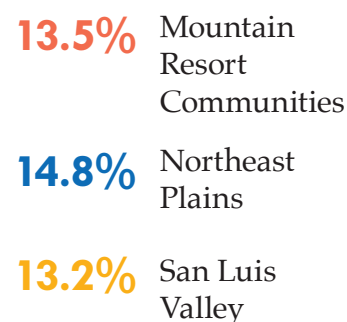
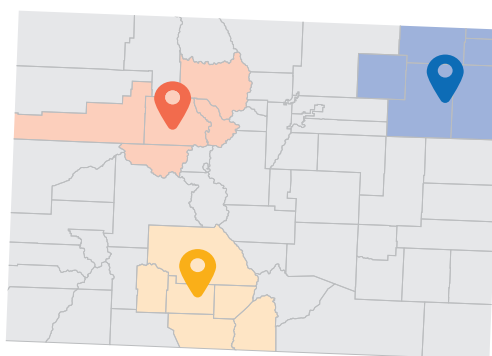
Mountain resort counties had the highest employer sponsored health insurance rates within rural Colorado



Rural Colorado experienced higher uninsured rates for adults under 65



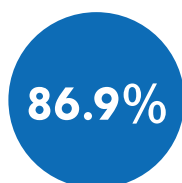
## HIGHEST UNINSURED RATES AMONG ADULTS <65



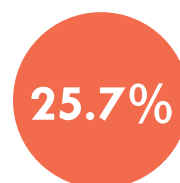
## WHAT PREVENTS UNINSURED COLORADANS FROM HAVING COVERAGE?



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  
cancer  
diabetes

stroke  
liver disease  
suicide

Alzheimer's  
influenza  
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

**VS**

**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

**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

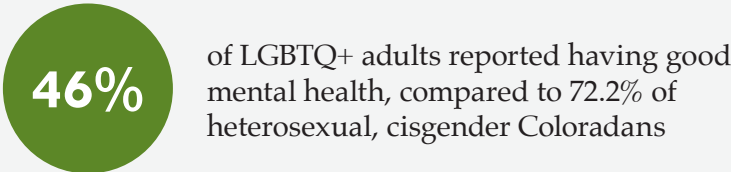
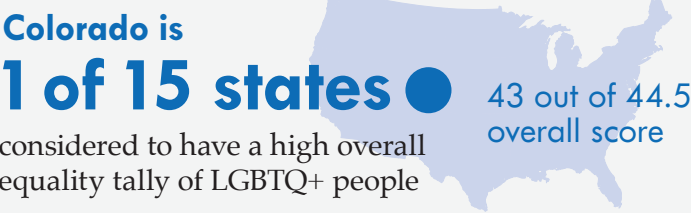
Agriculture

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

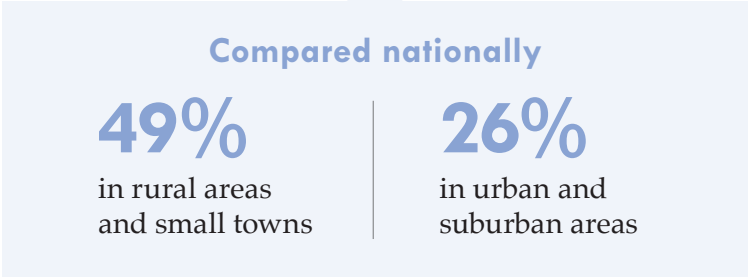
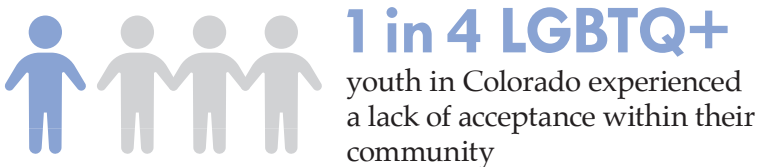
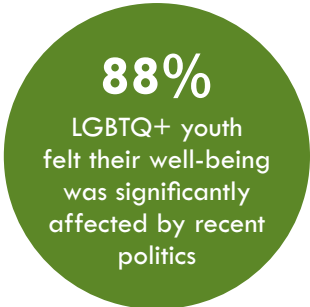
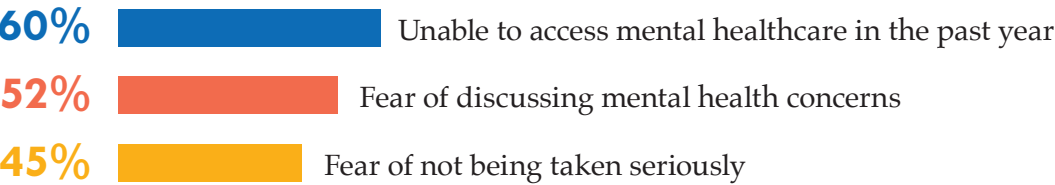
**DESCENDANTS OF:**

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

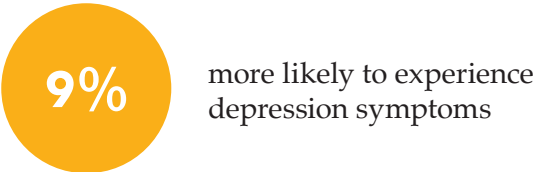
# LGBTQ+ People in Colorado



## MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH IN COLORADO



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





# 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**

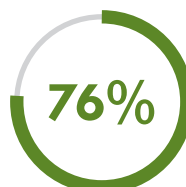


**Travel 75+ miles to see their transgender-related medical care provider**



**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

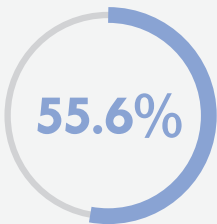
**8%**  
of the urban population  
over 18 are veterans

## 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

**25.5%** reported housing costs of 30% or more of income

**20.8%** of Veteran homeowners reported housing costs of 30% or more of income

**43.7%** of veterans renting reported rental costs of 30% or more of income

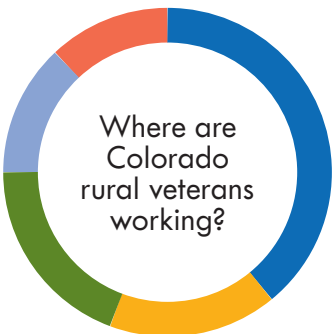
## WHERE DID COLORADO VETERANS LIVING IN RURAL AREAS SERVE?



**1.3%** World War II  
**41.2%** Gulf War  
**39.0%** Vietnam Era

**13%** Between conflicts  
**5.5%** Korean War

## 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

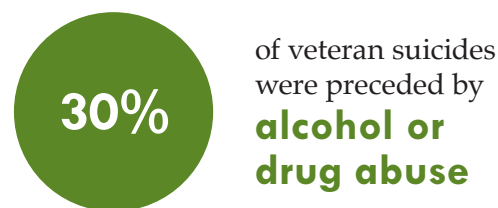
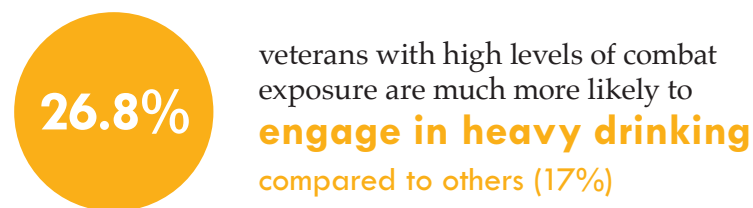


**14% of homeless** veterans reside in rural and non-metro Colorado

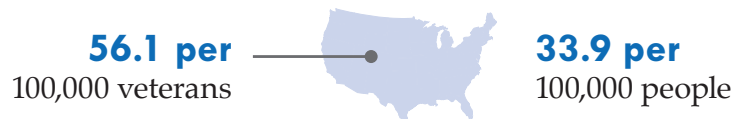


# Health of Veterans

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**



**212 Colorado veterans died by suicide in 2021**



## VETERANS IN RURAL COLORADO

**21.6%** have a service-connected disability

**31.3%** have a disability



Compared to the general civilian population, **those who serve experience higher rates of access to healthcare**

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



<b>81.8%</b>	<b>78.8%</b>	<b>75.9%</b>
Pitkin	San Miguel	Lake

Had the highest rates of individuals eligible for VA care but not enrolled



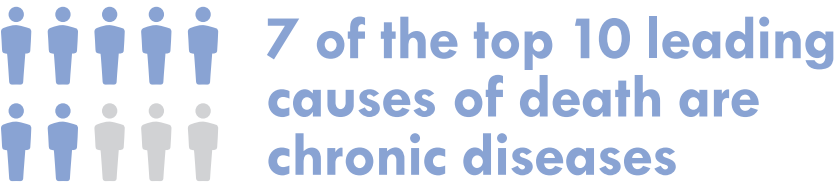
# Rural Health in Colorado

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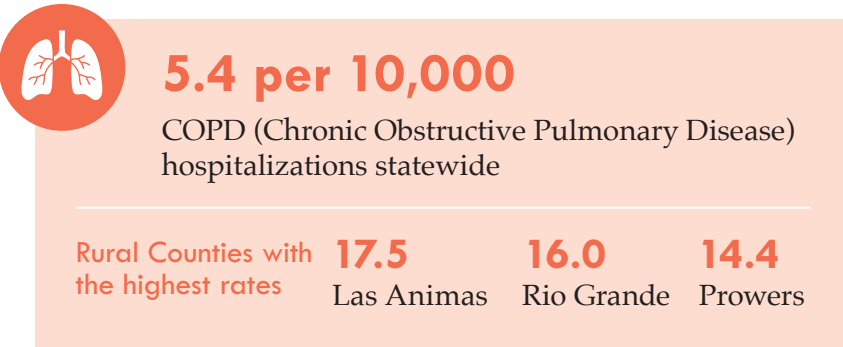


# Chronic Disease






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.



## AGE ADJUSTED HOSPITALIZATIONS IN 2022



## 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



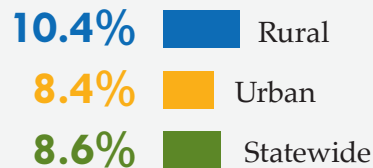


## The 10 leading causes of death in rural Colorado

- |   |                                    |    |                         |
|---|------------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 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

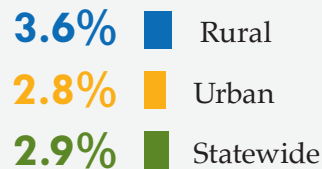
#### Diabetes



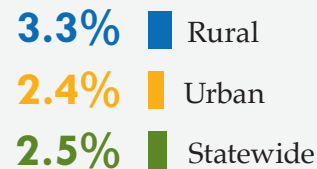
#### High Cholesterol



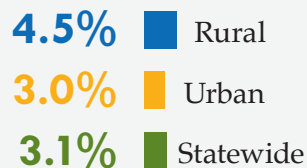
#### Heart Attack



#### Stroke



#### Heart Disease



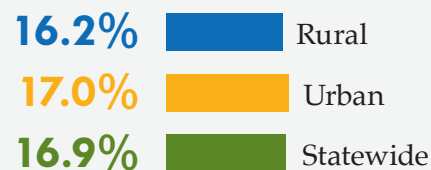
#### Arthritis



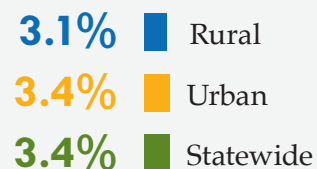
#### High Blood Pressure



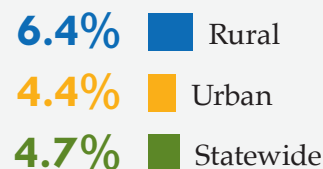
#### Asthma



#### 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

Slightly lower in rural areas



**Age adjusted rate for cancer deaths per 100,000**

**120.8**

Statewide

**122.9**

Rural

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

**34.4** Statewide

**30.8** Rural



Blood

**11.7** Statewide

**9.1** Rural



Colorectum

**29.5** Statewide

**27.0** Rural



Breast

**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

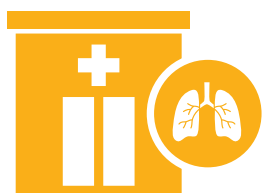
**90.4**

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**

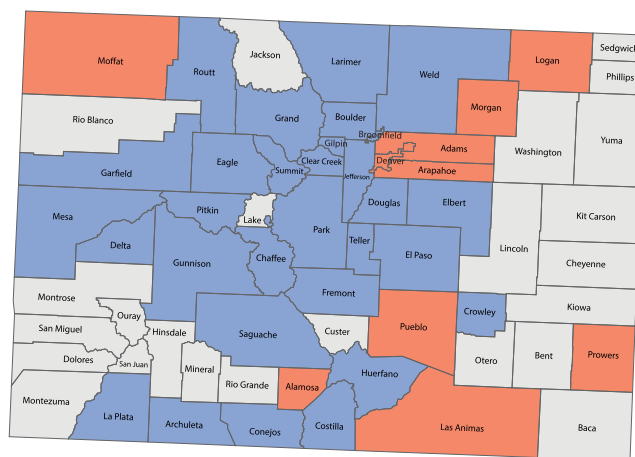
ages 5-14

**33.0**

ages 15-34

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



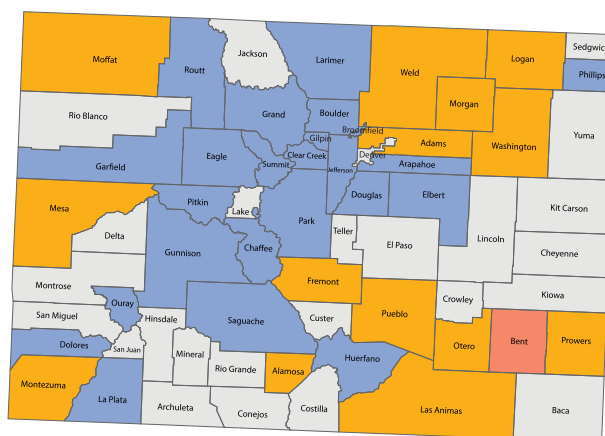
**28.1**

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

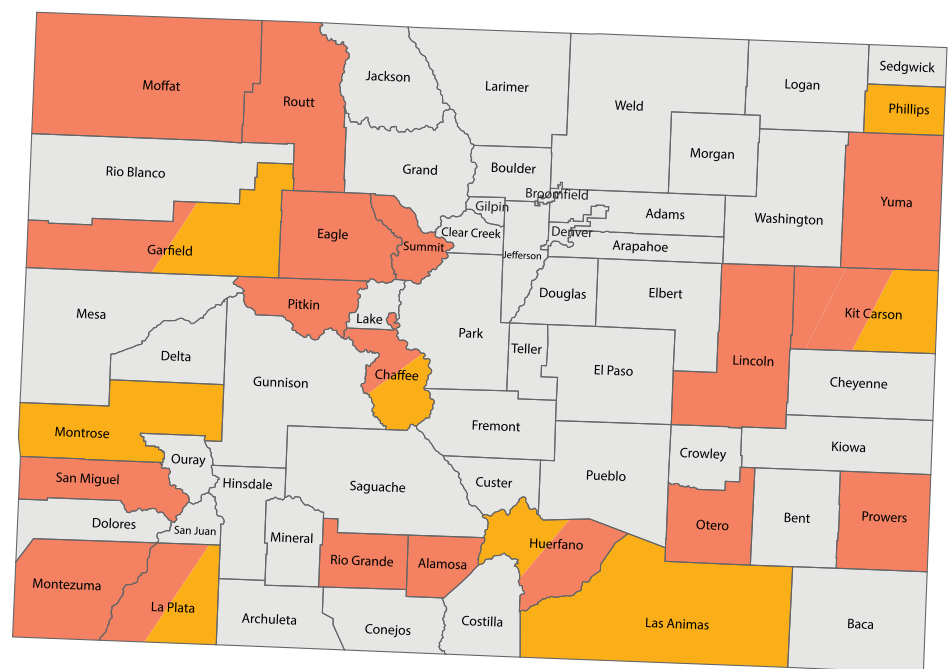
Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) teaches participants how to eat healthy, be active, monitor blood sugar levels, take medication, problem solve, reduce risk for other health conditions, and cope with their disease. It is evidence-based and improves clinical outcomes, health status,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

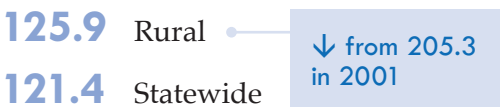


The age adjusted death rates among American Indians/Alaska Natives and Hispanic individuals in rural Colorado **were 2X more than the Non-Hispanic White population**

HEART DISEASE AMONG COLORADO ADULTS



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



Age adjusted stroke death rate per 100,000 in 2023



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

High Cholesterol in Ages 20+



Blood Pressure Medication



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



Compared to 55.6% statewide



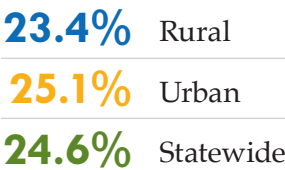
Adults ages 20+ reported having a cholesterol screening within 5+ years



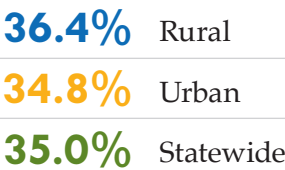
Increase from 71.7% of rural adults reported having a screening in 2015

NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE AMONG COLORADO ADULTS

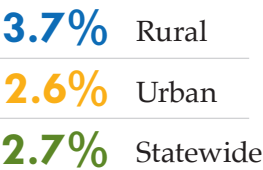
Obesity



Overweight



Underweight



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



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



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

<b>22%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>22%</b>
behavioral health discipline	oral health discipline	family practice

## OLDER ADULTS IN RURAL COLORADO EXPERIENCE MORE POSITIVE HEALTH FACTORS

Physical inactivity	Obesity	Frequent mental distress	Physical distress
<b>19.6%</b> Rural	<b>18.7%</b> Rural	<b>4.6%</b> Rural	<b>10.4%</b> Rural
<b>21.1%</b> Urban	<b>25.0%</b> Urban	<b>8.0%</b> Urban	<b>16.2%</b> Urban

## MENTAL HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS

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

<b>32.4 per 100,000</b>		<b>22.8 per 100,000</b>
older adults in rural areas		older adults in urban areas

**Depression rates in Colorado among adults 65+ in 2022**



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



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)



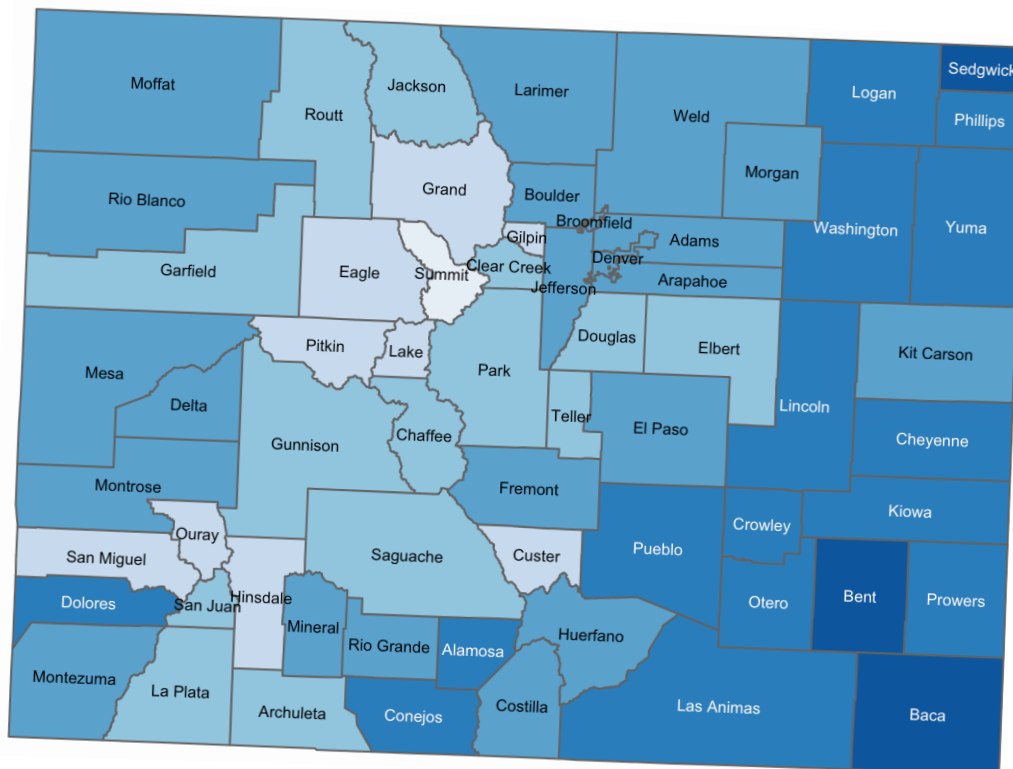
**1 certified nursing home bed per 40 individuals**

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"**



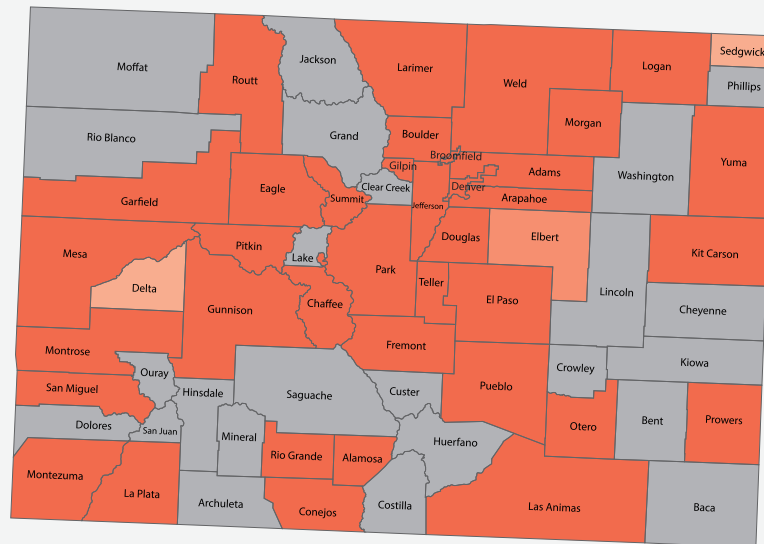
On average, women living in maternity care deserts **travel 51 miles for maternity care**

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



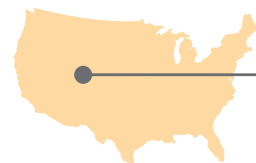
**80.7% of live births**

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**

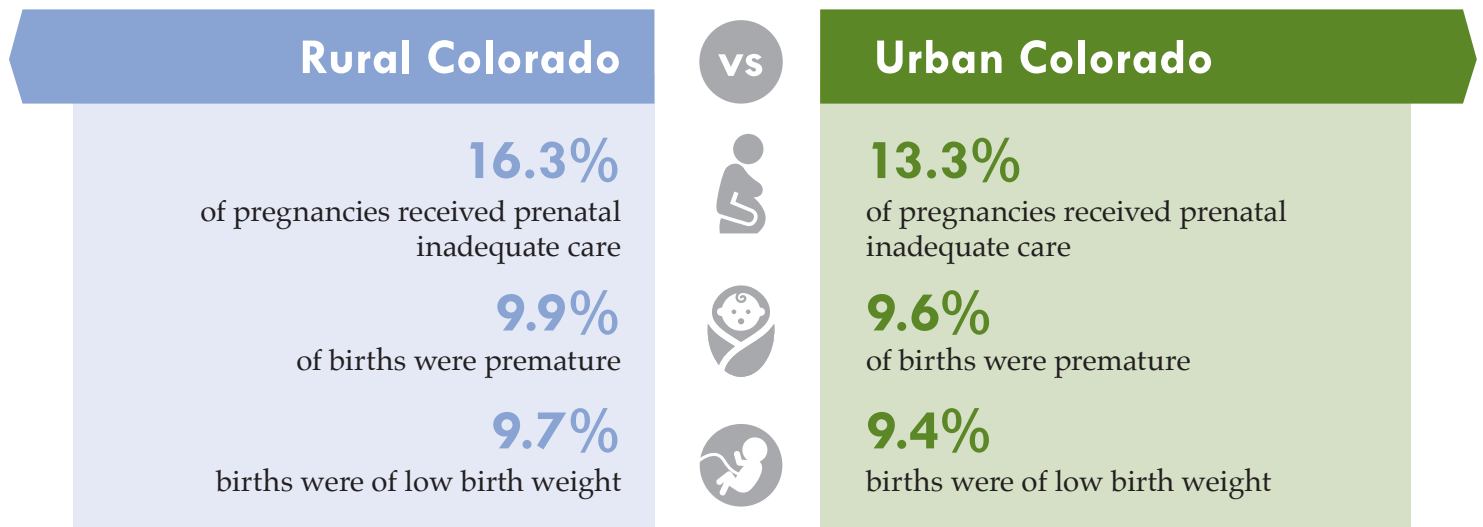
**22 states now prohibit abortion or restrict it earlier in pregnancy**



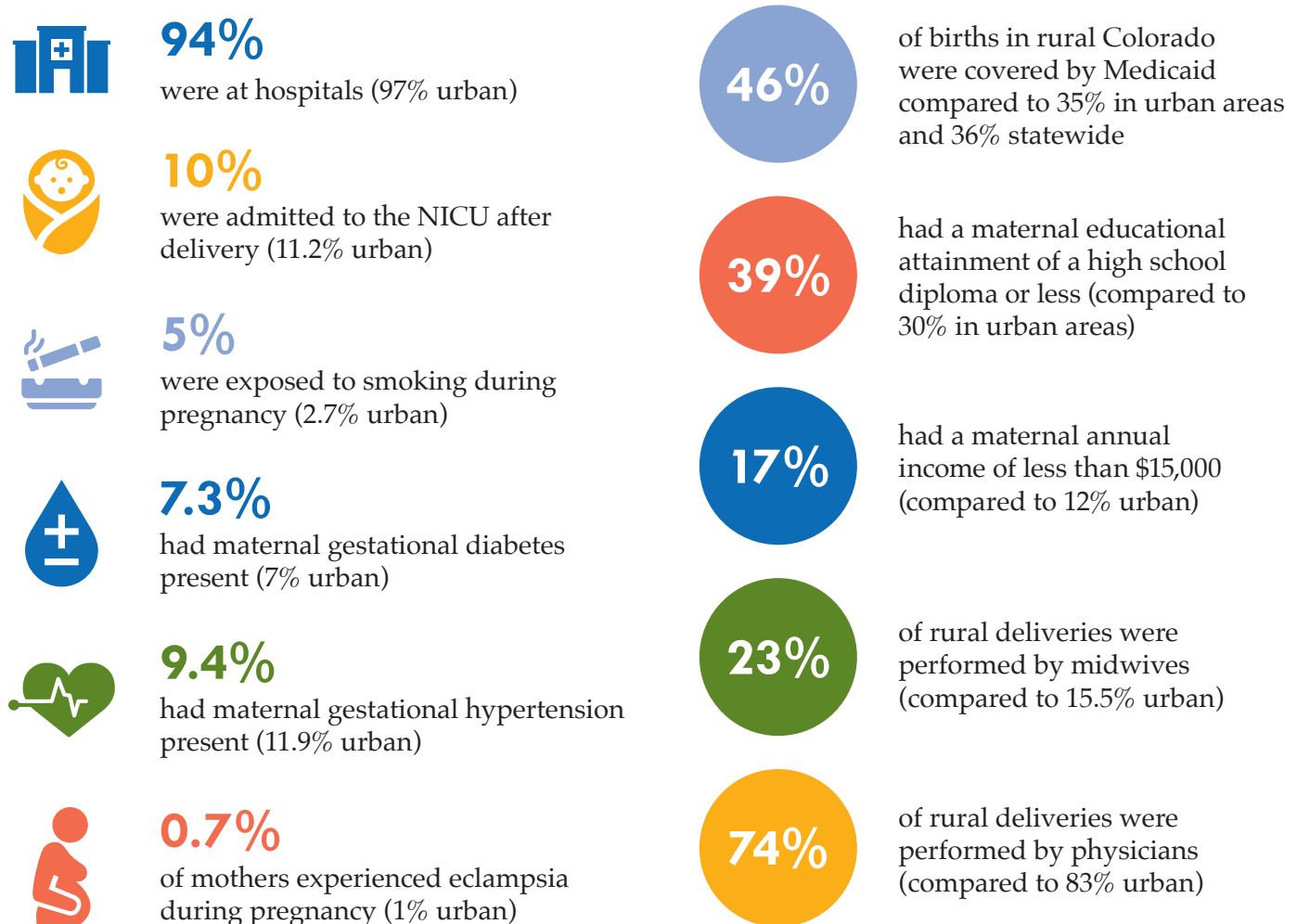
**14,154 abortions** were reported in Colorado in 2022 (27.9% were from out of state)

**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

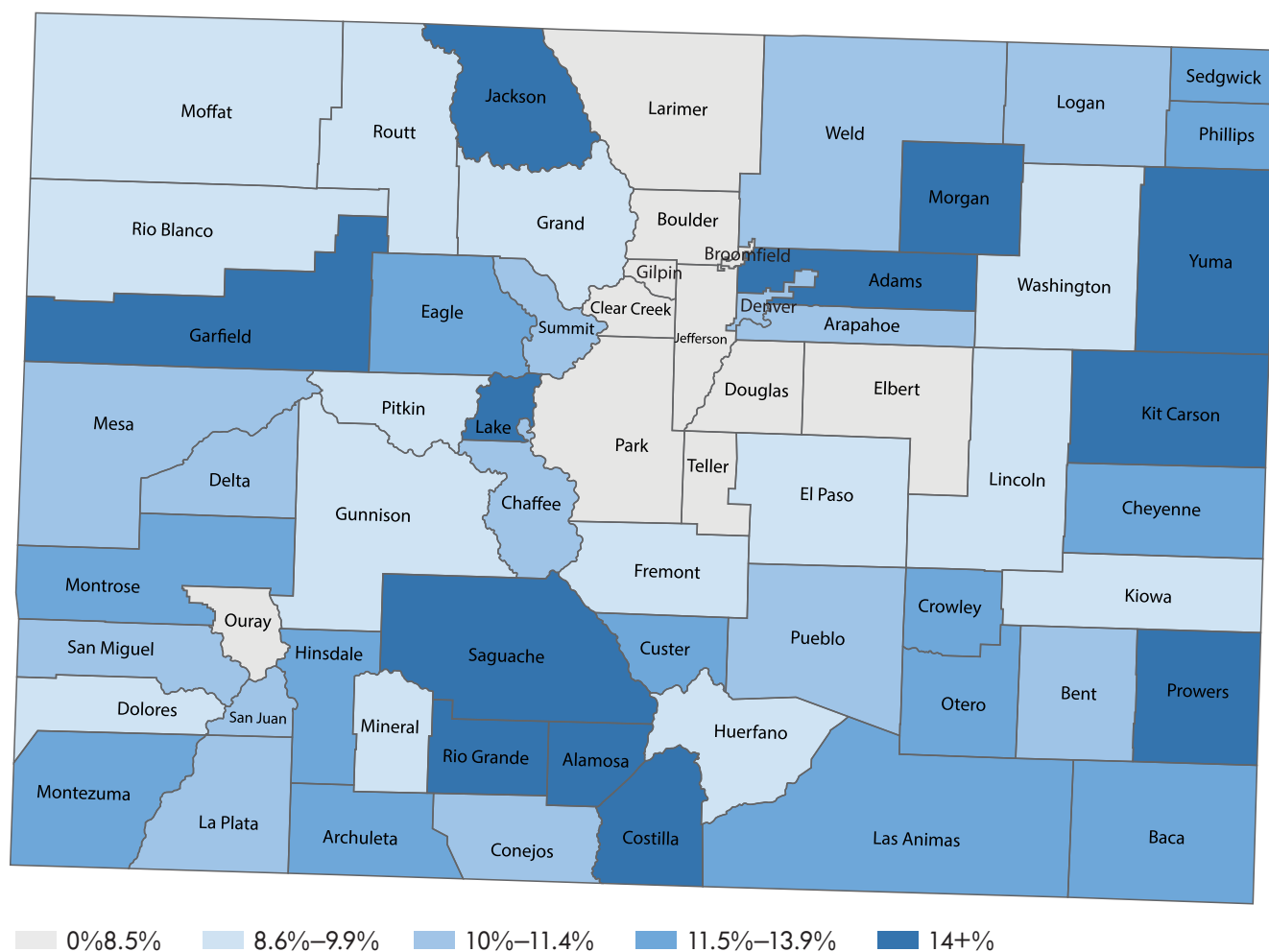


**6,578**  
**rural births**  
**in 2023**

## 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		
66.0%	Hispanics	59.5%	African Americans



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.



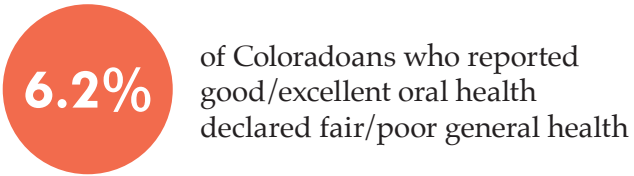
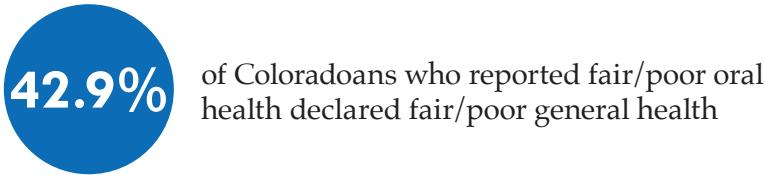
**16.7% of Colorado workers** were employed in an occupation with a high risk of morbidity



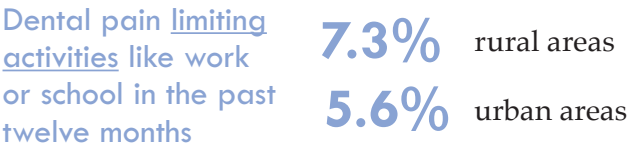
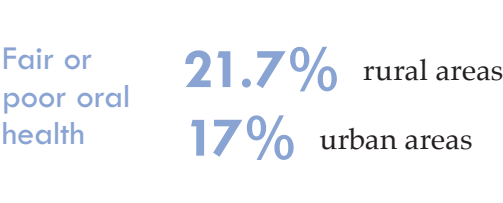
**13.1% of Colorado workers** were employed in an occupation with a high risk of mortality

# Oral Health

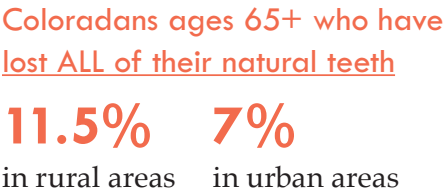
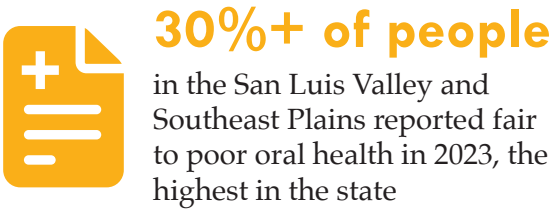
Physical, oral, and mental health are all interconnected. Coloradans experiencing poor oral health were more likely to experience fair or poor overall health.



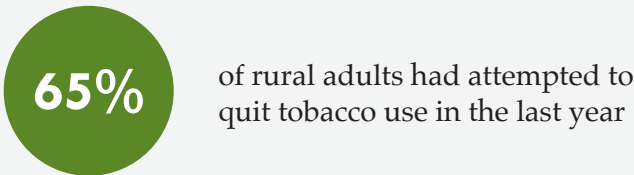
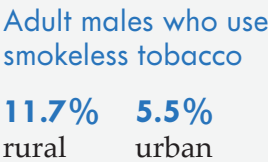
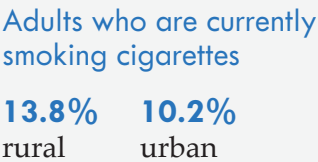
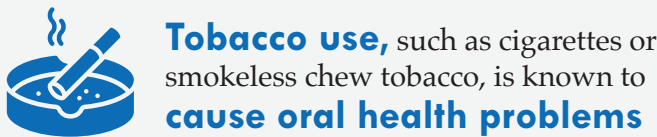
## COLORADO ADULTS REPORTED IN 2023



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

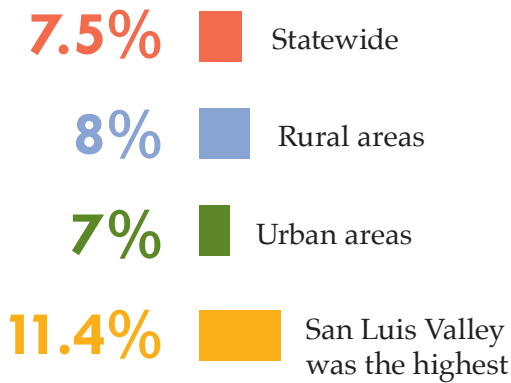


## ORAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE





## 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

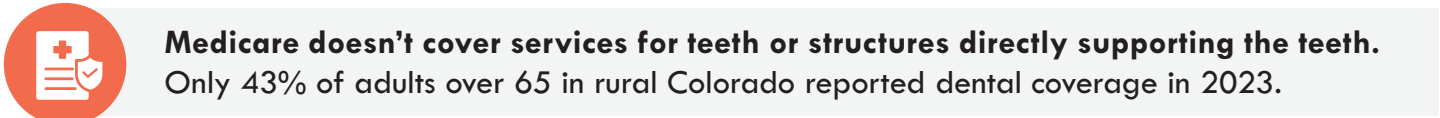
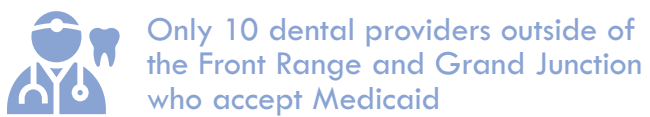
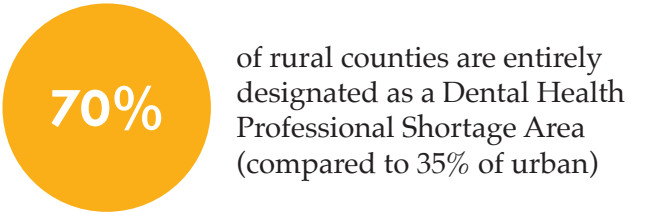
**65%** insured through Medicaid

**67%** 19-50 years of age

**67%** income below 200% of the FPL

**39%** uninsured

# Dental Care Access



## 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



## 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

# 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

**26%**

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

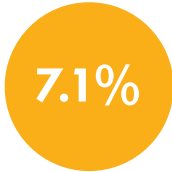


**12.0**  
per 100,000



## Suicide rates among rural age groups per 100,000

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

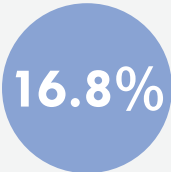


## Protective factors to reduce risk of suicide among youth include

- ✓ 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



of rural high school students reported binge drinking in the past 30 days in 2023  
(12.1% Colorado)



of rural adults report heavy drinking in 2023  
(6.9% urban)



of rural adults report binge drinking in 2023  
(18.3% urban)

## TOBACCO USE IN RURAL COLORADO



13.8%

of rural adults smoked in 2022 compared to the state rate of 10.7%



12.4%

of rural high school students reported using any tobacco product in the past 30 days (statewide: 9.2%)

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

Archuleta    La Plata    San Juan  
Dolores    Montezuma



5.1%

of rural high-school aged youth reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days (statewide: 3.1%)

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

Gunnison    Hinsdale    Ouray  
Delta    Montrose    San Miguel



24.3%

of all cancer deaths are attributable to smoking

## MARIJUANA USE IN RURAL COLORADO



19.2% of adults

18+ used marijuana within the past 30 days



15.8% of rural youth

reported using marijuana one or more times in the past 30 days compared to 12.8% statewide

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%

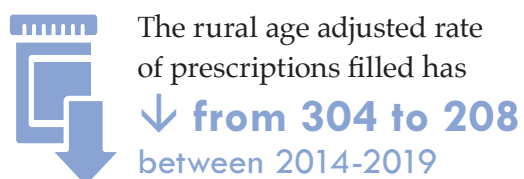
to experiment

8.2%

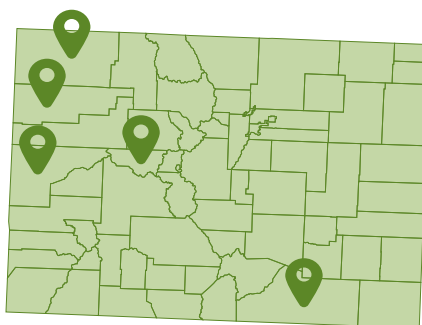
boredom

## BENZODIAZEPINE PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

**Rural females had more benzodiazepine prescriptions filled than urban females**



## Top 5 rural counties benzodiazepine prescriptions dispensed



<b>375</b>	Pitkin
<b>325</b>	Las Animas
<b>314</b>	Rio Blanco
<b>310</b>	Moffat
<b>306</b>	Mesa

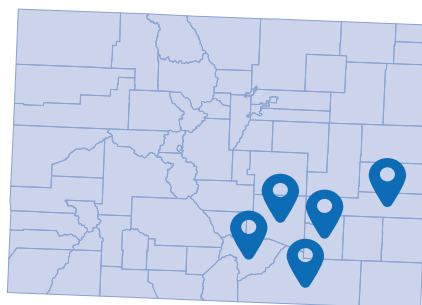
## OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



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



## The highest opioid prescribing rates are seen within southeast Colorado



<b>790</b>	Pueblo
<b>756</b>	Las Animas
<b>750</b>	Huerfano
<b>718</b>	Kiowa
<b>705</b>	Otero

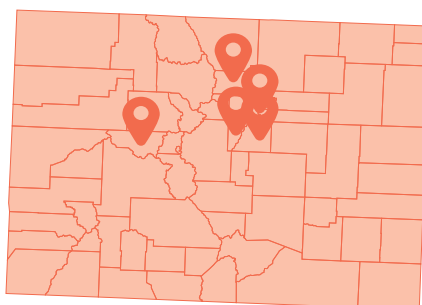
## STIMULANT PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

**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



<b>323</b>	Pitkin
<b>259</b>	Douglas
<b>233</b>	Broomfield
<b>199</b>	Boulder
<b>198</b>	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

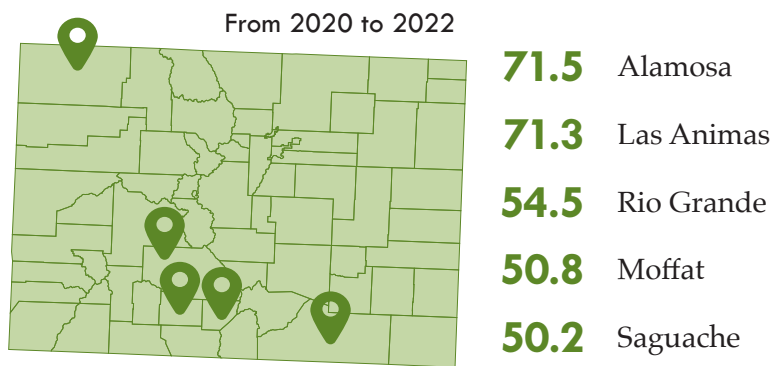
**28.1** rural areas      **30.2** urban areas



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



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)

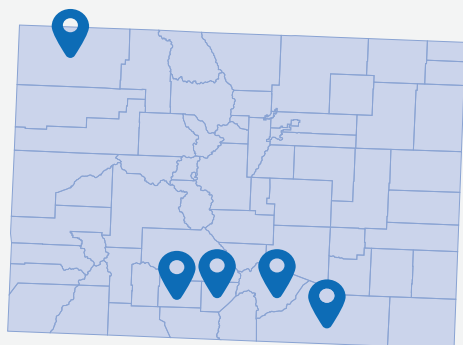
**26%** of emergency department visits involving drug overdoses in 2023 were for individuals aged 15 to 24

**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**

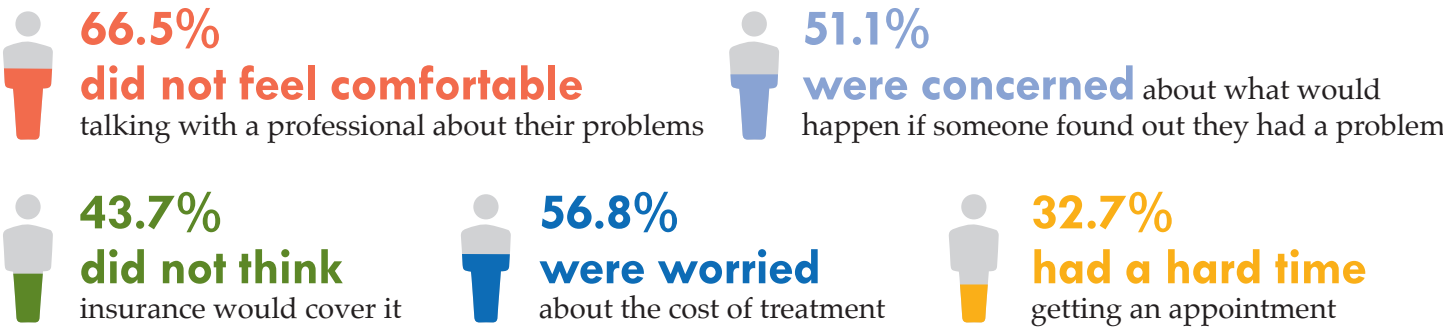
Females



# 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.

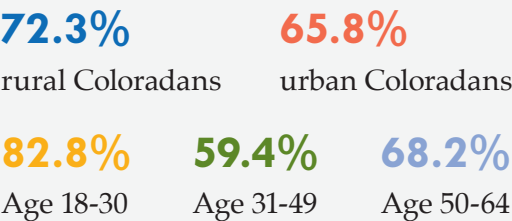
## 100,000 COLORADANS DIDN'T RECEIVE NEEDED SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT IN 2023



Stigma/concerns of someone finding out about needing care



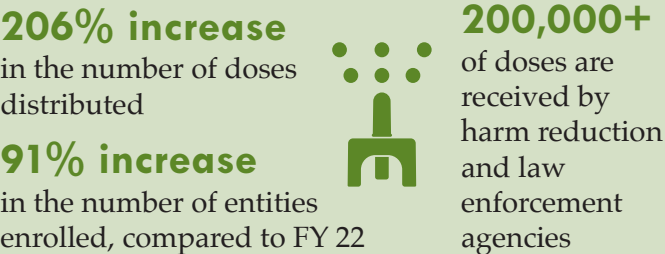
Discomfort with speaking to healthcare professionals about treatment



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



**10 out of 1,000 rural residents** received substance use disorder care from a Colorado Behavioral Health Administration funded or overseen program in 2023



**The Bulk Fund has spent \$12.9 million** of the \$19.7 million allocated to the program since 2022

Leaving roughly \$6.7 million until 2026

# Gun Violence

37%

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

28%

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

53%

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

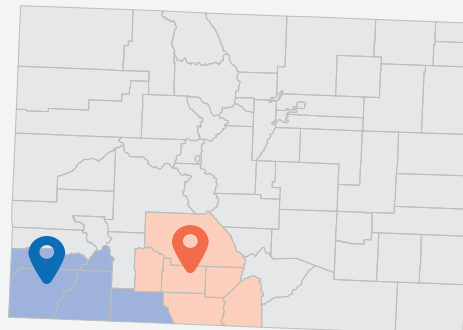
**31** rural males **6.6** rural females



Firearm deaths among youth under 18

**3.3** rural areas **4.3** urban areas

**Counties with the highest access to** firearms without adult supervision



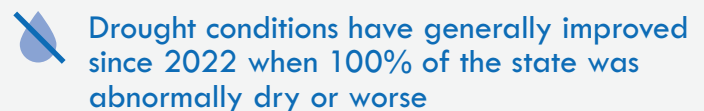
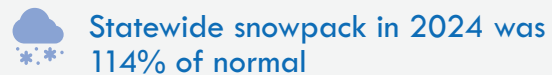
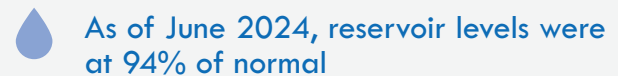
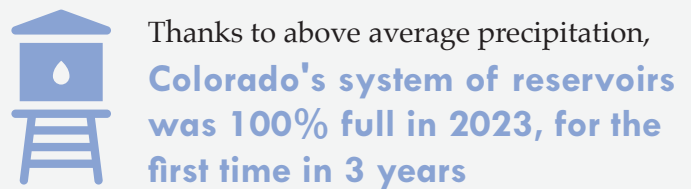
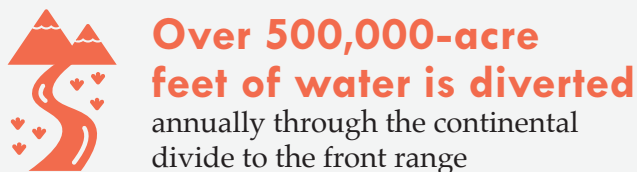
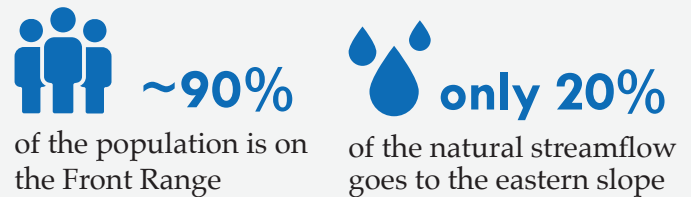
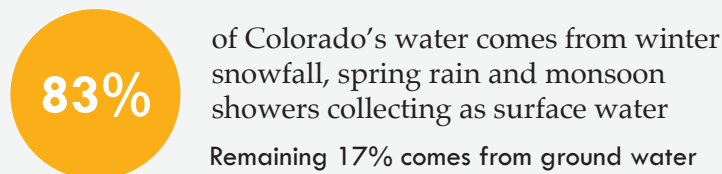
**39.3%** Southwest Colorado

**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



## Ground water use across Colorado

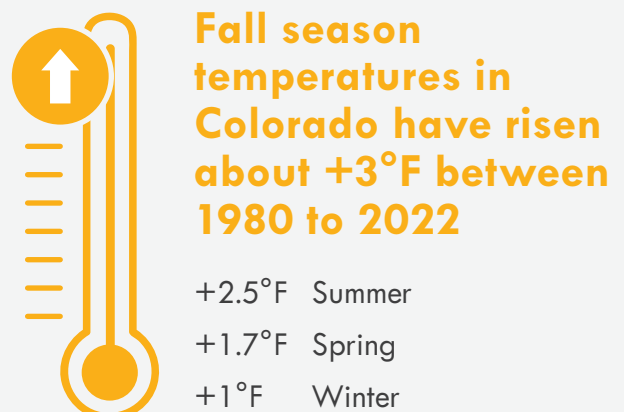


~18% of the population relies on it for their water

## TEMPERATURE INCREASES



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




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

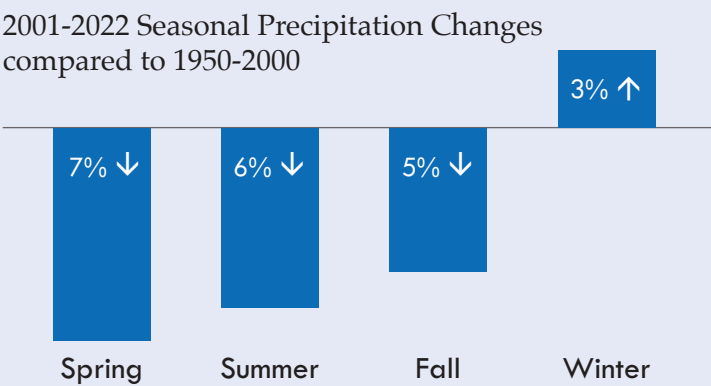
 By 2050, municipal and industrial water could face a shortage between **230,000 to 740,000 (in dry years) acre feet annually**



 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**





 **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

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# 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

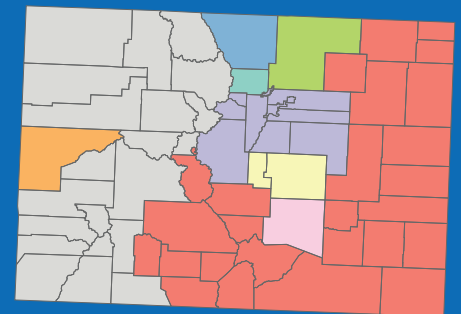
## 6 COLORADO COUNTIES DON'T HAVE A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY



Dolores  
Hinsdale  
Mineral

San Juan  
Jackson  
Gilpin

## HOSPITAL REPORTING REGIONS



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



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

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



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

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



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

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



# 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

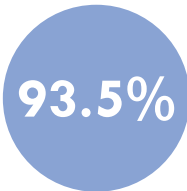
No access to speeds of 25/3 mbps



Underserved locations

No access to speeds of 100/20 mbps

## STATEWIDE BROADBAND ACCESS AS OF JUNE 2023



of Colorado households have access to **100/20 mbps**



of Colorado households have access to **25/3 mbps**

### Rural and Frontier Broadband Disparity



rural or frontier counties have <80% of households with access to **100/20 mbps**



rural or frontier counties have <80% of households with access to **25/3 mbps**

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



Cheyenne



Custer



Crowley

These counties have the worst access in the state



## ACCESS IN 2022

**92%**

of households in the state had a broadband internet connection

**86%**

of rural households had a broadband internet connection compared to 93% of urban households

# 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		
<b>489</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>195</b>
Chronic Disease	Journey Mapping	ADT



### 348,594 patients

were attributed to 111 rural health providers participating in the CAP

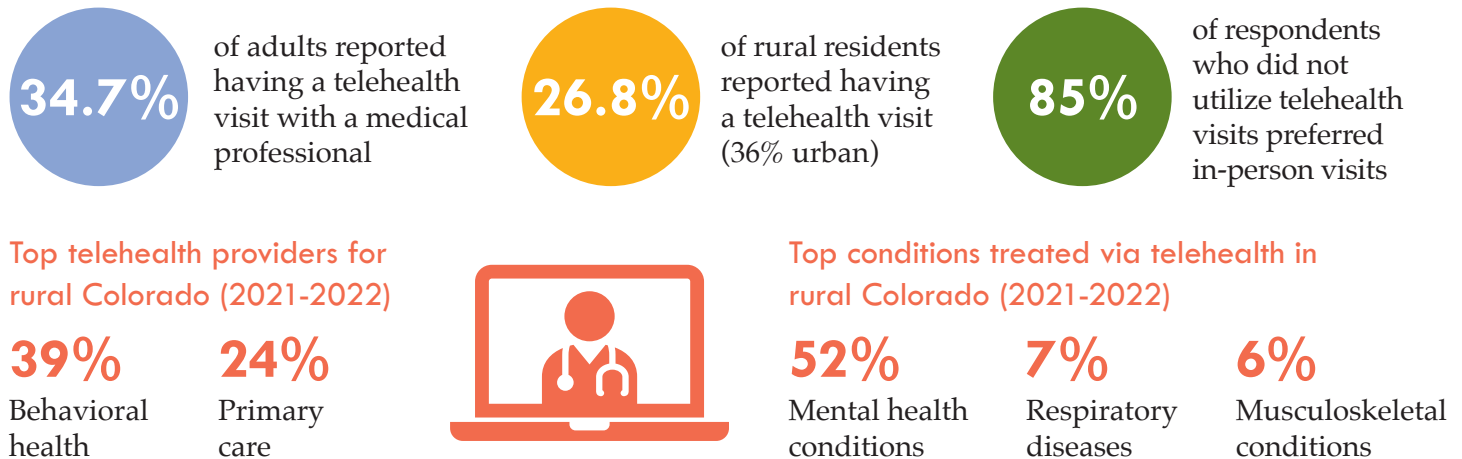


75%

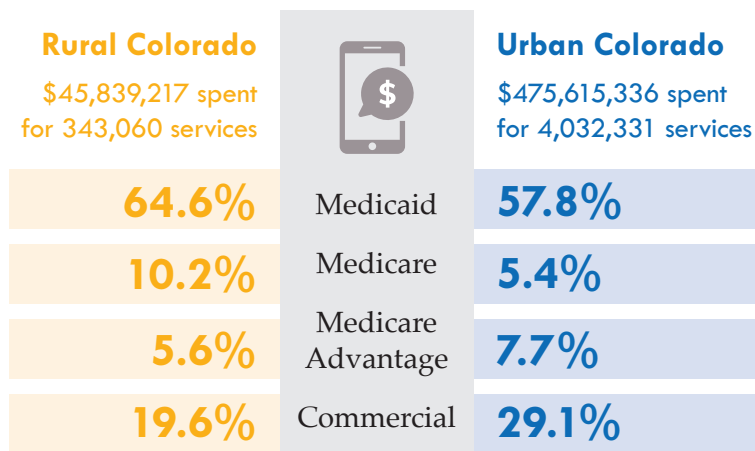
of CAHs were contracted to participate in the CAP, and 69% of RHCs as of September 2024



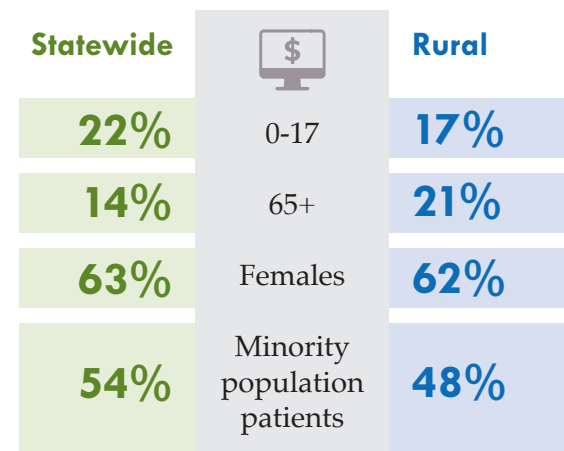
## TELEHEALTH IN COLORADO



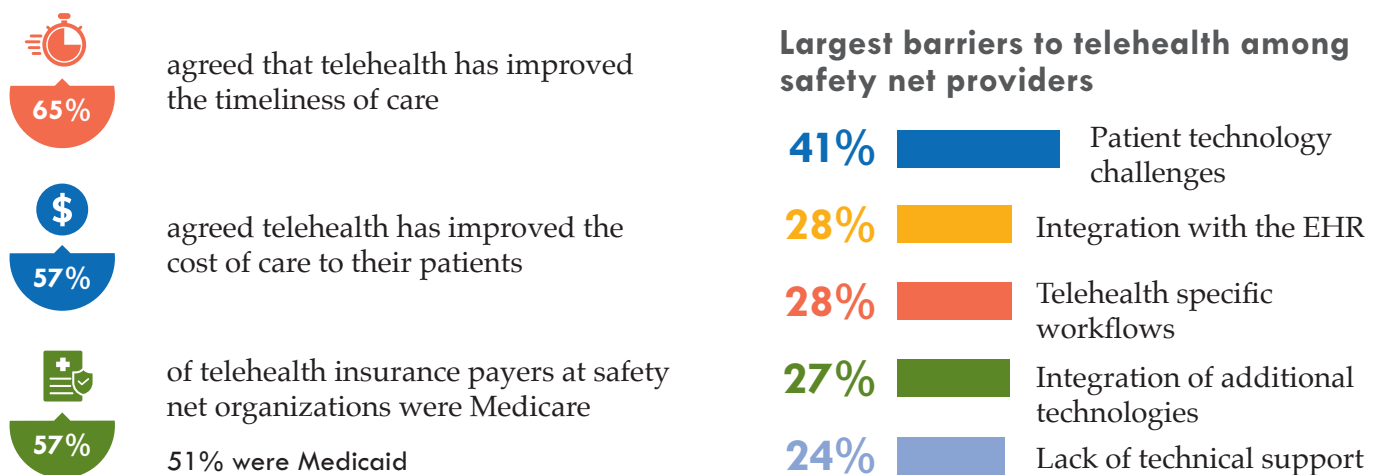
## TOTAL SPENDING ON TELEHEALTH SERVICES FROM JAN 2021 TO JAN 2022



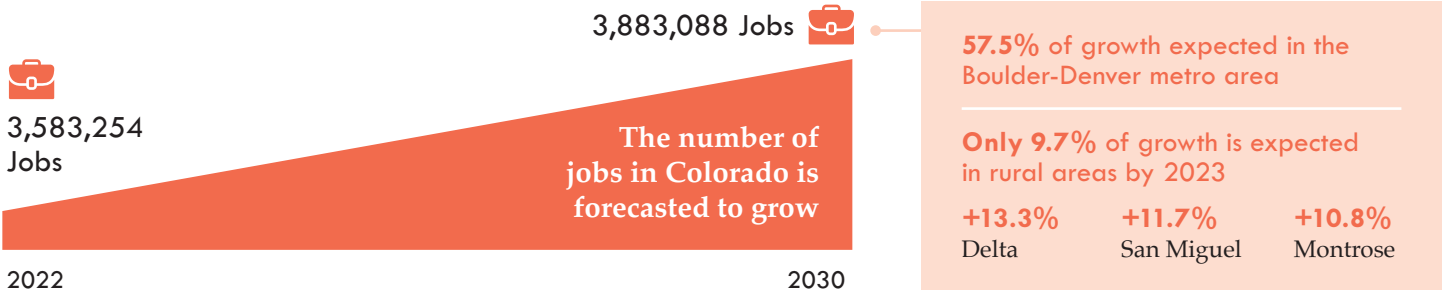
## AMONG ALL PAYERS USING TELEHEALTH VISITS FROM JAN 2021 TO JAN 2022



































## 2021 COLORADO TELEHEALTH SAFETY NET PROVIDER SURVEY



# 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

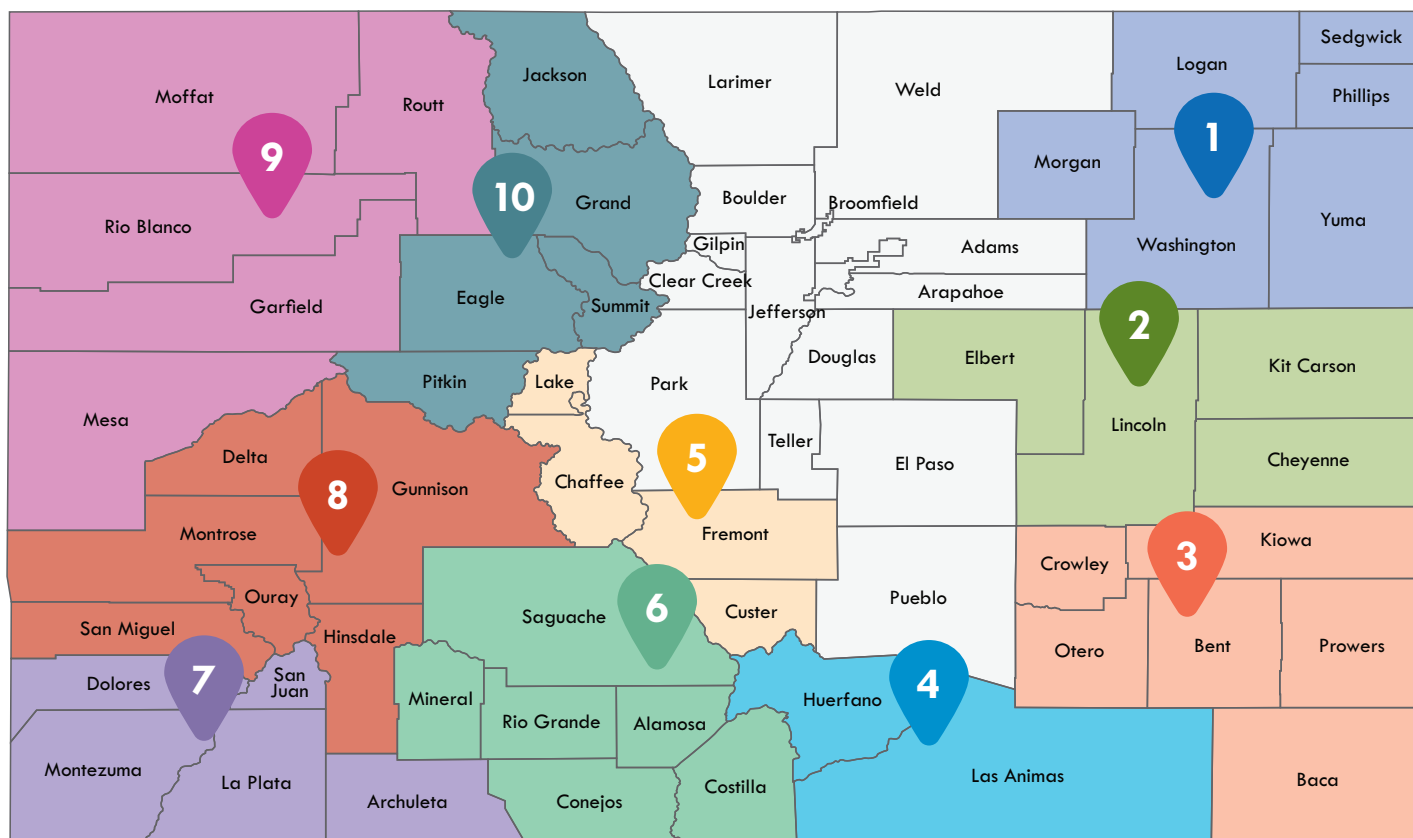
Rural counties with the most  
jobs per unemployed person

3.6  
Rio Blanco

3.3  
Pitkin

2.1  
Garfield

# Regional Industries



## NORTHEASTERN REGION

1



### 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

2



### 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

3



### 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

**8.4%**  
increase in supply expenses

**73.5%**  
increase in contracted labor expenses

**10.4%**  
increase in operating expenses

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

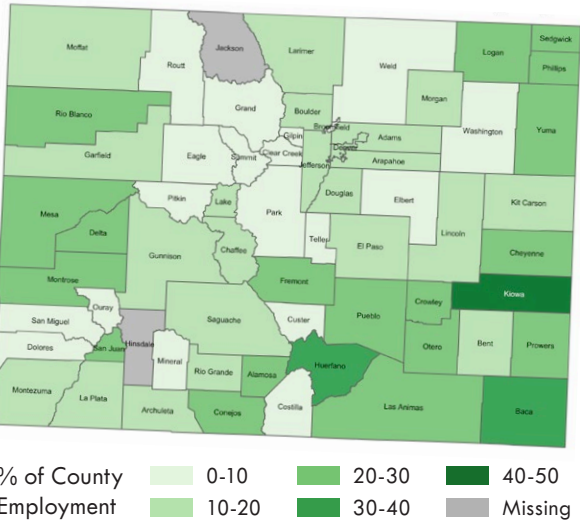
↓ **2.7-4%**  
decrease in per capita income

↑ **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



# 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%**

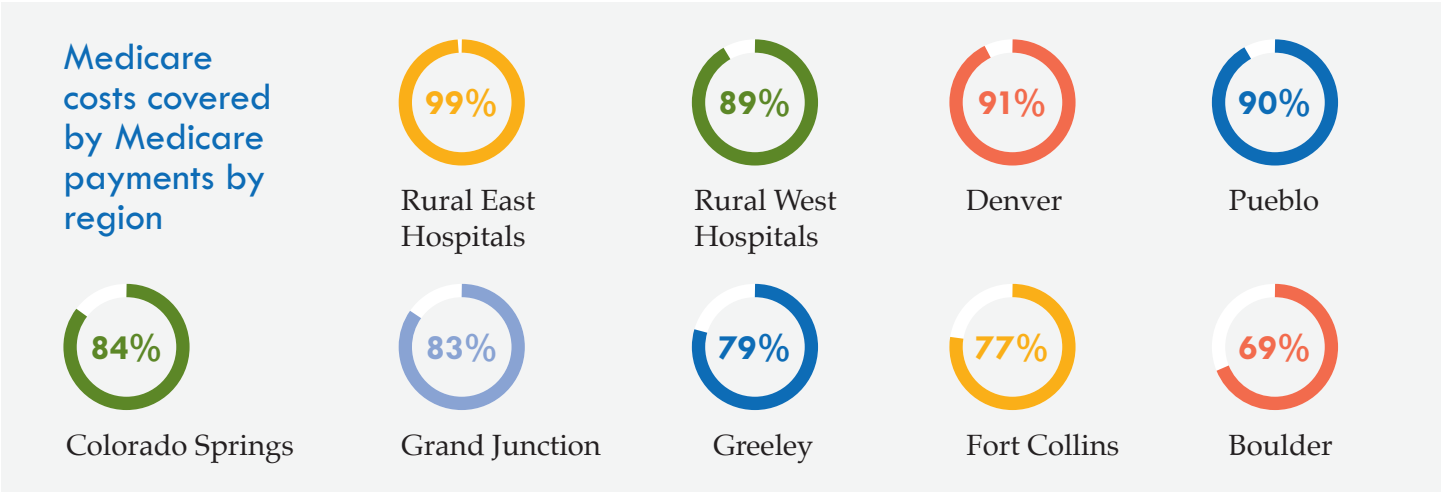
uncompensated care (5% national)

**2.7%**

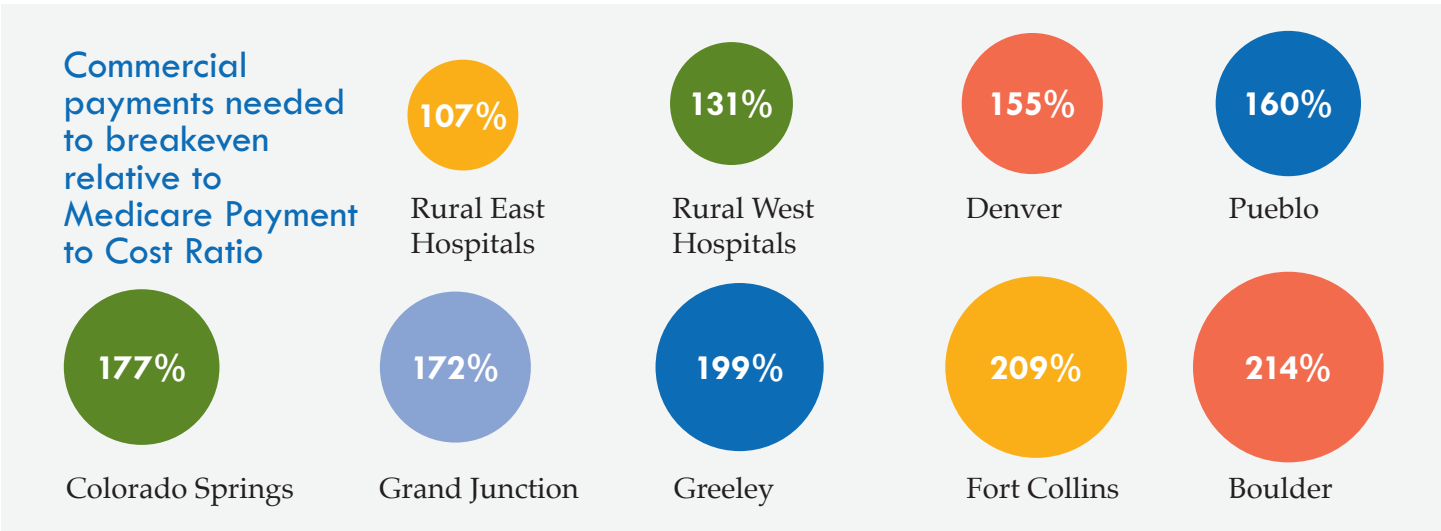
unreimbursed cost of Medicaid, CHIP, and state & local indigent care programs (3.8% national)

HOSPITAL FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

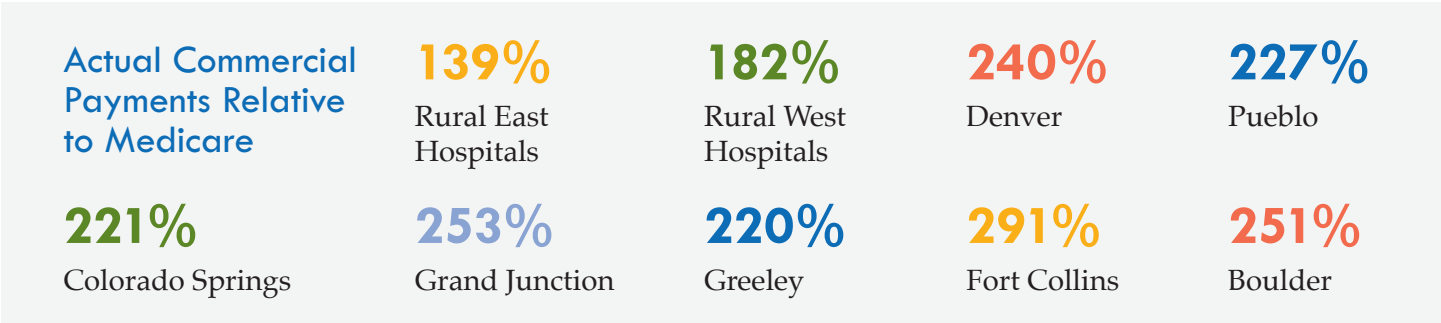
Benchmarking hospital payments to Medicare rates can encourage cost efficiency and financial sustainability. Rural Colorado hospitals generally see Medicare cover a higher proportion of costs but receive lower relative commercial payments. Consequently, changes to Medicare and Medicaid policies would 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)		Nurse Practitioners (NPs)
	<b>121,437</b> job postings		<b>5,288</b> job postings
	<b>23,412</b> unique job postings		<b>1,323</b> unique job postings
	<b>~5</b> postings/unique job		<b>~4</b> 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
- OB/GYN



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



**40% of healthcare employees**

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

Top Reported Causes of Burnout

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



## 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 <sup>1</sup>	Pediatric	1 to 1,207 <sup>1</sup>
1 to 3,945 <sup>2</sup>	OBGYNs	1 to 3,108 <sup>2</sup>
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
<sup>1</sup> under age 18 <sup>2</sup> women 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**

Urban

**9 min**

Rural

**13 min**

Frontier



### Incident transport time

**13 min**

Urban

**15 min**

Rural

**22 min**

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%**

Urban

**14.6%**

Rural

**10.3%**

Frontier



### Falls

**11%**

Urban

**12.7%**

Rural

**13%**

Frontier



### Breathing problem

**9.2%**

Urban

**8.6%**

Rural

**9.4%**

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**

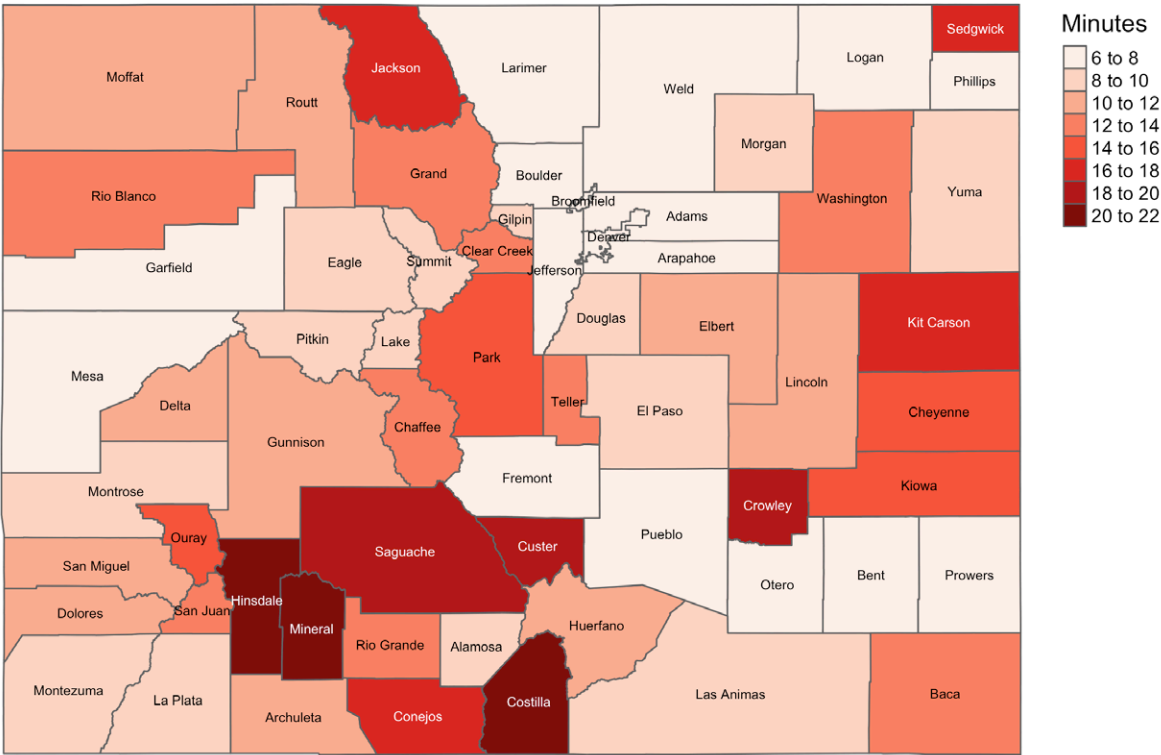
in frontier counties

36%  
volunteer

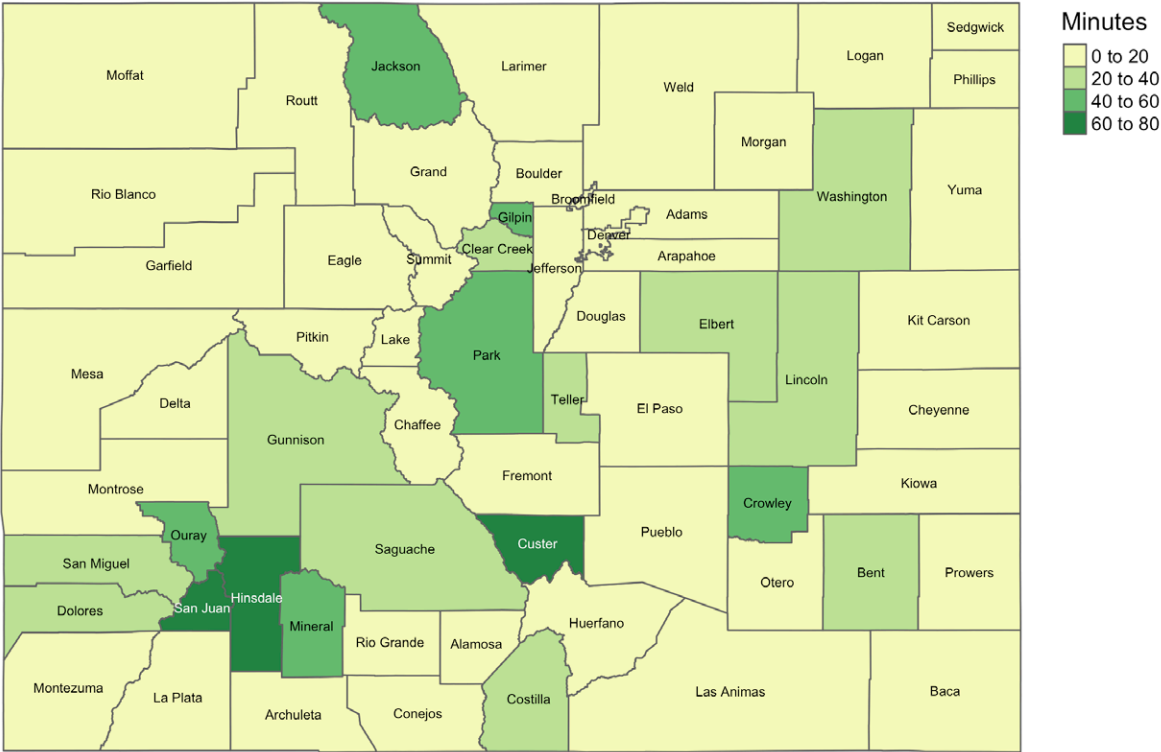
40%  
mixed

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 <sup>1</sup>	\$22.00	\$22.00
Mileage Reimbursement <sup>2</sup>	\$165.00	\$187.00
One Day of Lost Wages <sup>3</sup>	\$235.00	\$422.00
One Night of Accomodations <sup>4</sup>	\$163.00	\$585.00
One Day Federal Meal Per Diem <sup>5</sup>	\$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 Company <sup>1</sup>	\$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**

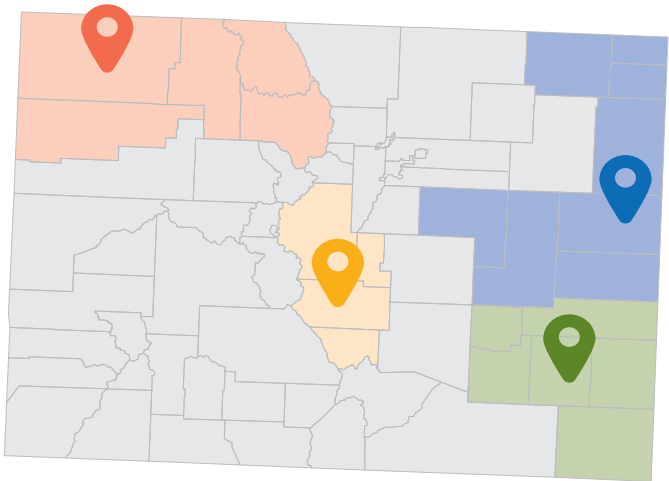
Rates for these categories were higher in rural Colorado

**70% rural      48% urban**

**44% rural      31% urban**

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

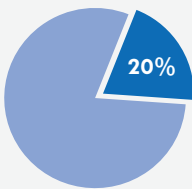
## Counties with the greatest difficulty securing transportation for medical appointments



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



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%

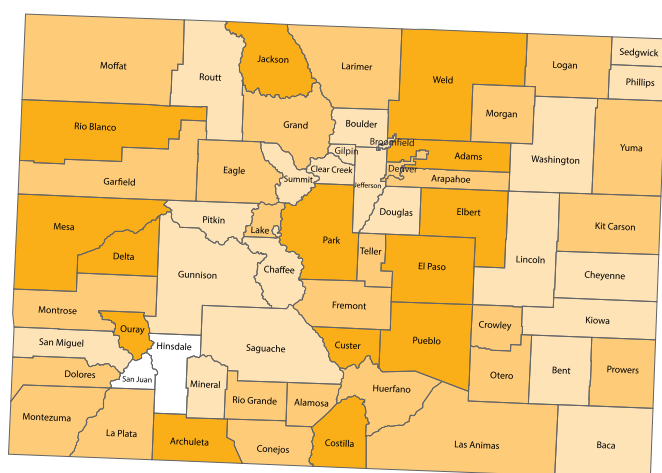
urban



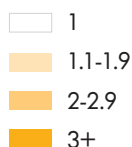
50% of Coloradoans live in a licensed childcare desert

11 rural counties

7 urban counties



Children per childcare slot



Any county with 3 or more children per childcare slot is considered a licensed childcare desert

# 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

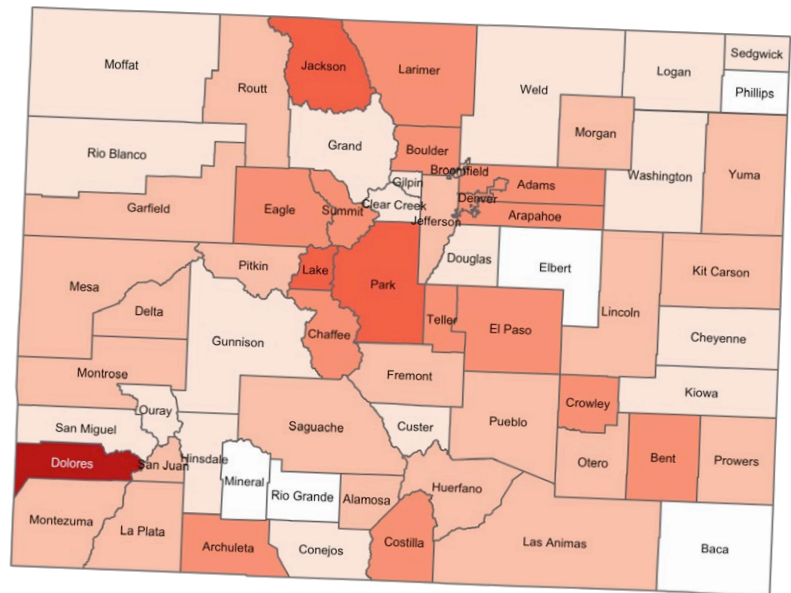
## 2023 CHILD CARE COST BURDEN

**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%)



% of Household Income

20-25	30-35	40-45	50-55
25-30	35-40	45-50	

## 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

**\$4.3 billion**

in Central Mountains

**\$3 billion**

in Pikes Peak region

**\$2.6 billion**

in Southwestern Colorado & San Luis Valley

**\$1.4 billion**

in Northwest Colorado

**\$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



**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**

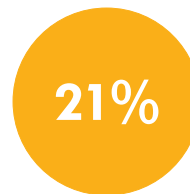
in crops (including  
nursery and greenhouse)



**\$6.4 billion in livestock**

(including poultry and their products)

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



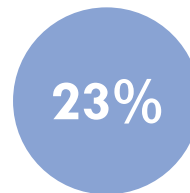
**21%**

estimated decrease  
in Colorado's 2023 net  
farm income



**\$1.8 billion net cash**

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



**23%**

estimated decrease in  
U.S. farm income in 2023

# Renewable Energy



**39%**

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



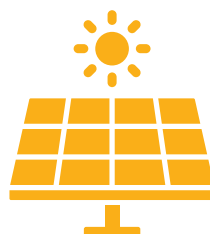
Colorado's use of wind power was

**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**

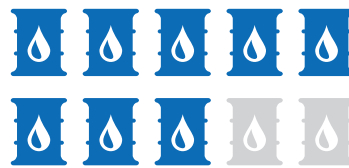


37.5%  
lower than  
the all-time  
high in 2022



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**



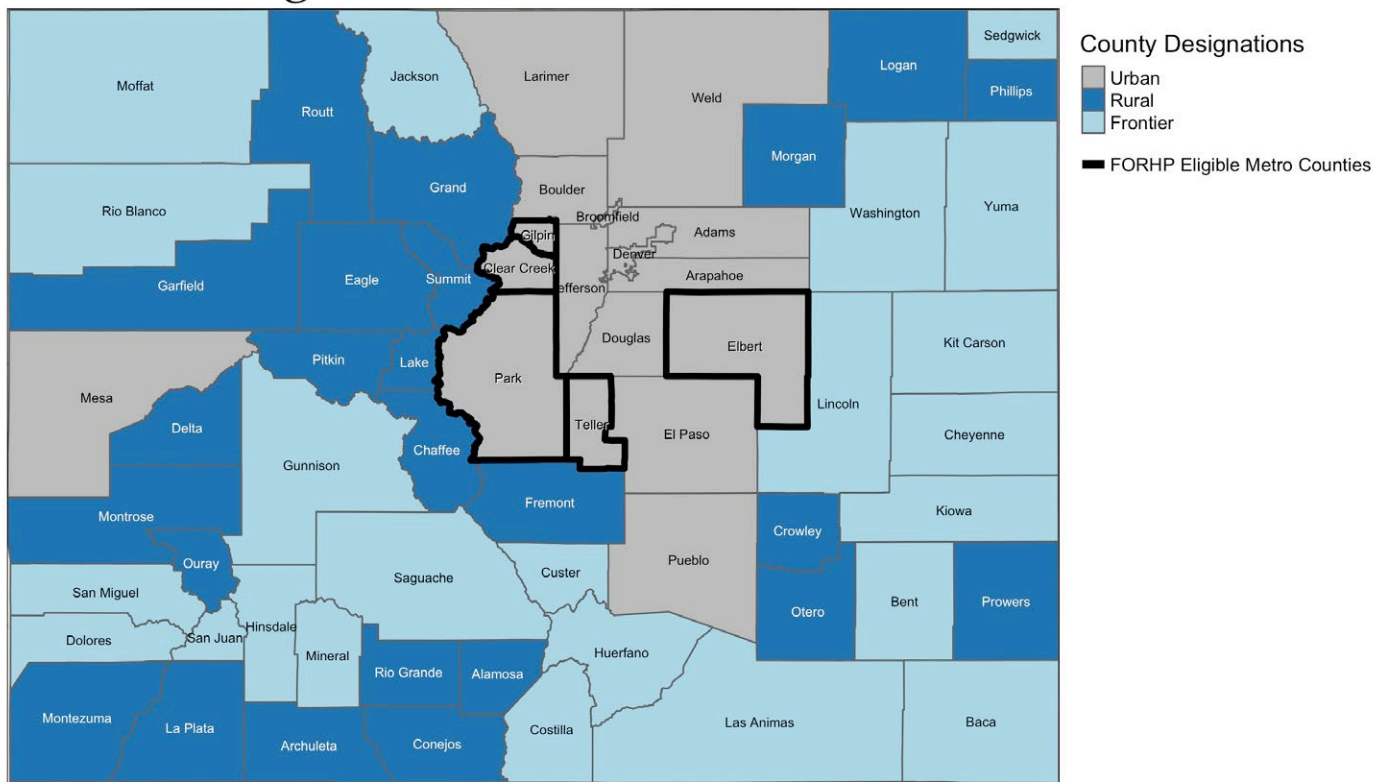
The combined production  
value was about \$915 million



# Appendix

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# 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.

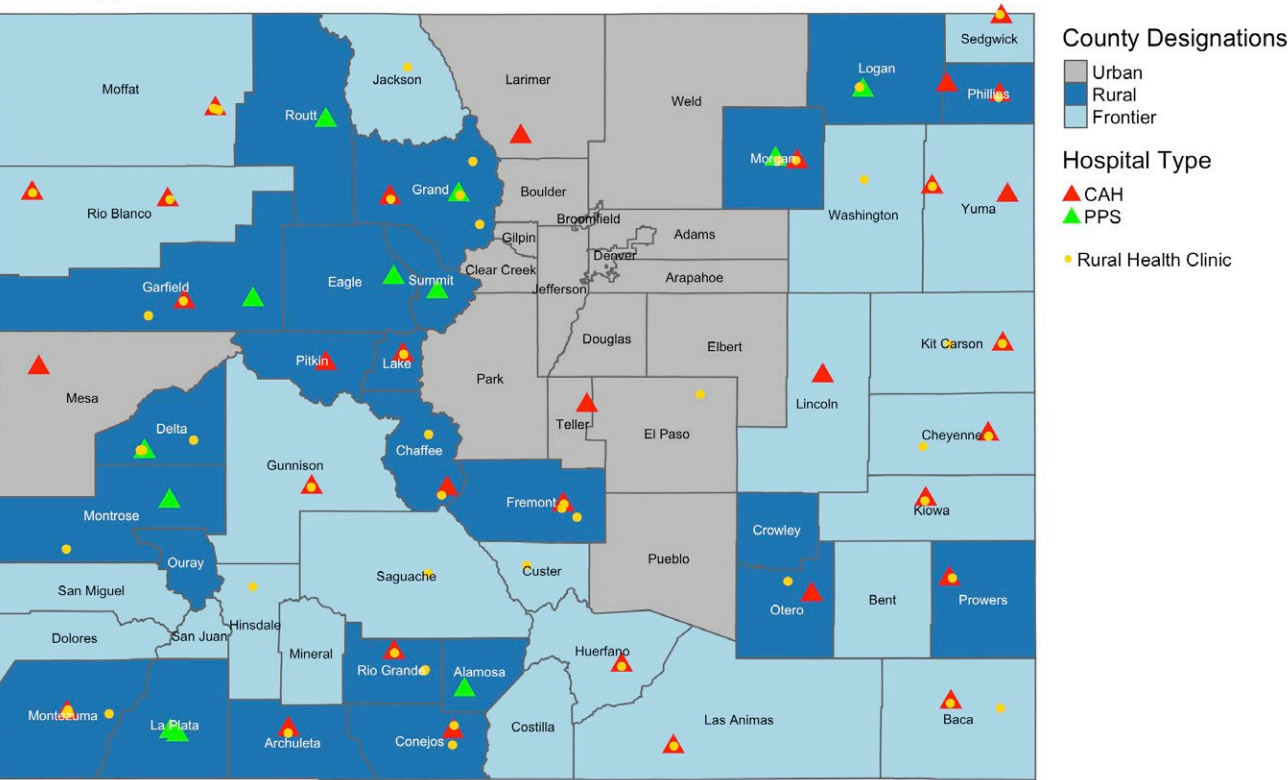
## FRONTIER COUNTIES

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

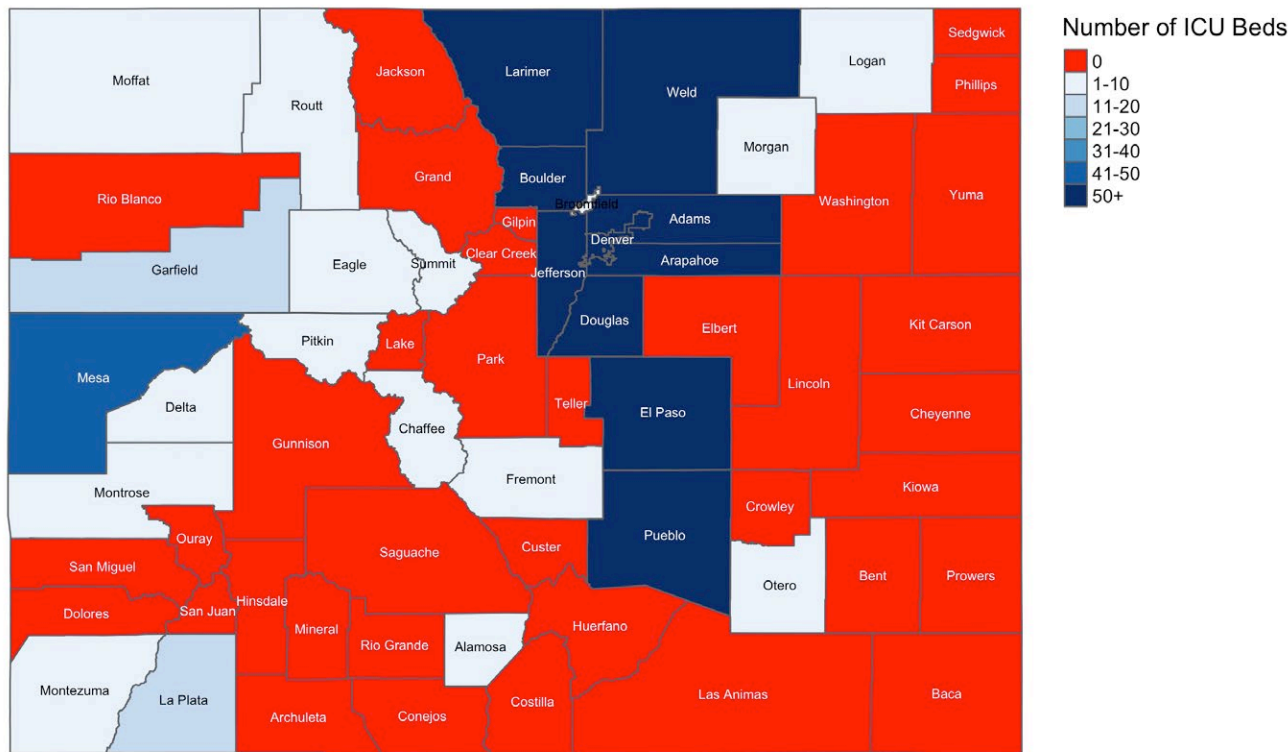
For additional information on the varying definitions of “rural” and “frontier,” please visit [ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural](http://ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural)



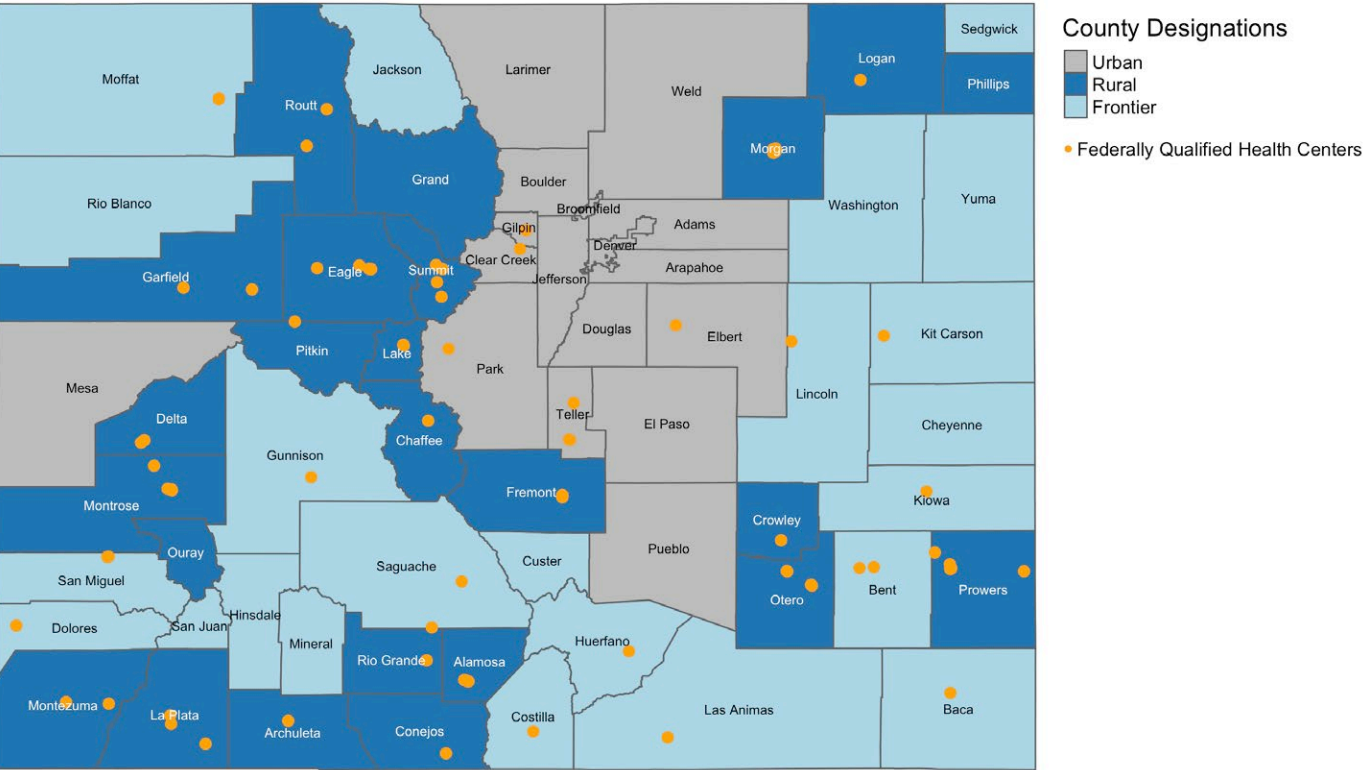
# Hospitals and RHCs in Rural Colorado



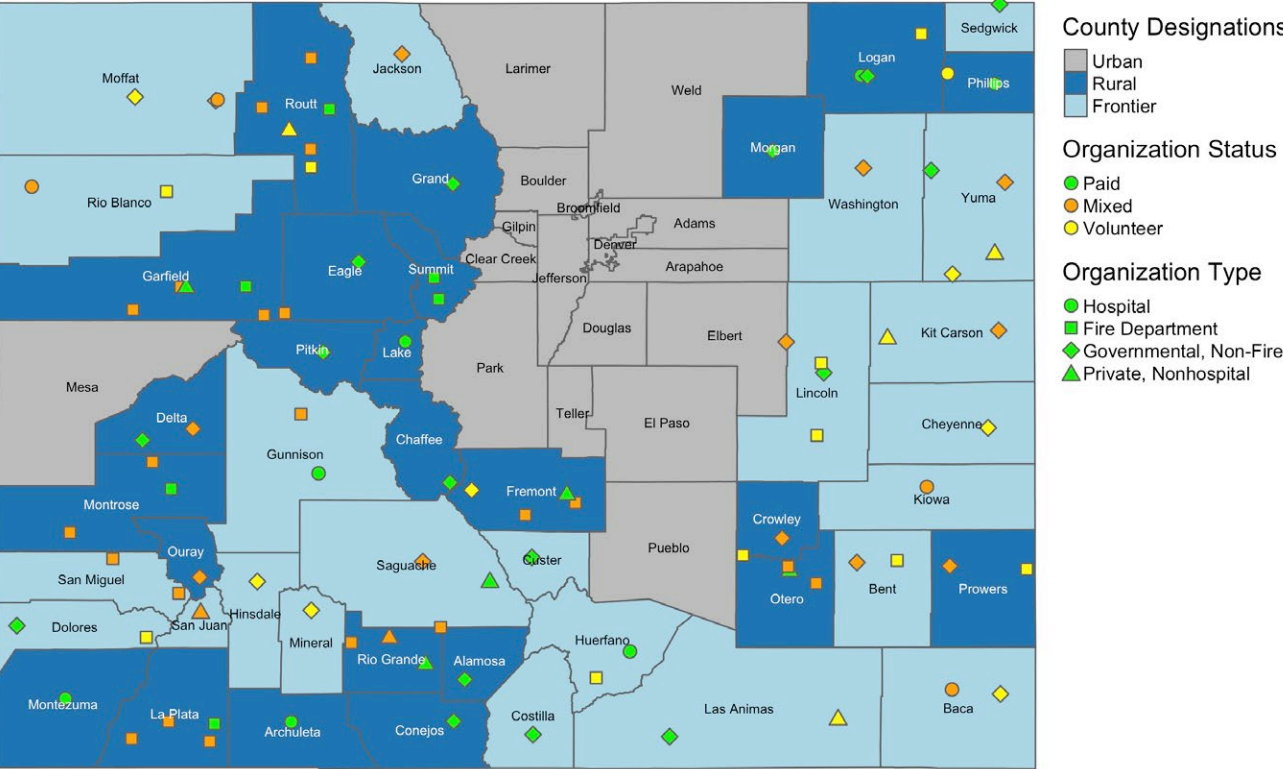
# Intensive Care Beds (2024)



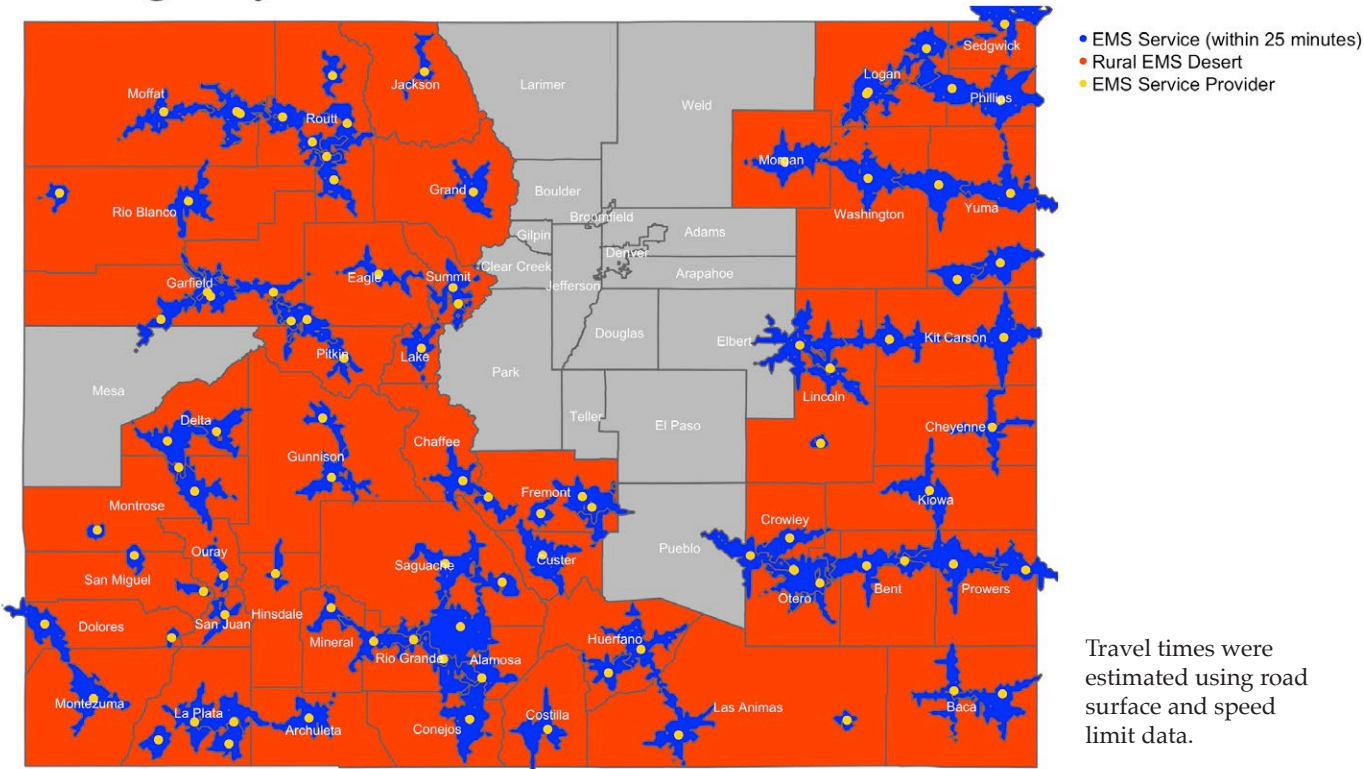
# FQHCs in Rural Colorado



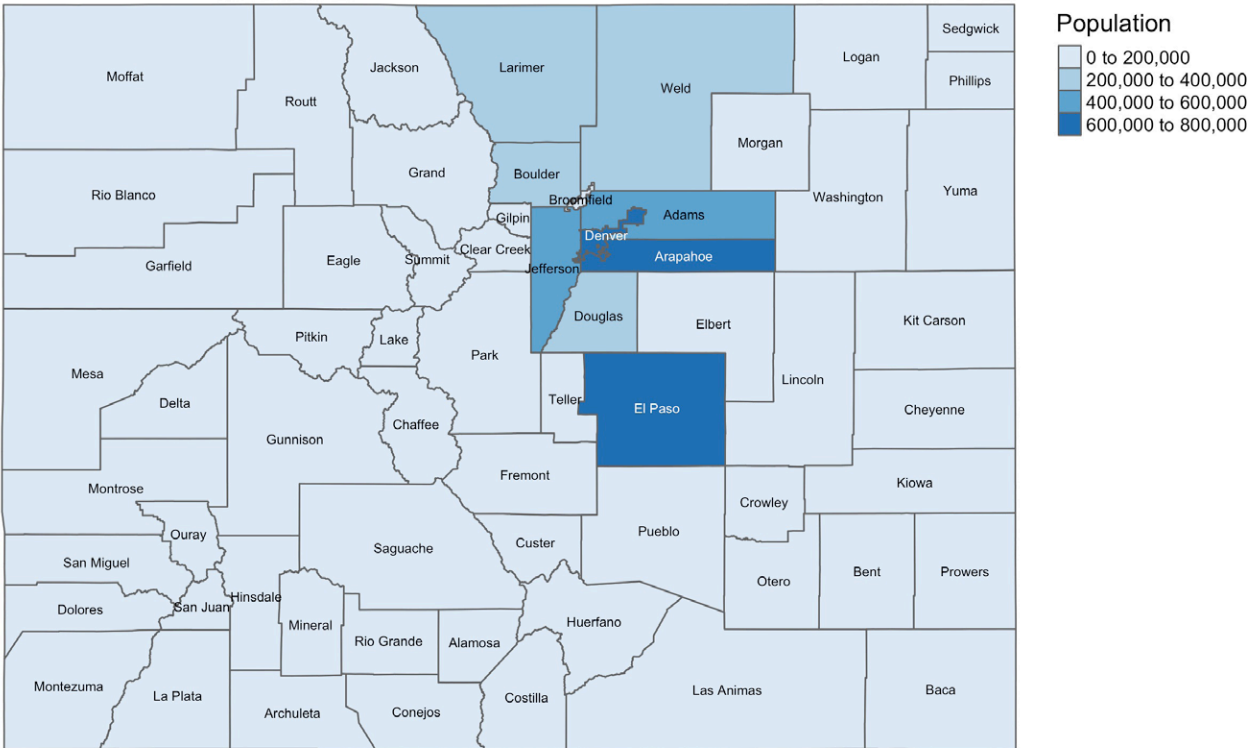
# EMS Agencies in Rural Colorado



# Emergency Medical Service Deserts (2023)

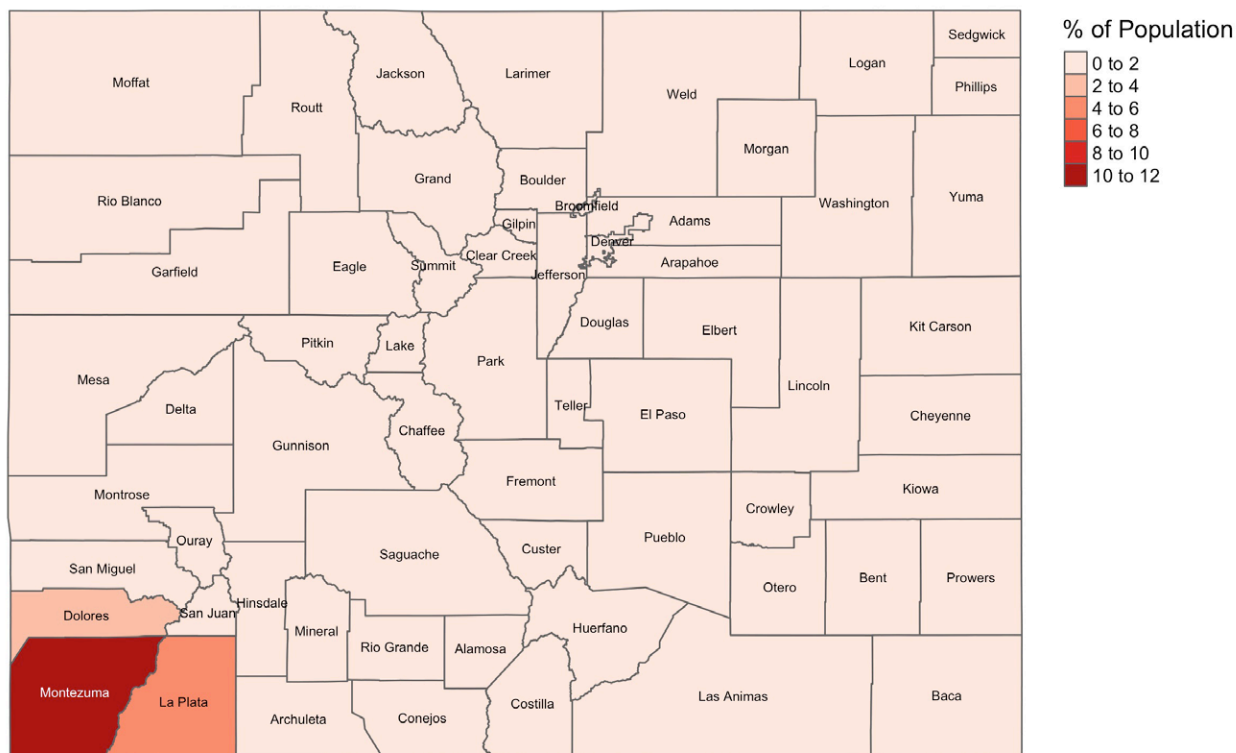


# Population Estimates (2023)

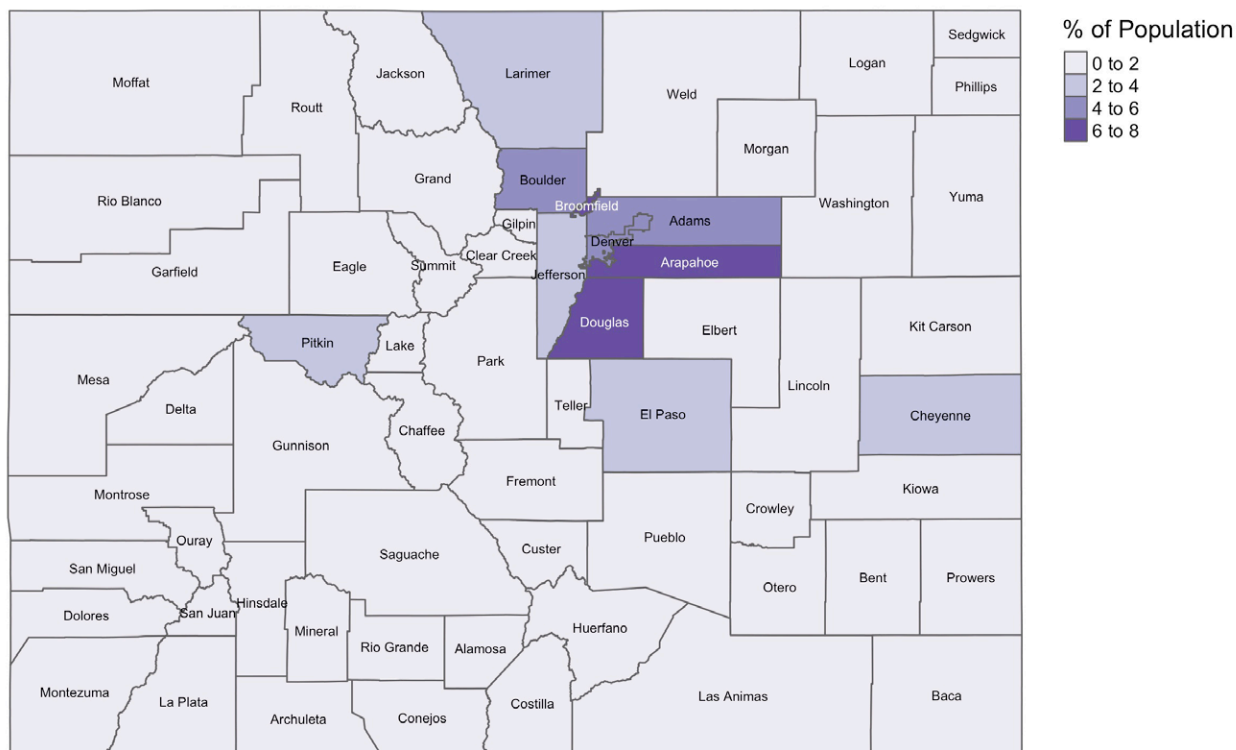




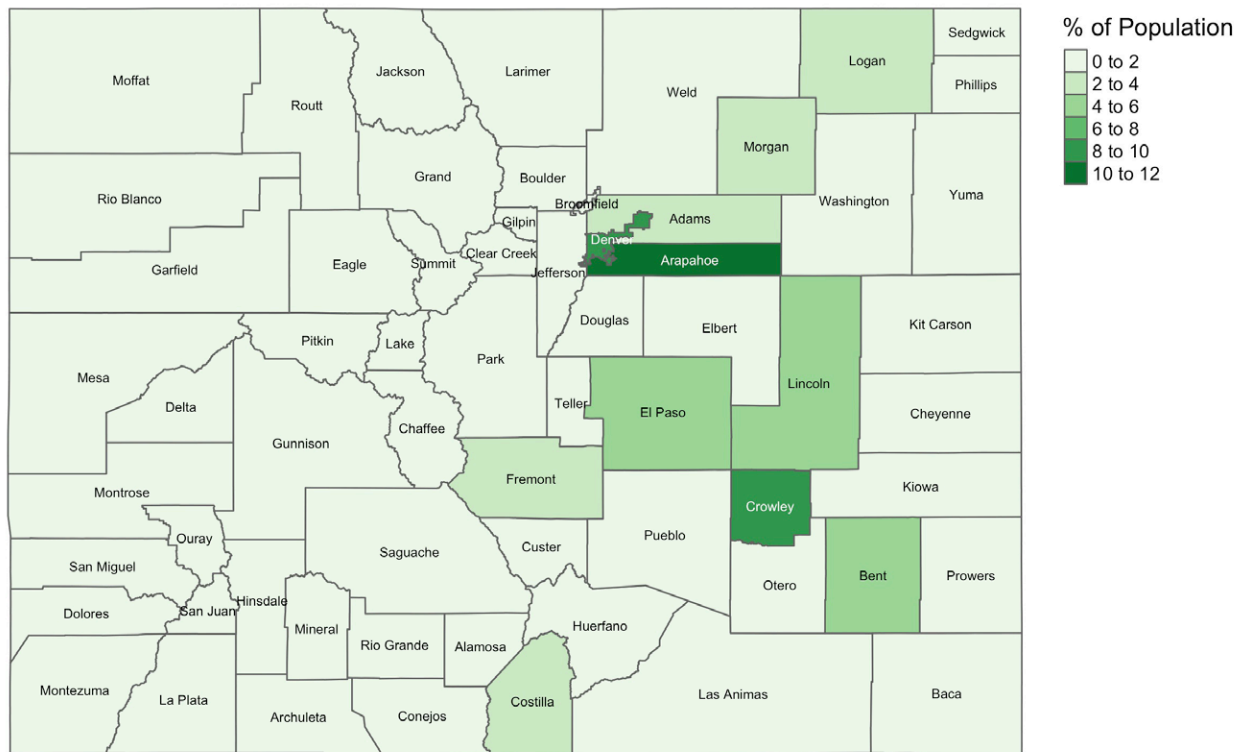
# American Indian & Alaska Native Population (2022)



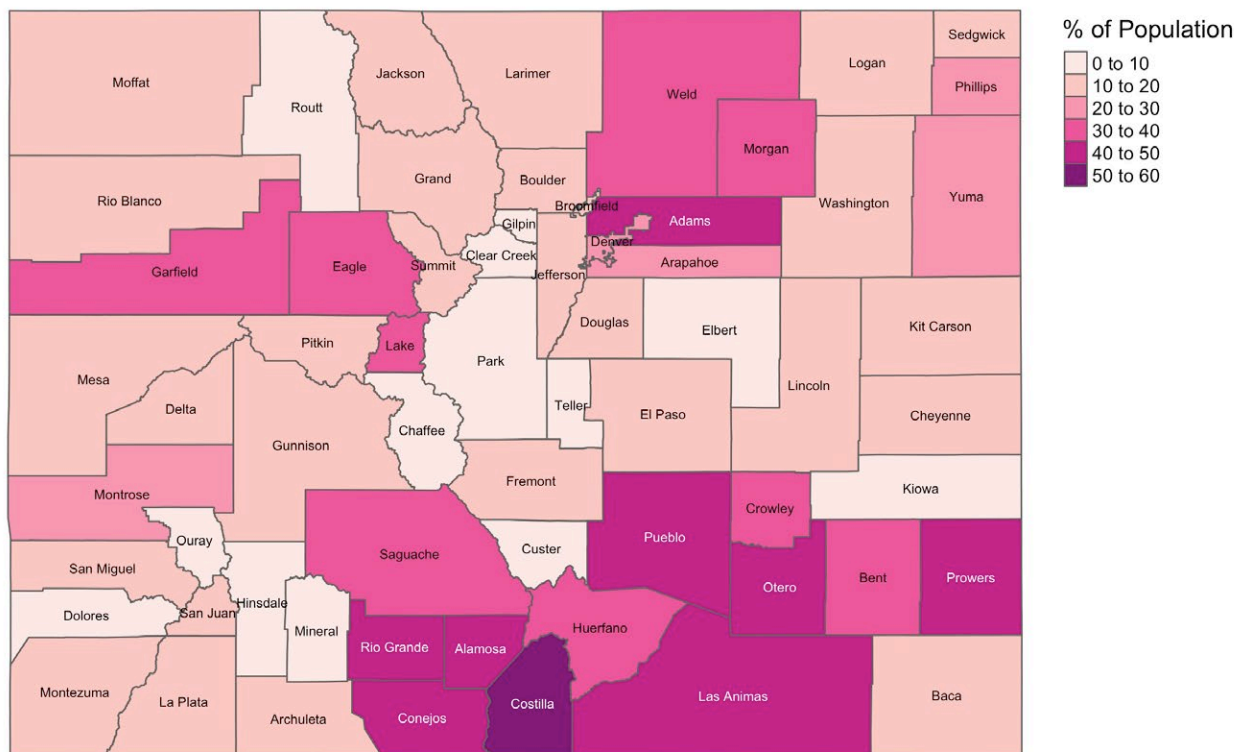
# Asian Population (2022)



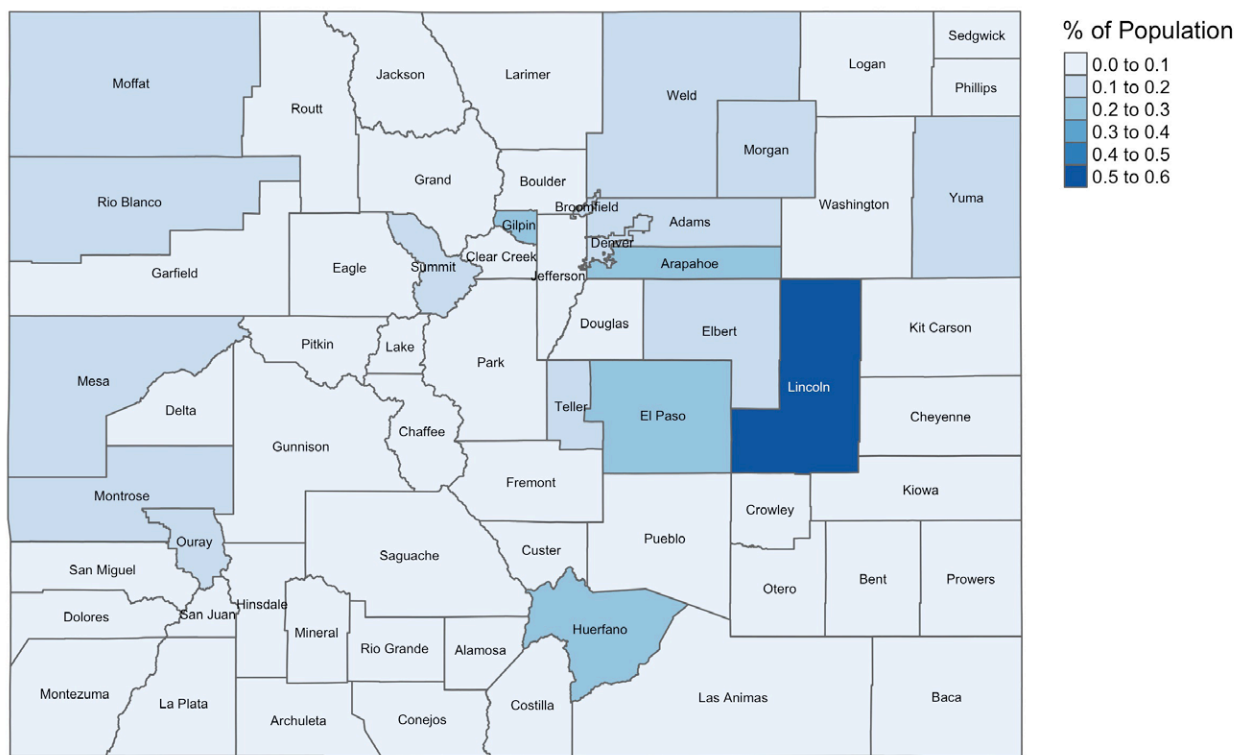
# Black or African American Population (2022)



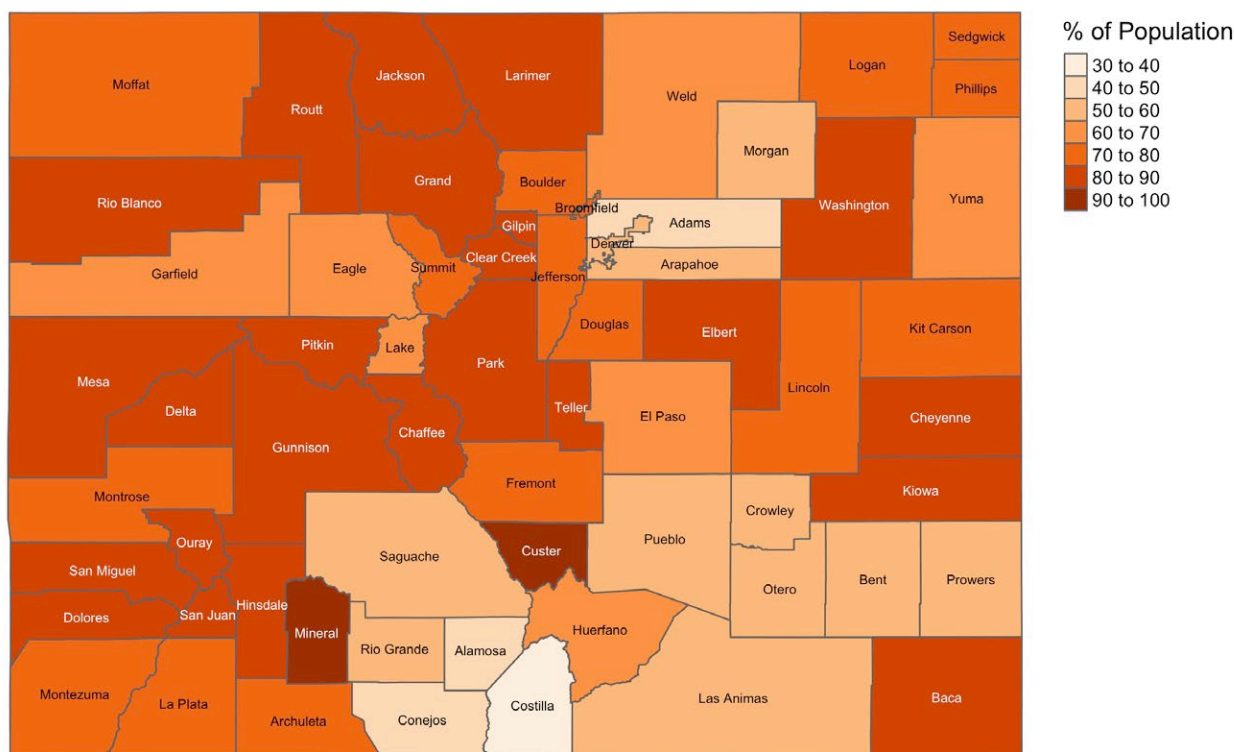
# Hispanic Population (2022)



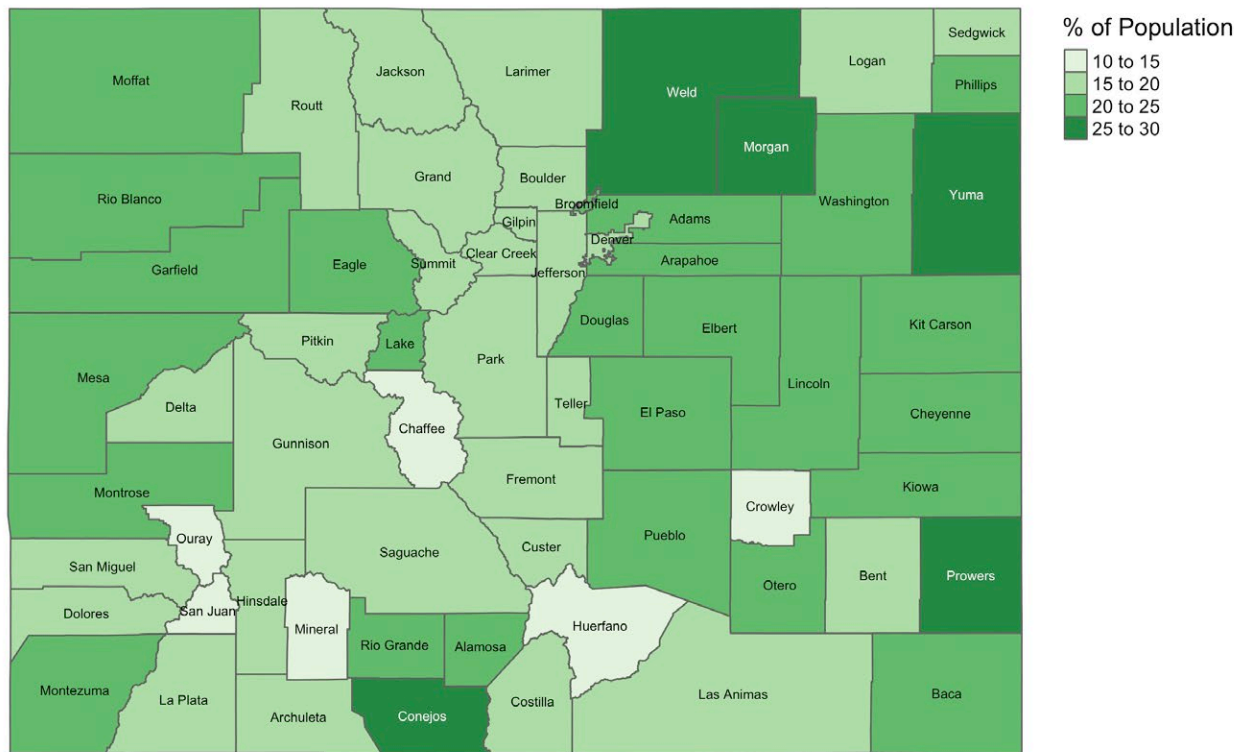
# Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Population (2022)



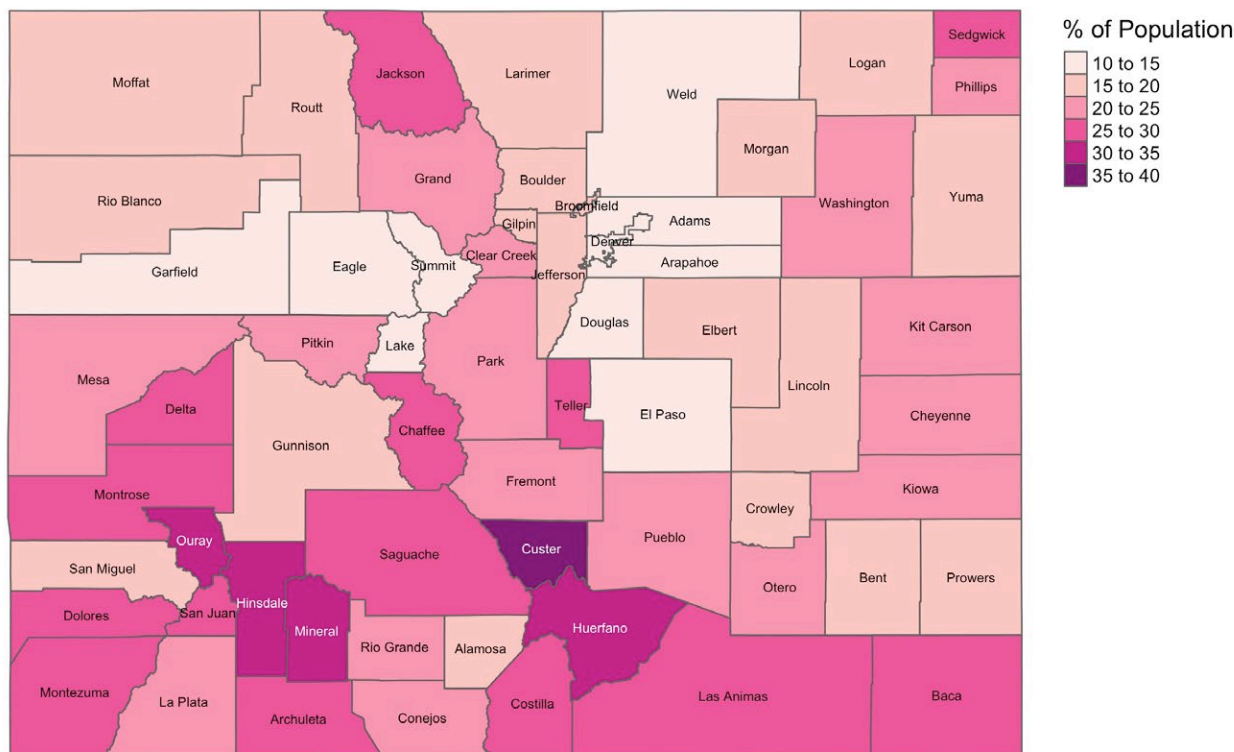
# White Non-Hispanic Population (2022)



# Population under 18 (2022)

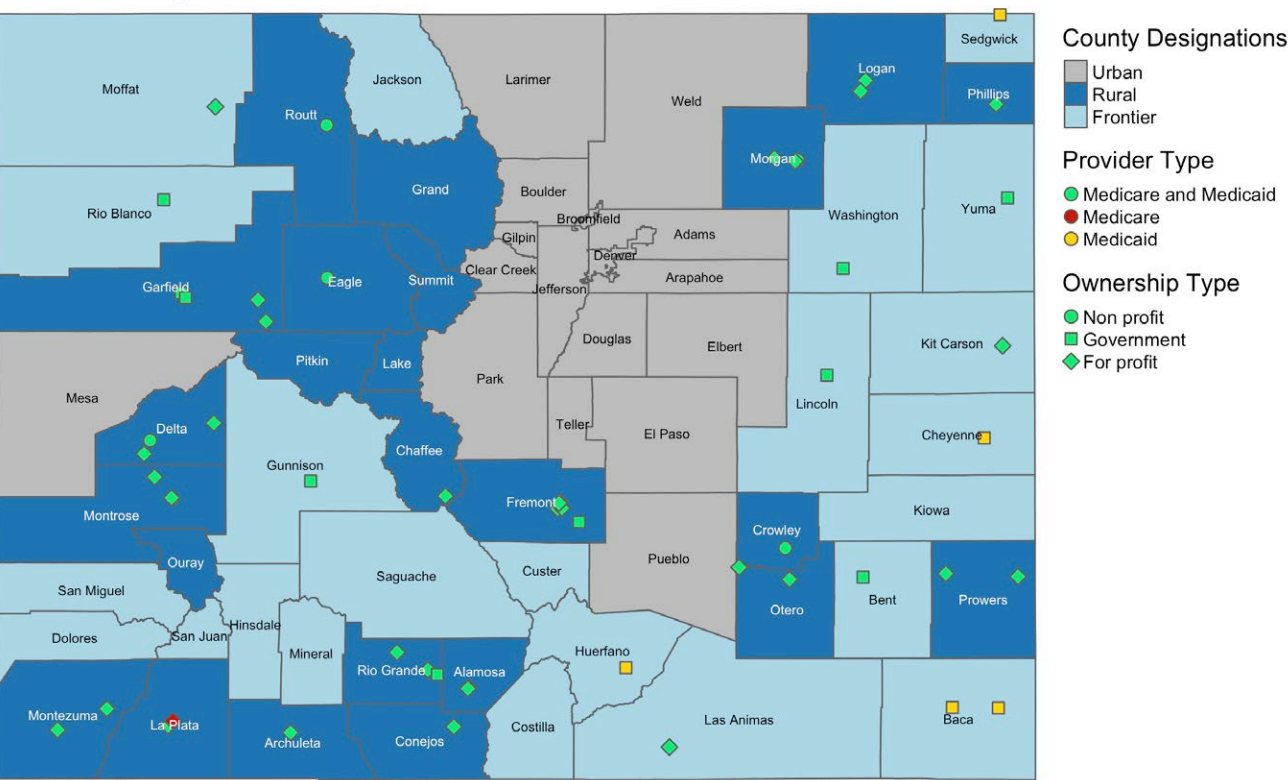


# Population 65+ (2022)

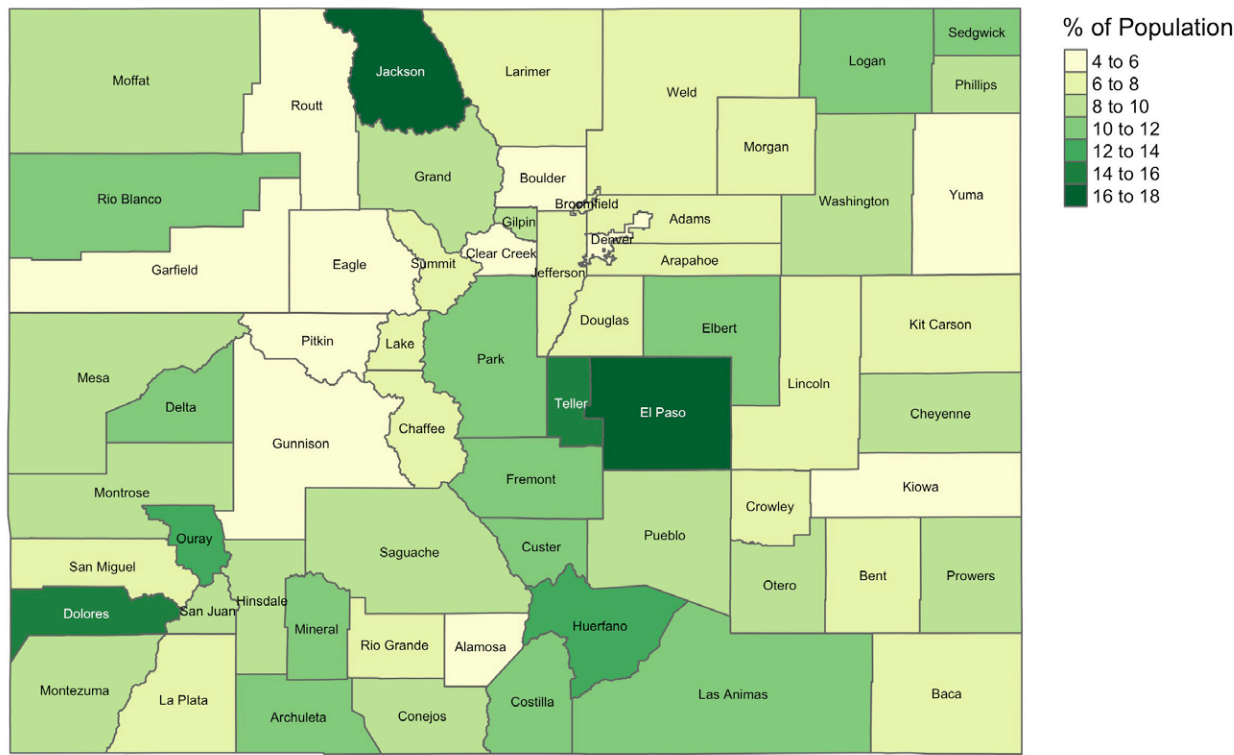




# Nursing Homes in Rural Colorado

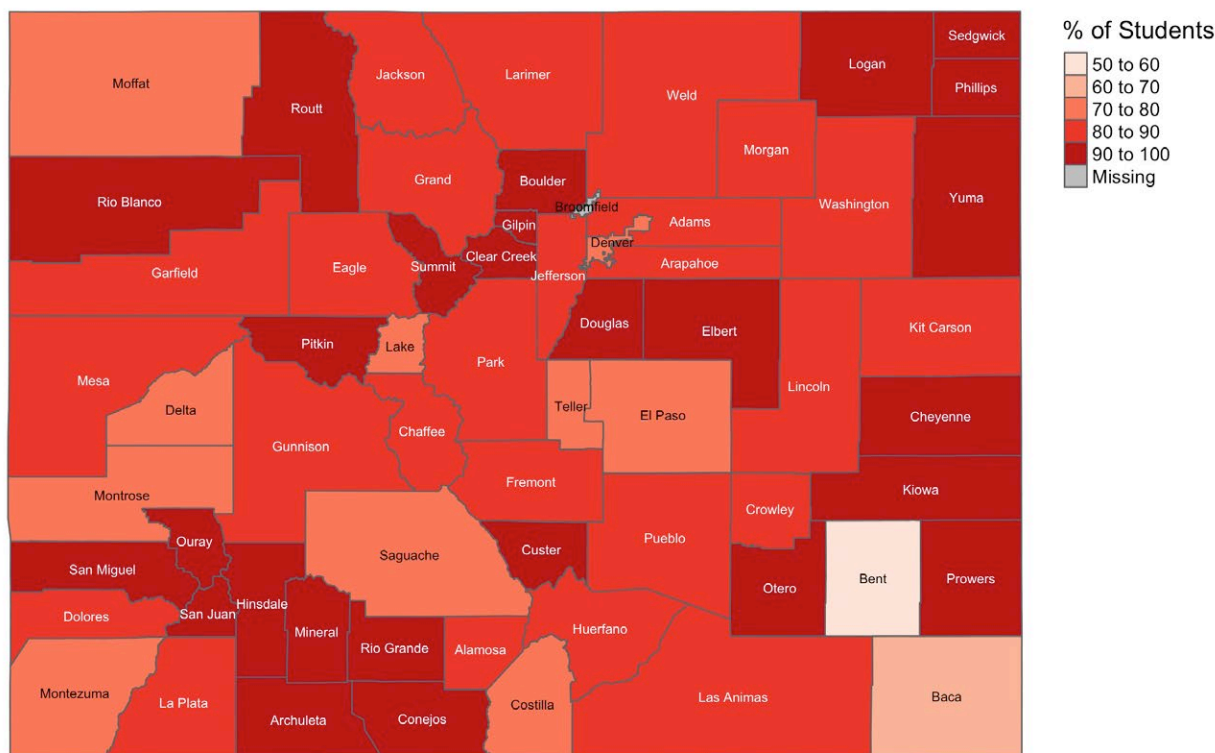


# Veteran Population (2022)

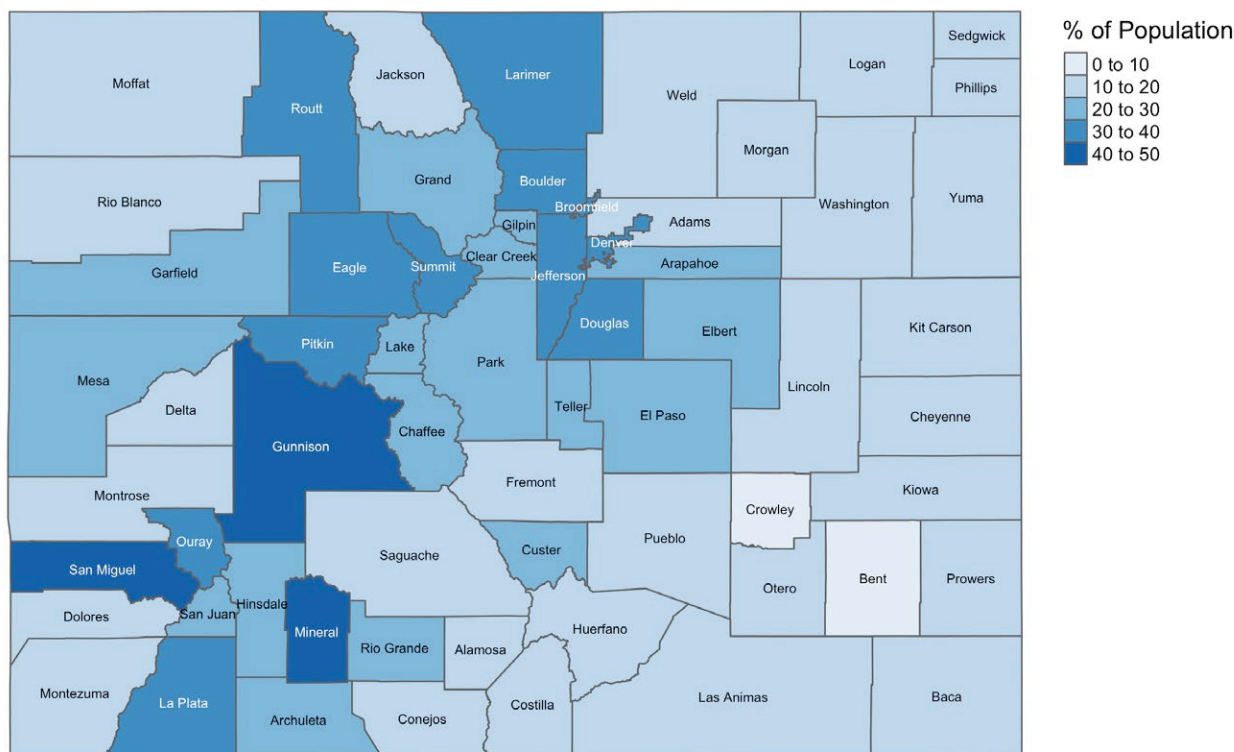




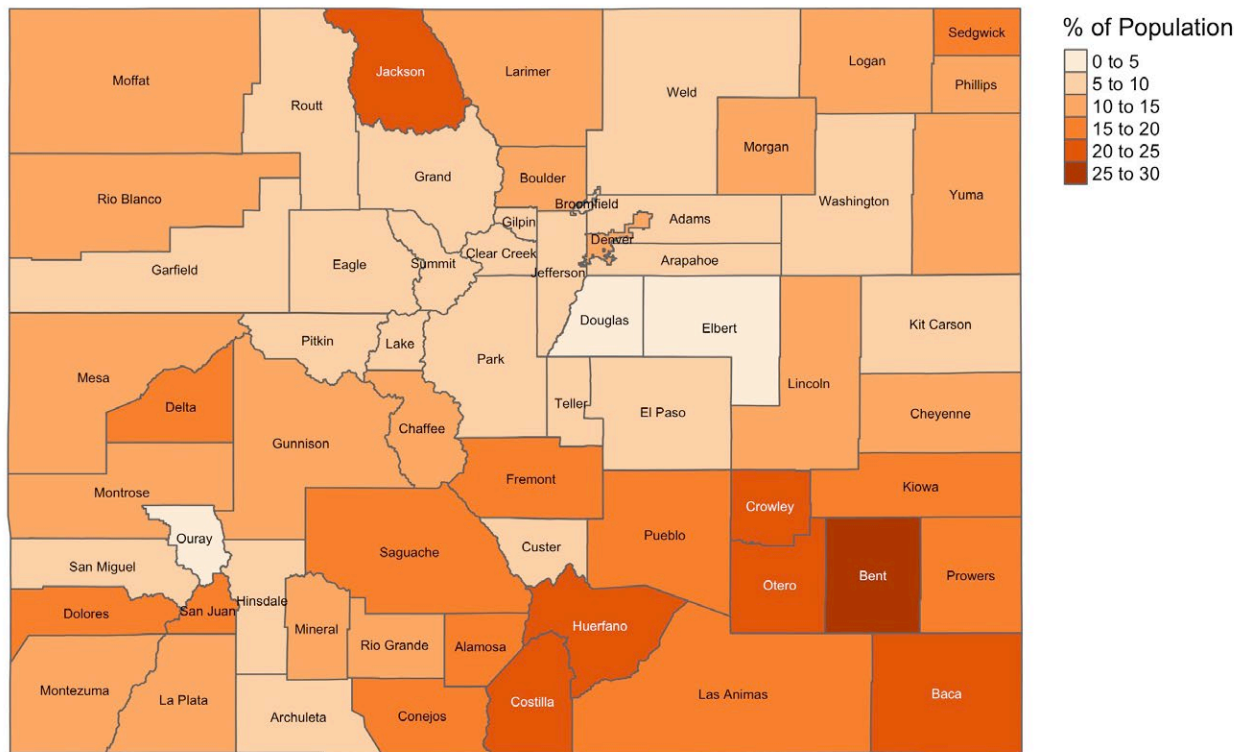
# 4-Year Highschool Graduation Rate (2023)



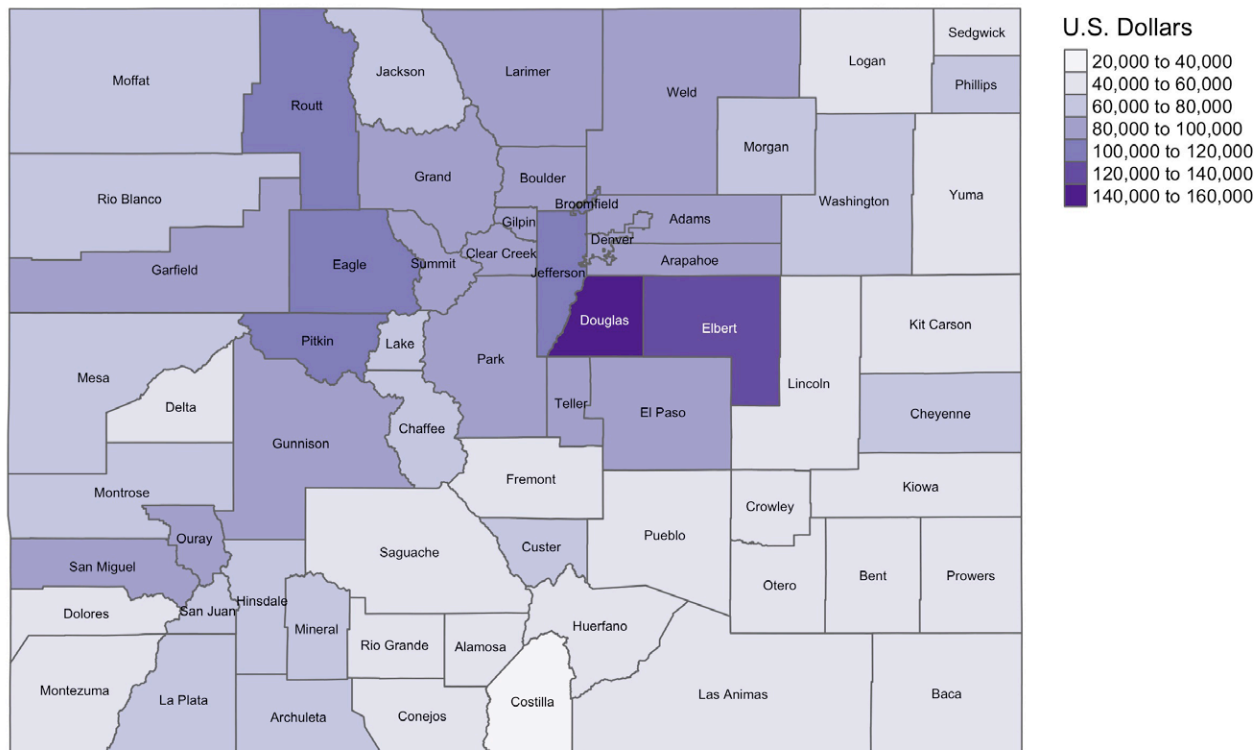
# Bachelors Degree or Higher (2022)



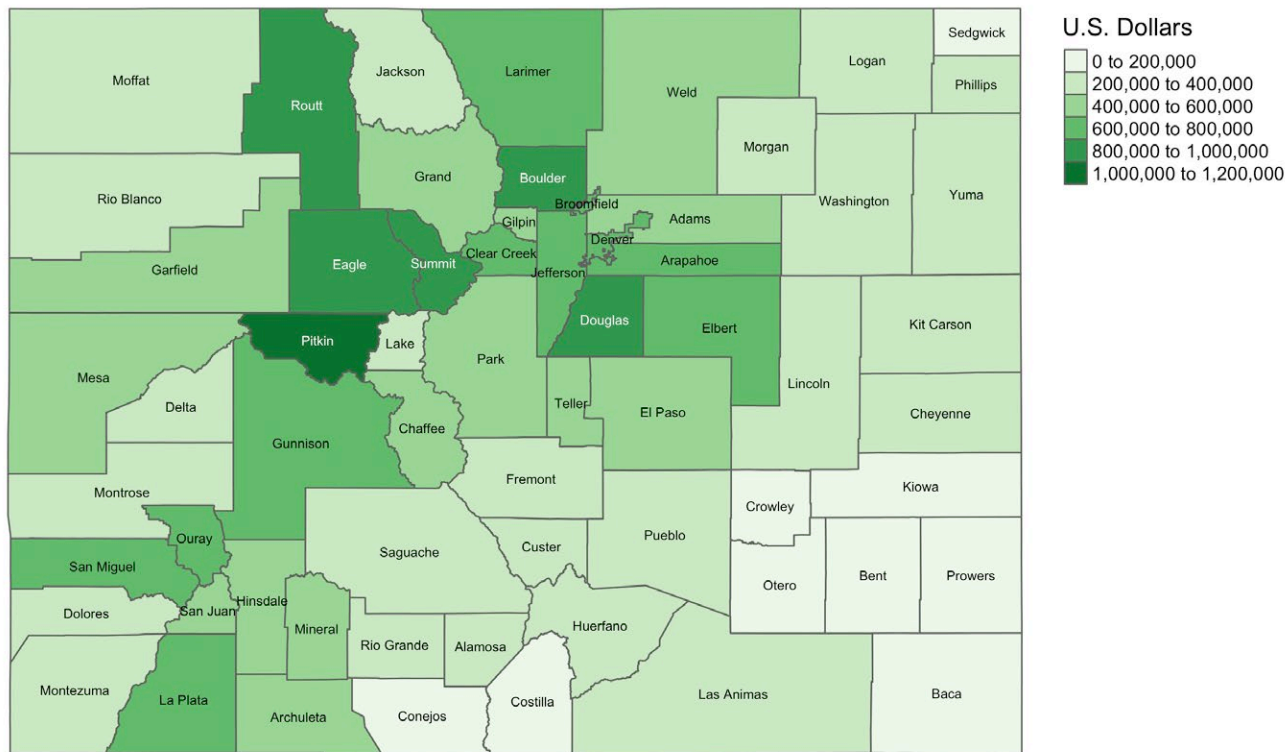
# Population Experiencing Poverty (2022)



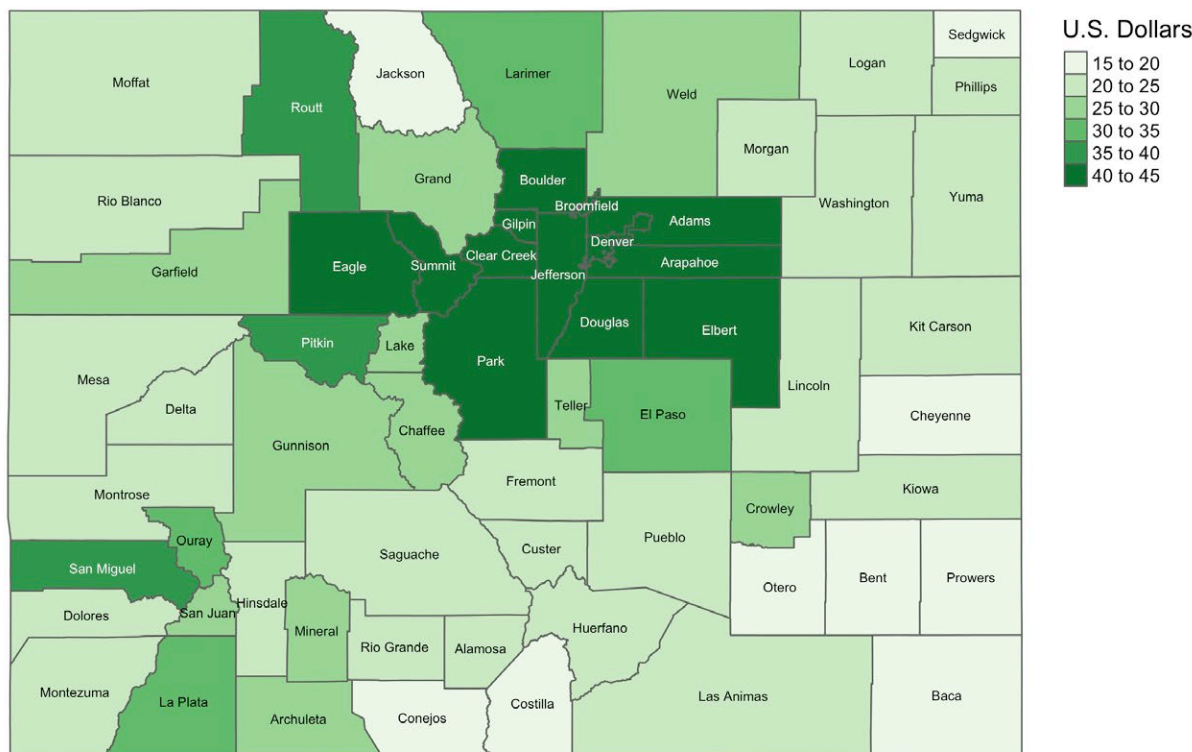
# Household Median Income (2022)



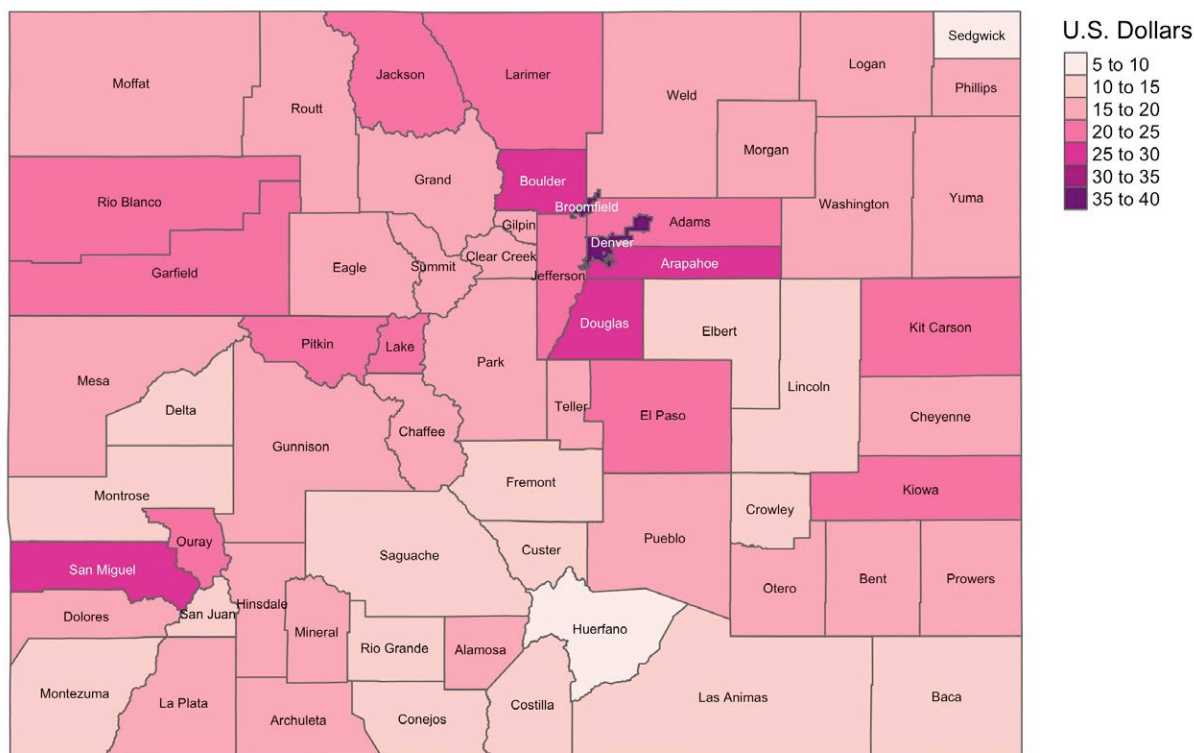
# Median Home Price (Q1 2024)



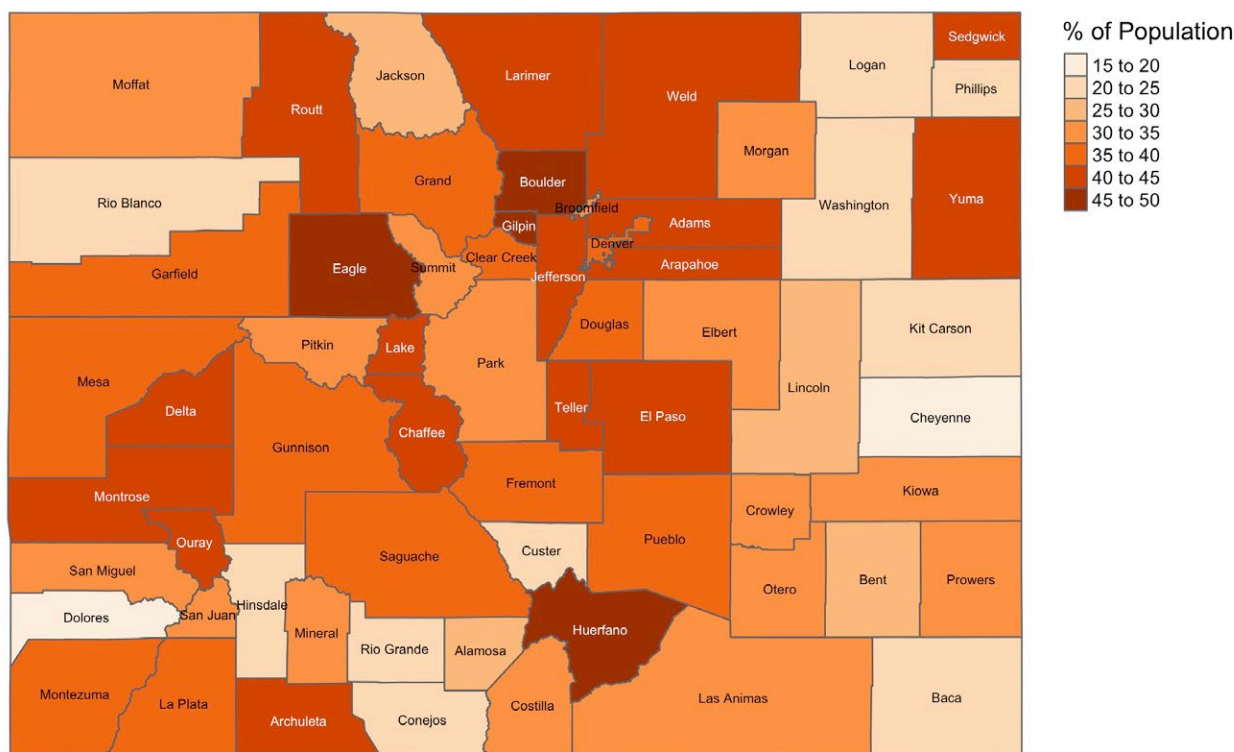
# Hourly Wage Needed for a 2 Bed Rental (2024)



# Average Renter Hourly Wage (2024)

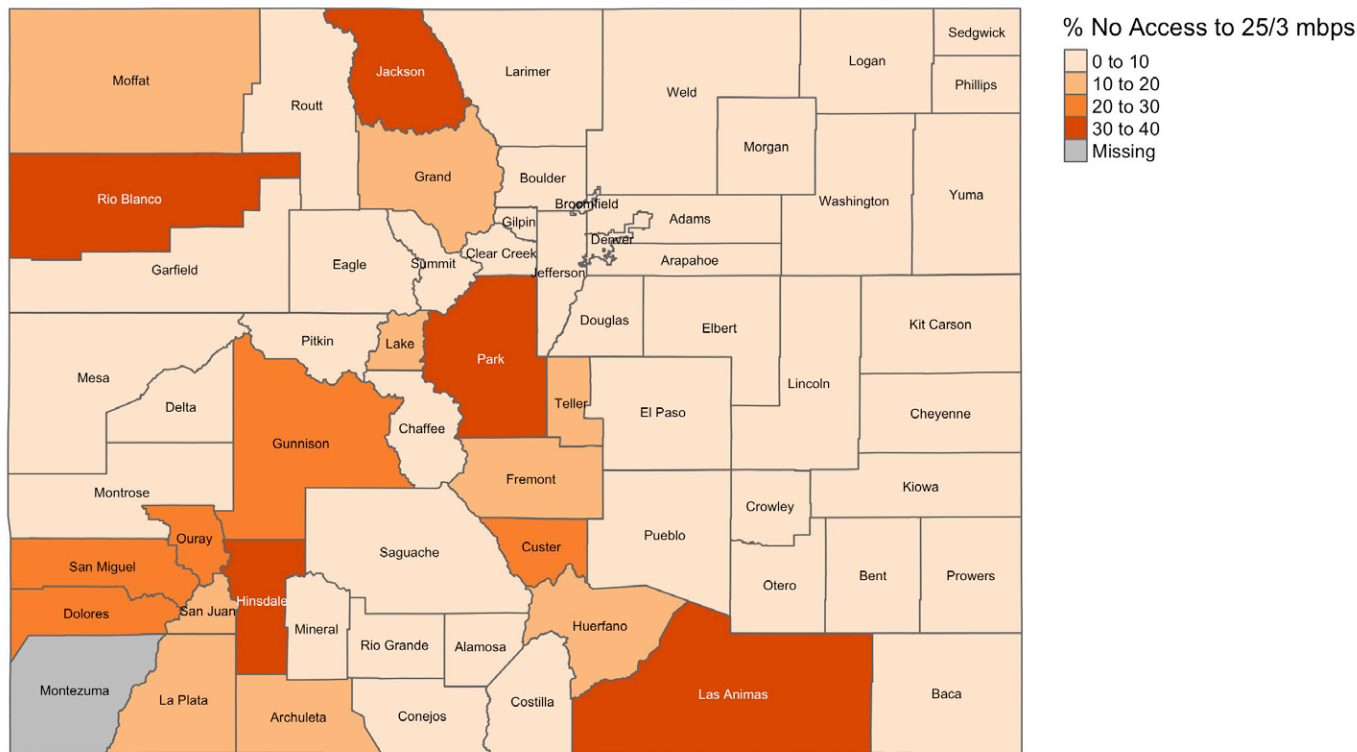


# Spending 35%+ of Income on Rent (2022)

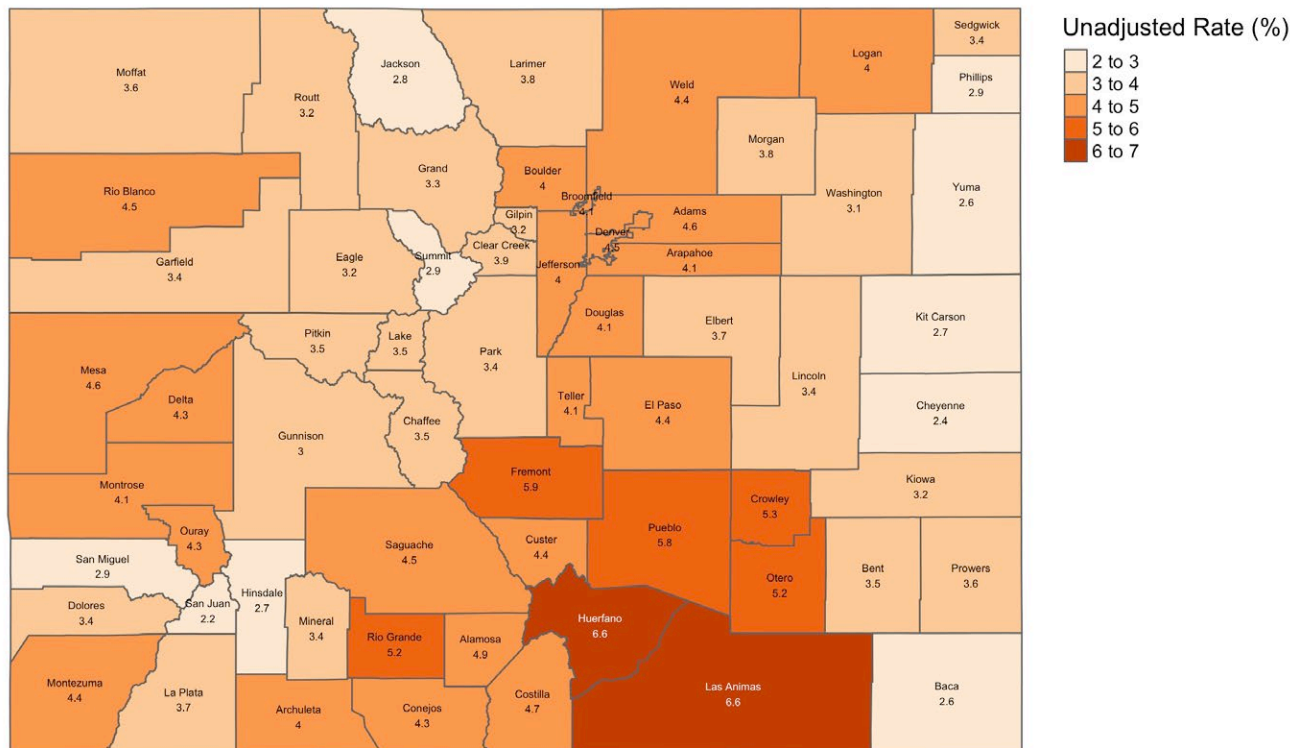




# Colorado Broadband: Unserved (2024)

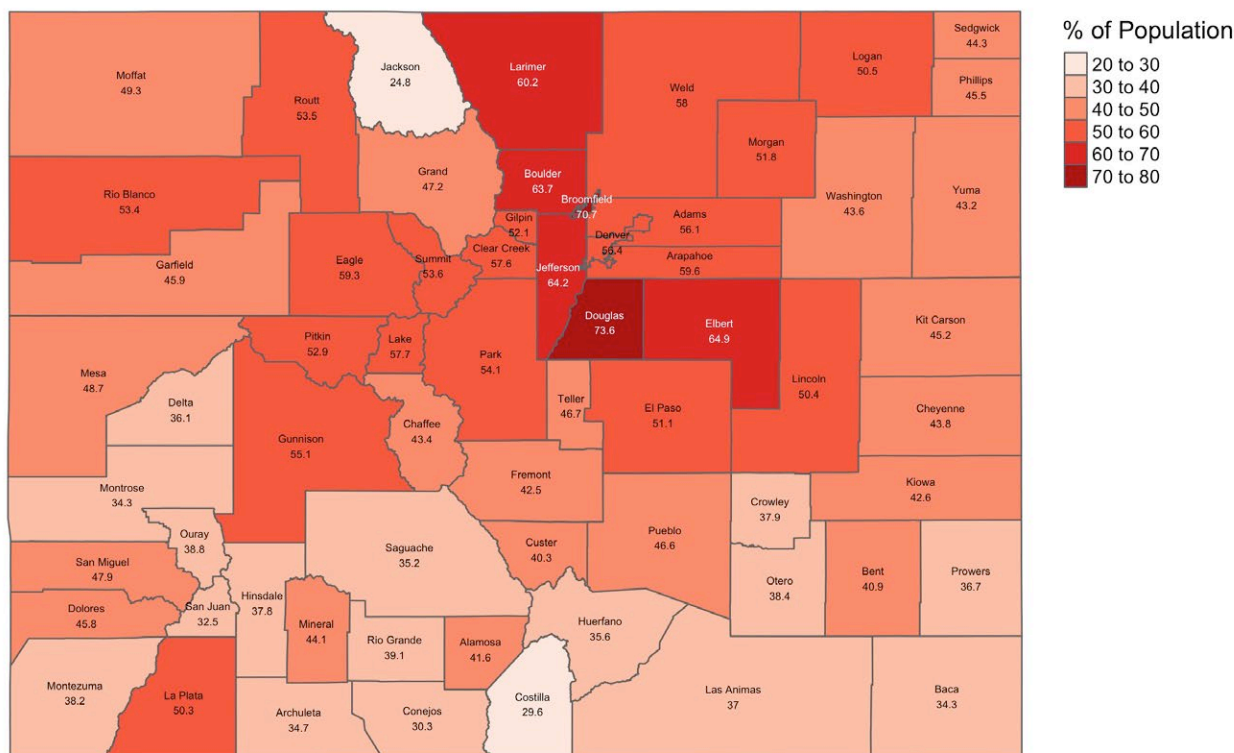


# Unemployment (Jul 2024)

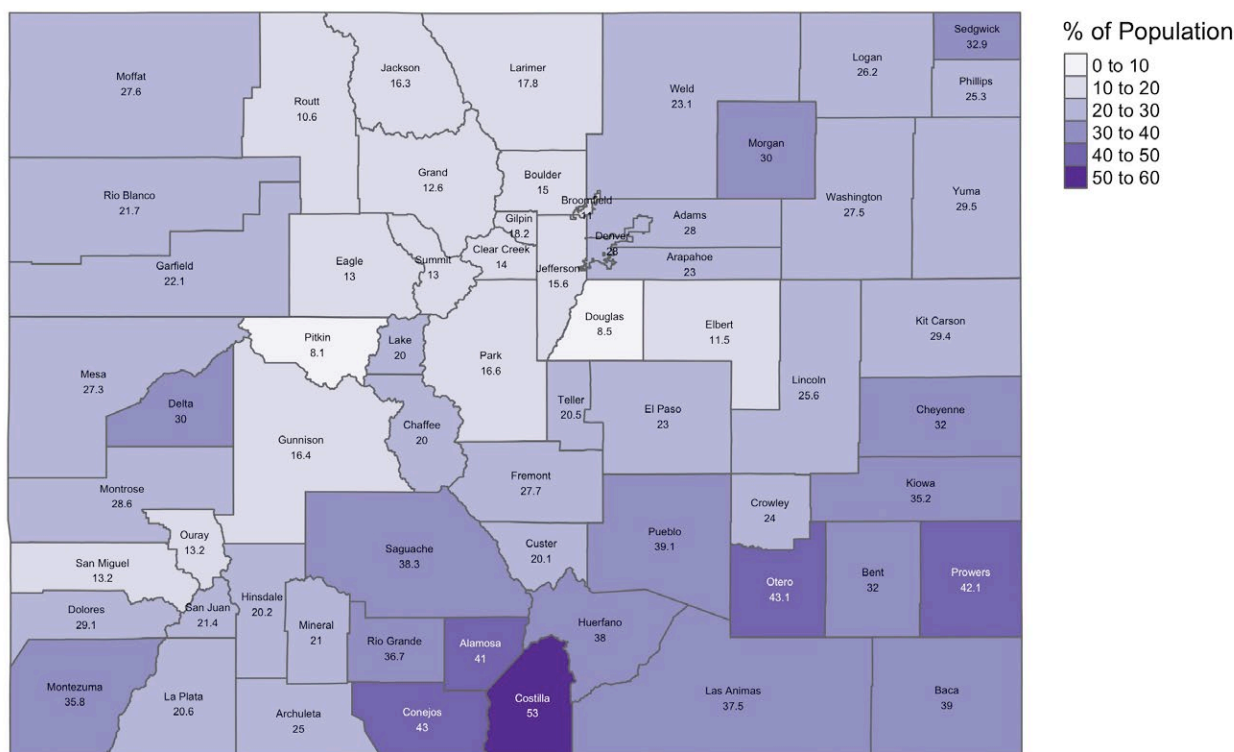




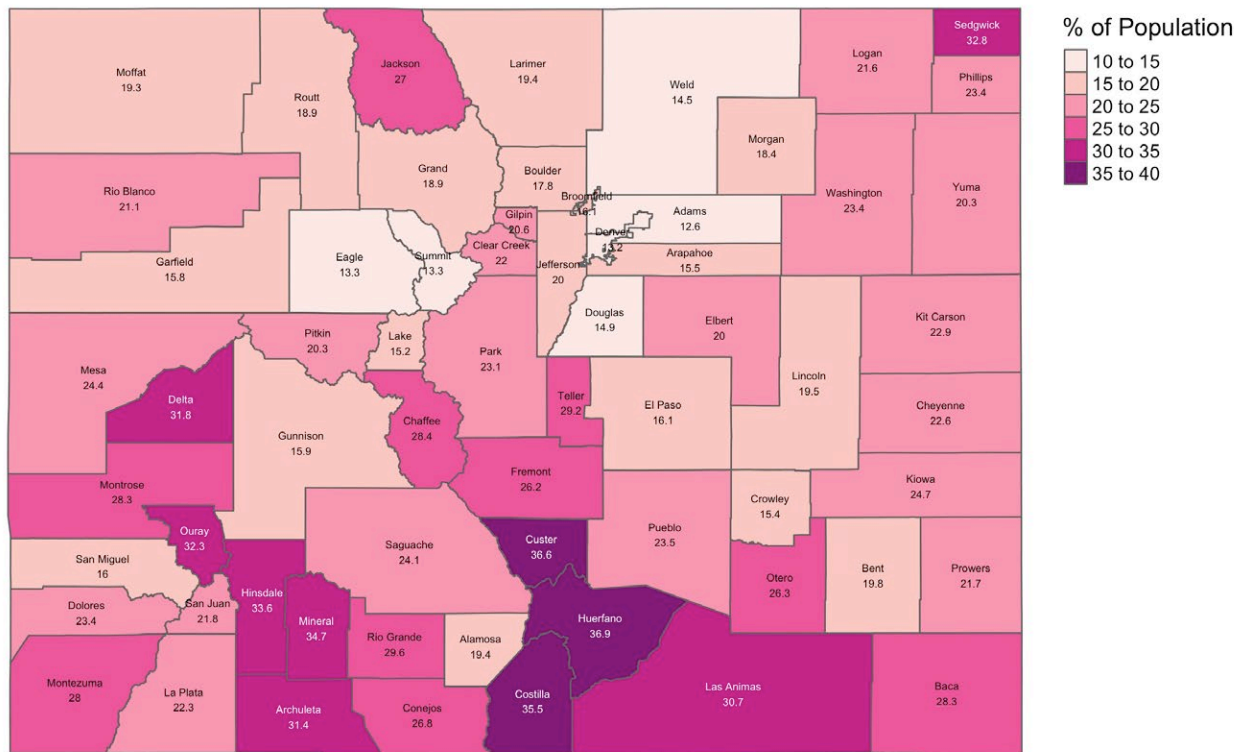
# Employer Sponsored Insurance (2022)



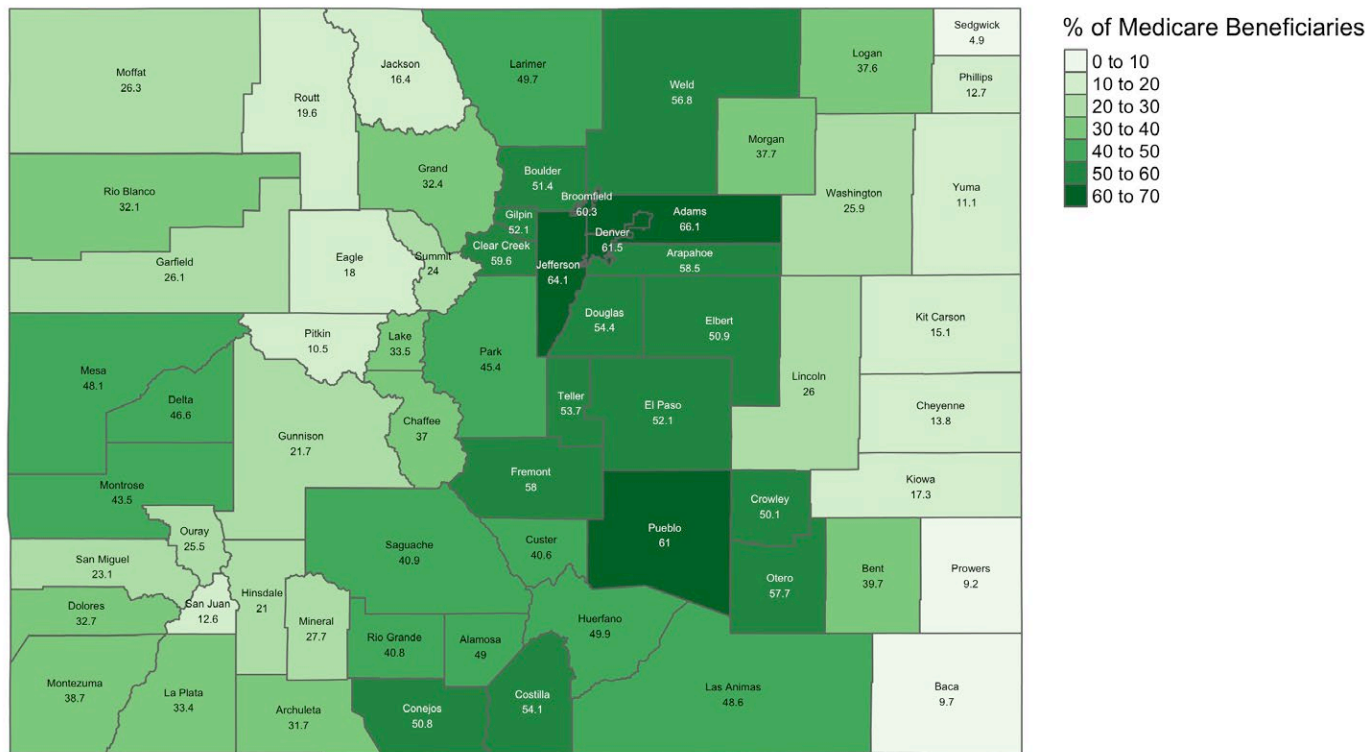
# Medicaid (2024)



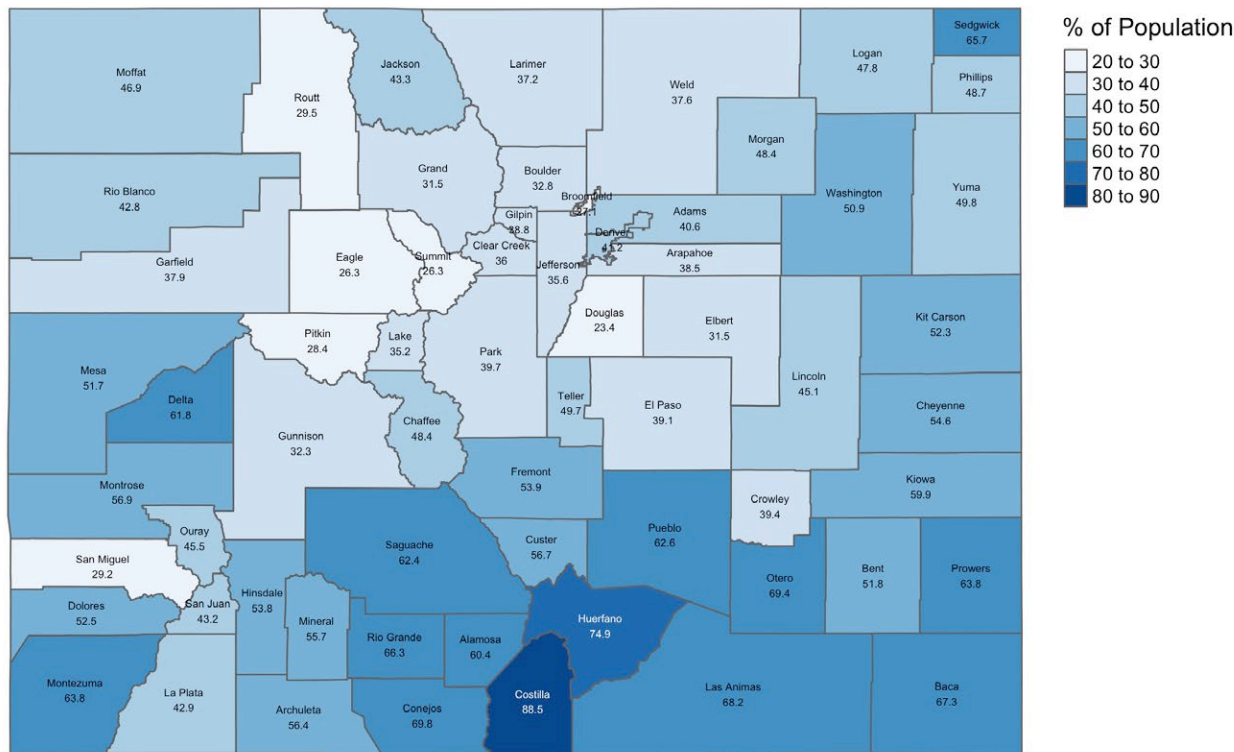
# Medicare (2024)



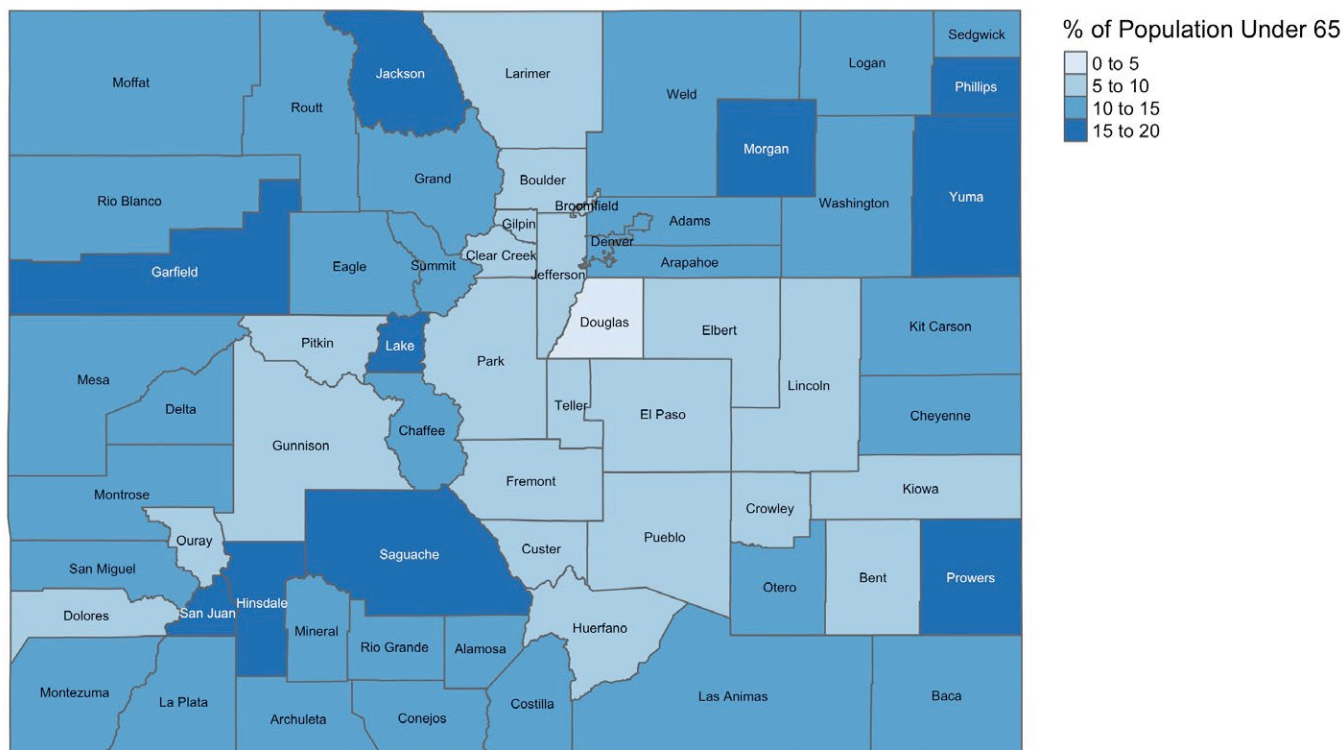
# Medicare Advantage Penetration (2024)



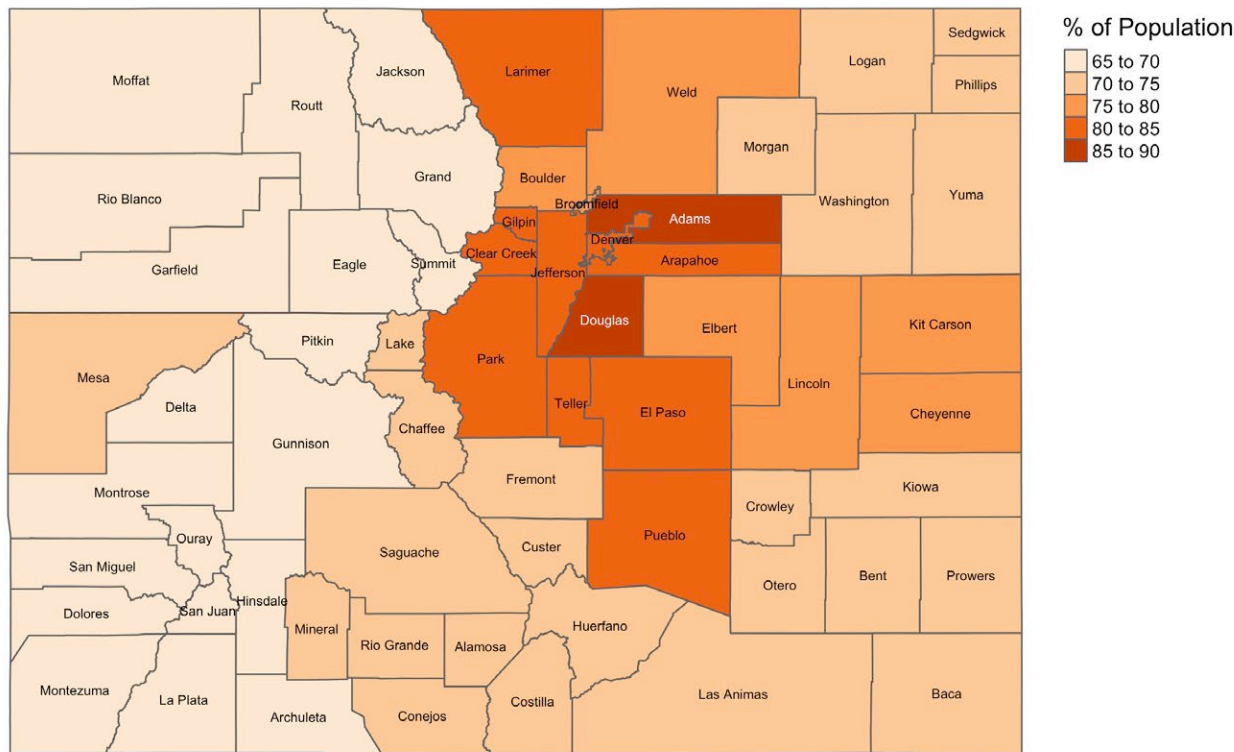
# Medicare and Medicaid (2024)



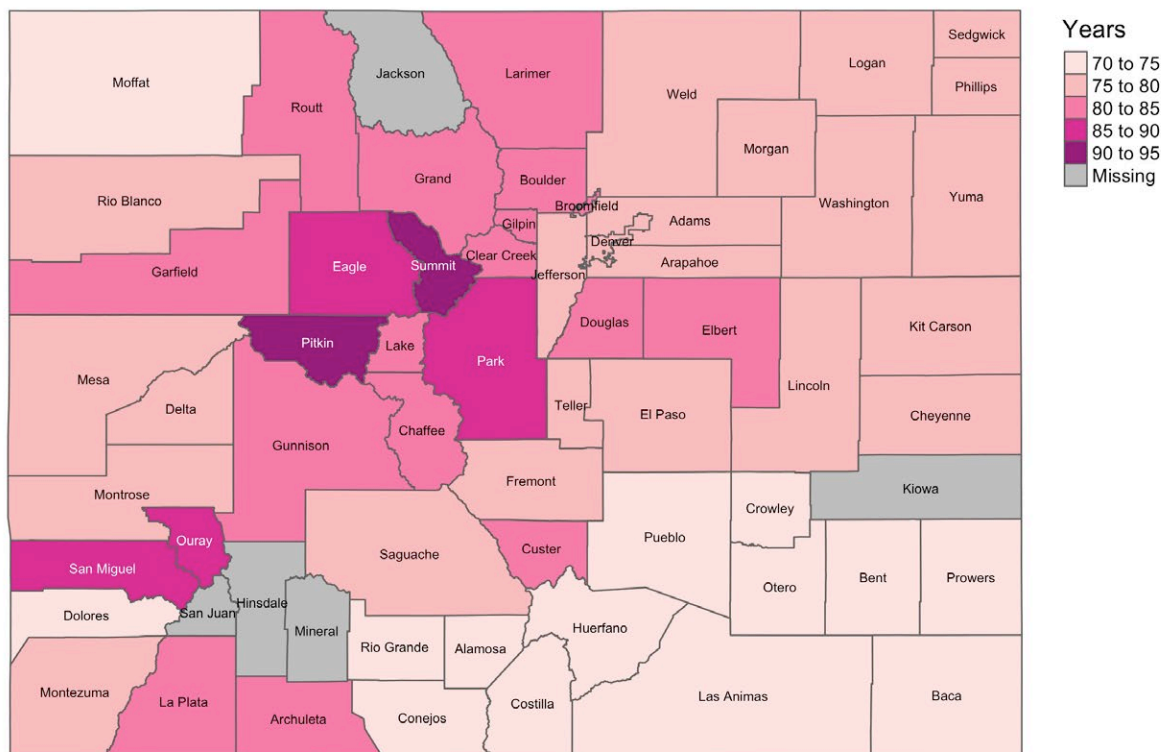
# Uninsured under 65 (2022)



# Dental Insurance within last year (2022)

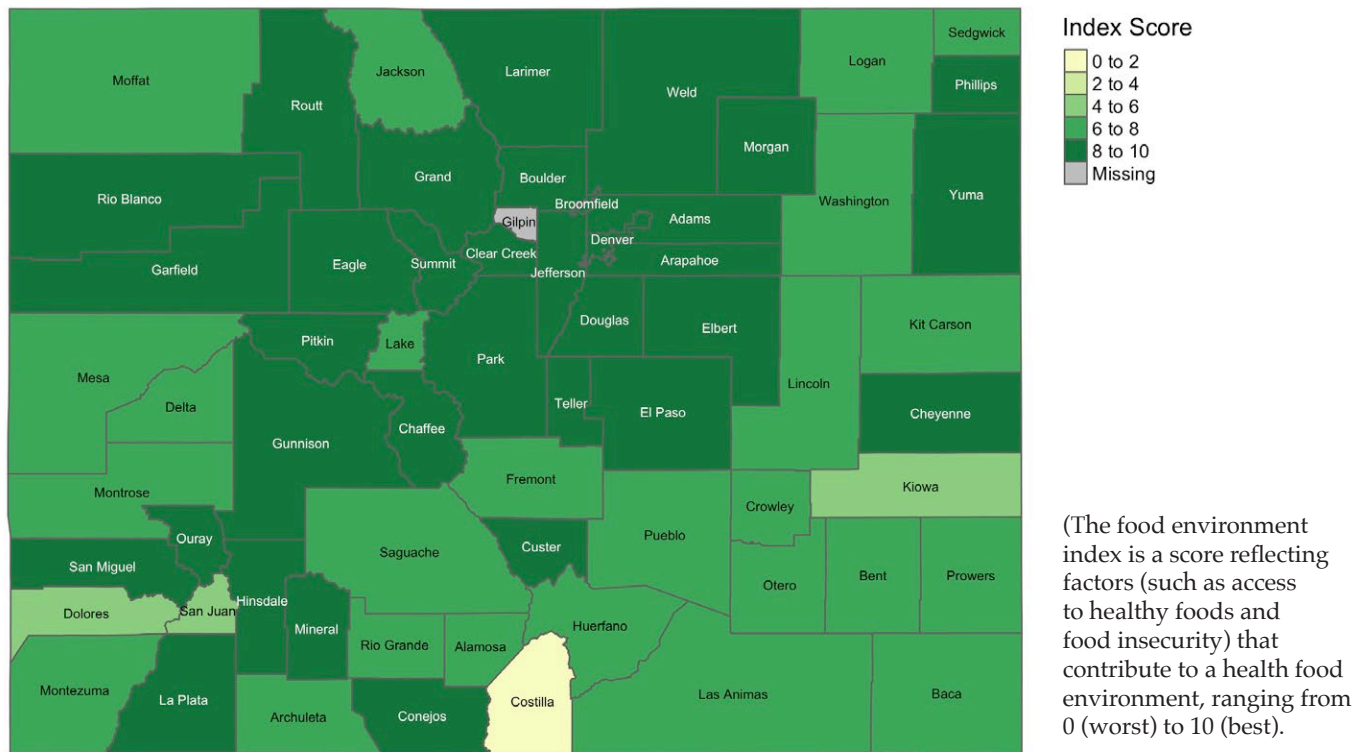


# Life Expectancy (2022)

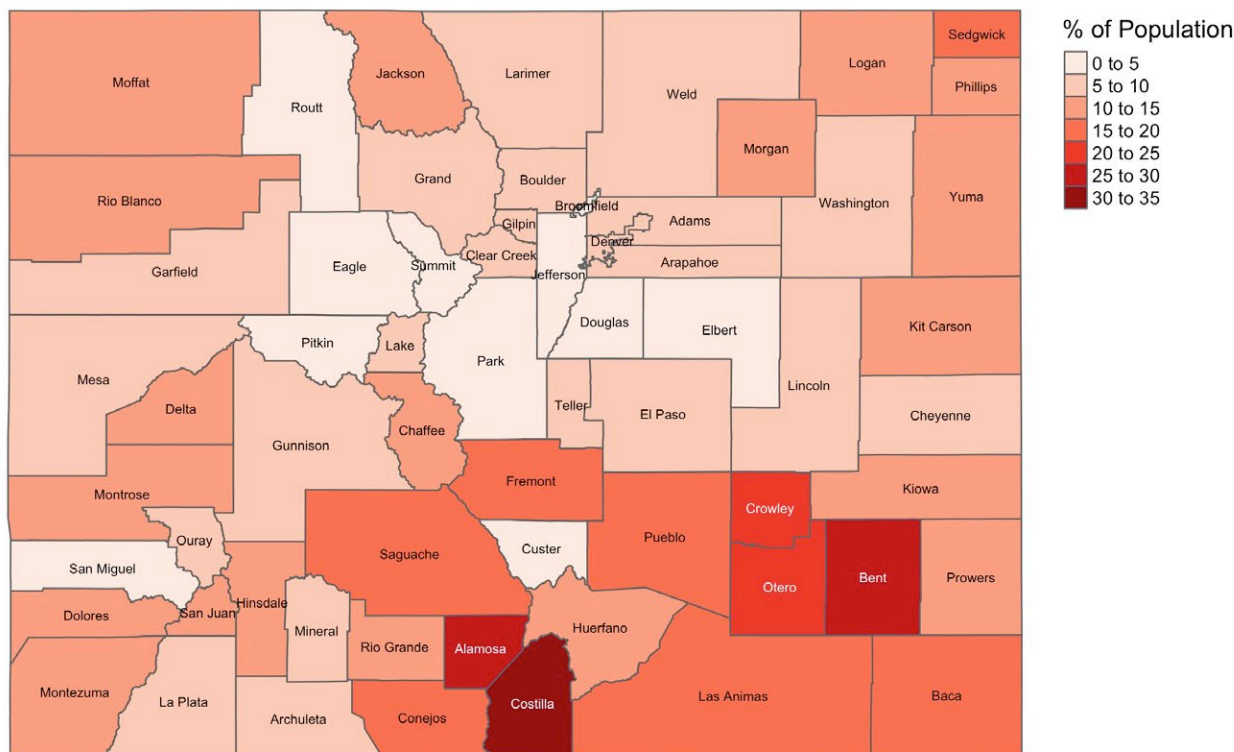




# Environmental Food Index (2024)

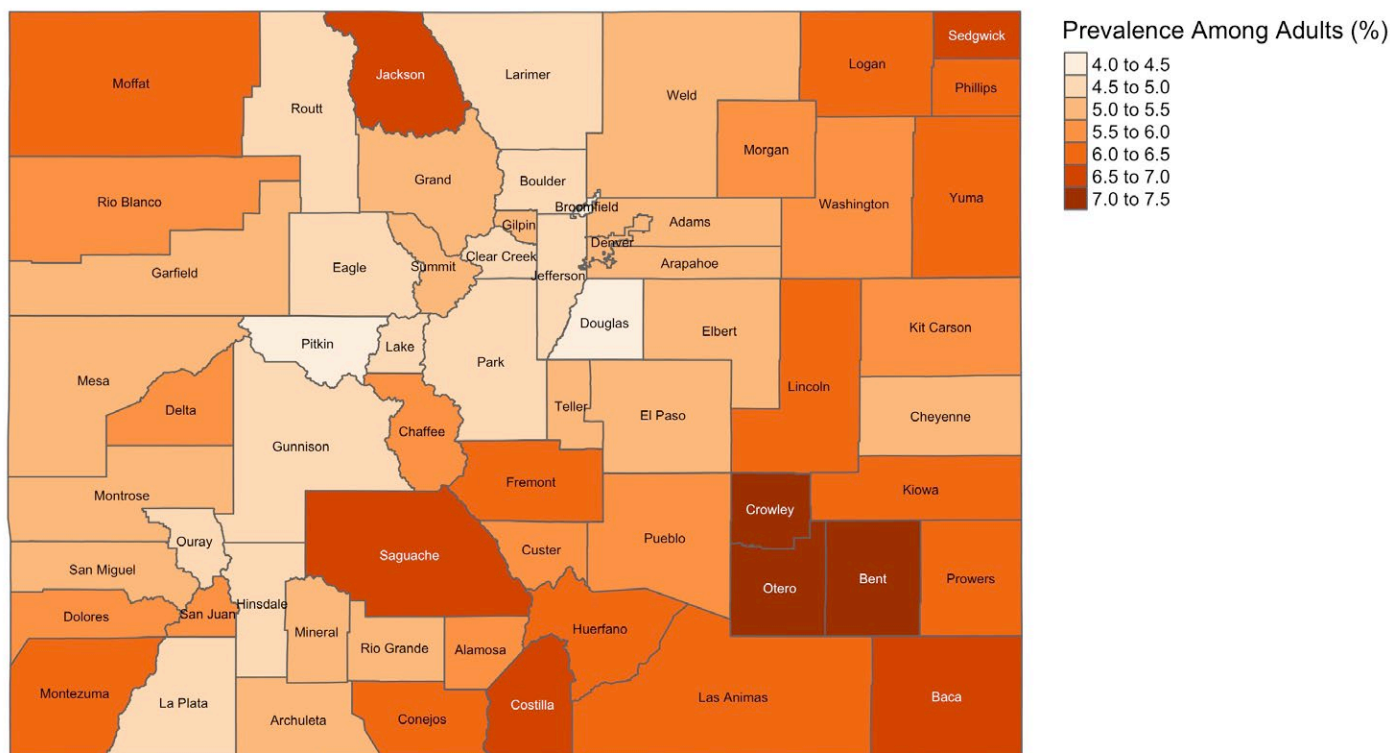


# SNAP Benefits (2022)

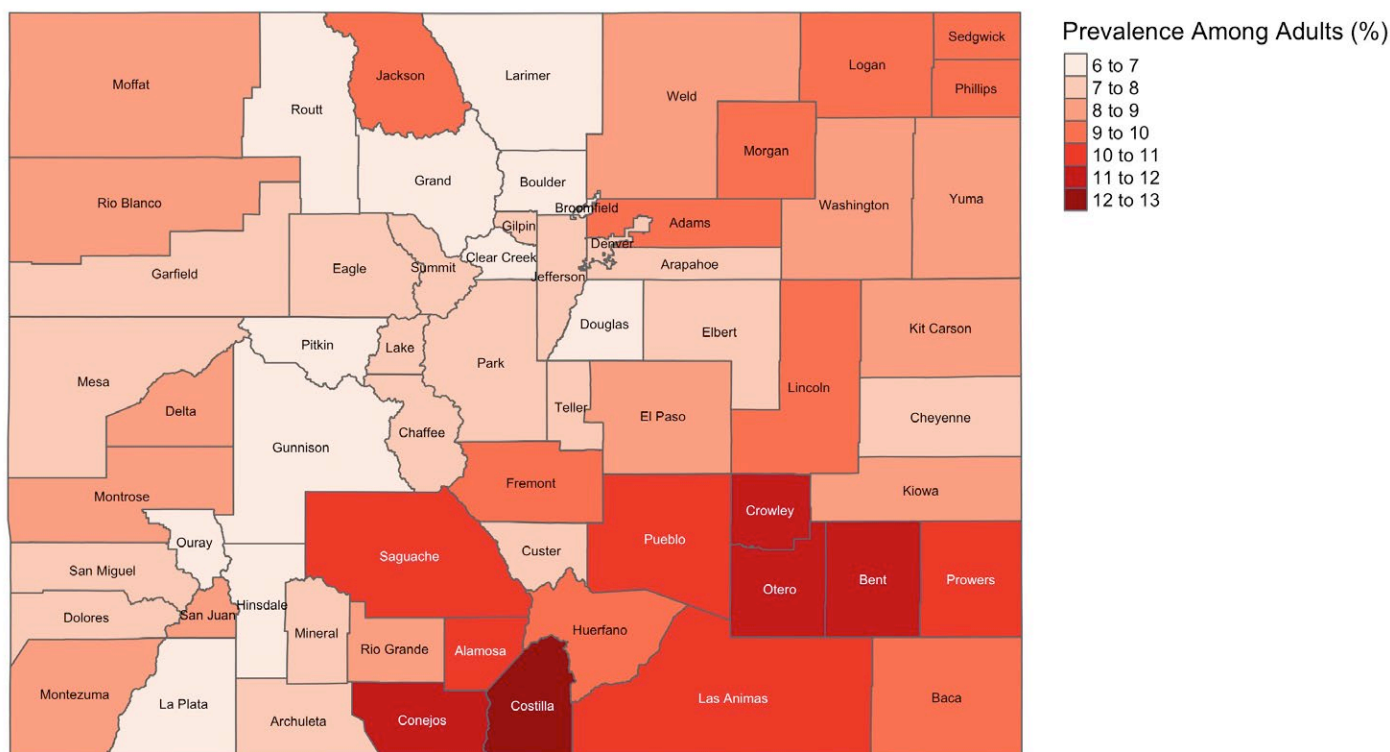




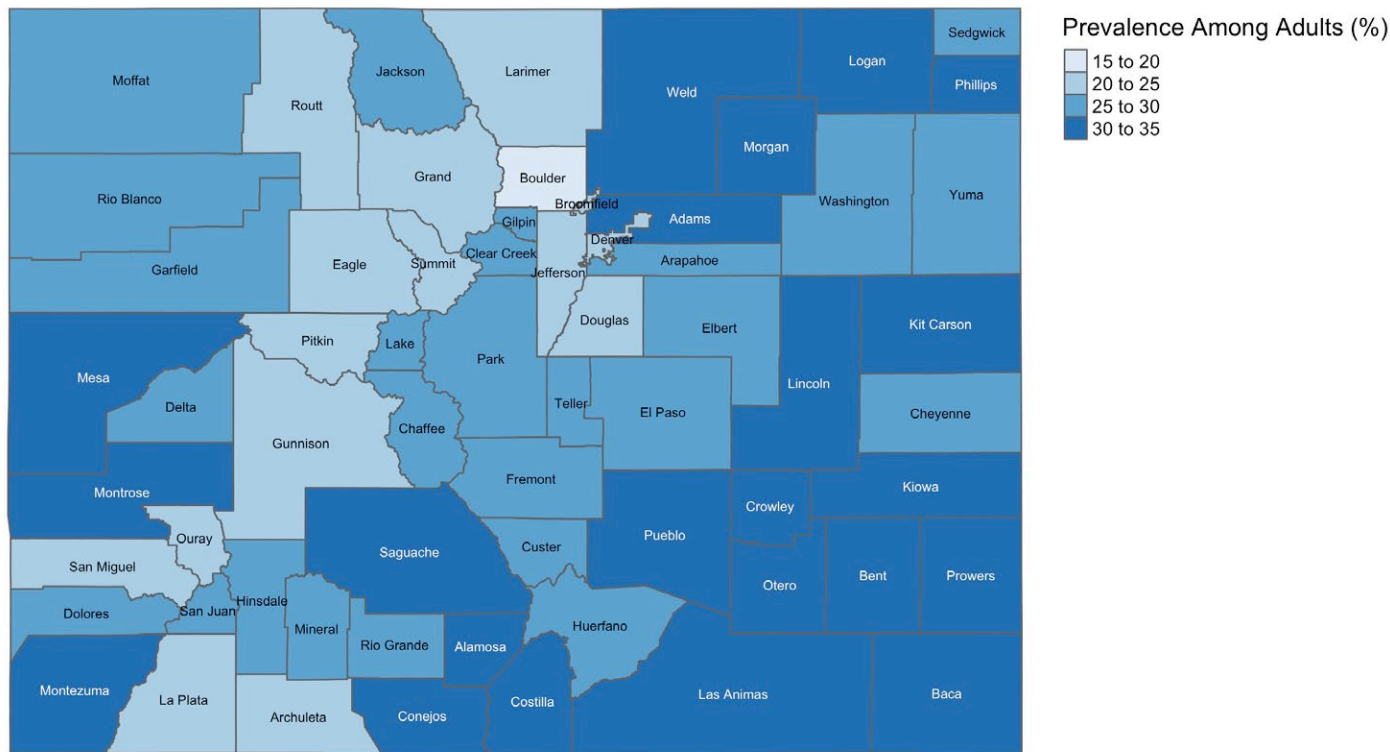
# Coronary Heart Disease (2022)



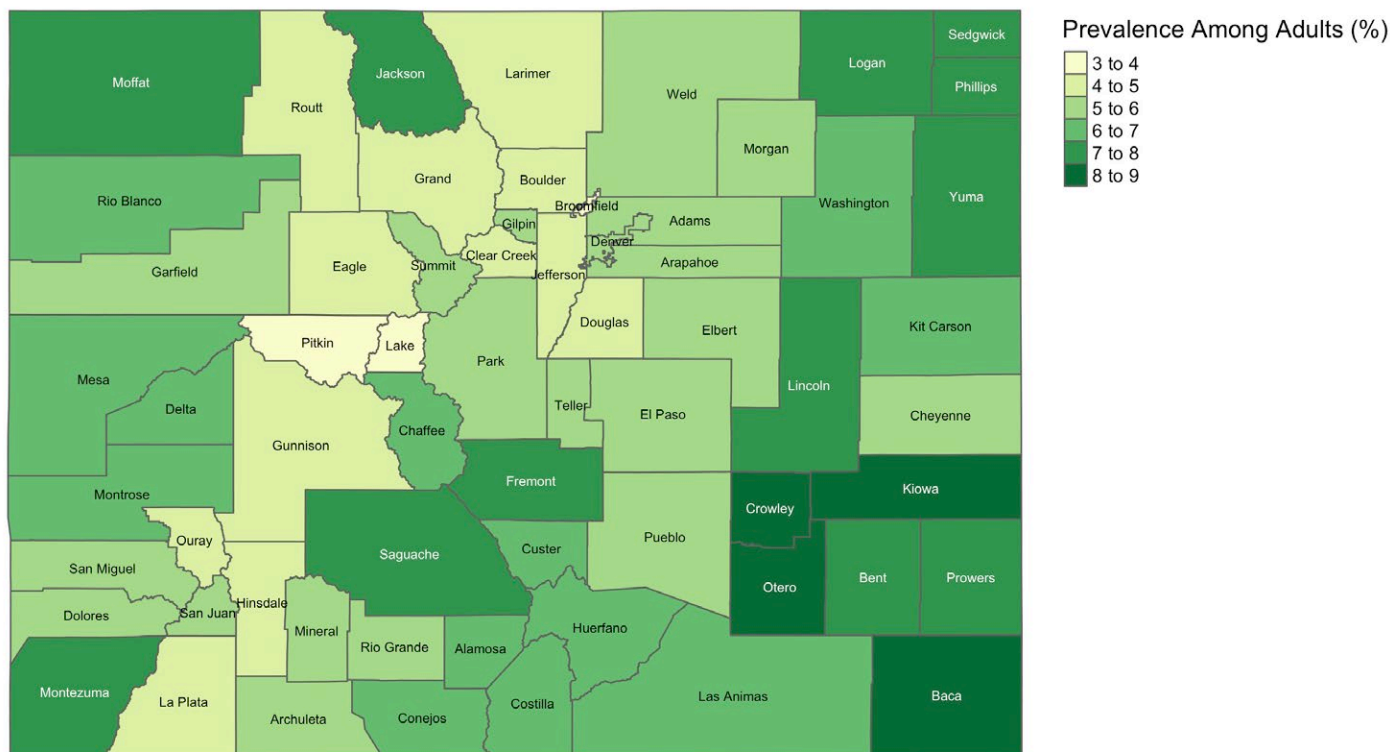
# Diagnosed Diabetes (2022)



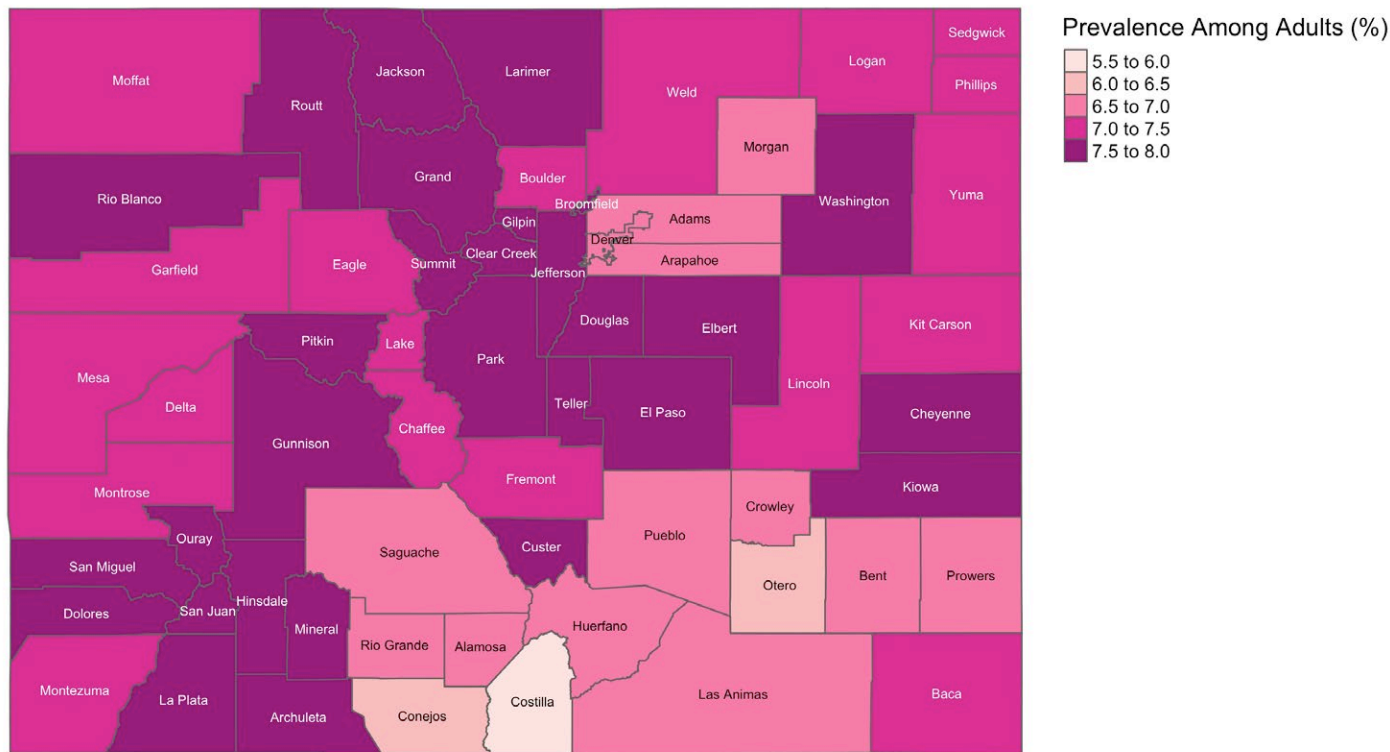
# Obesity (2022)



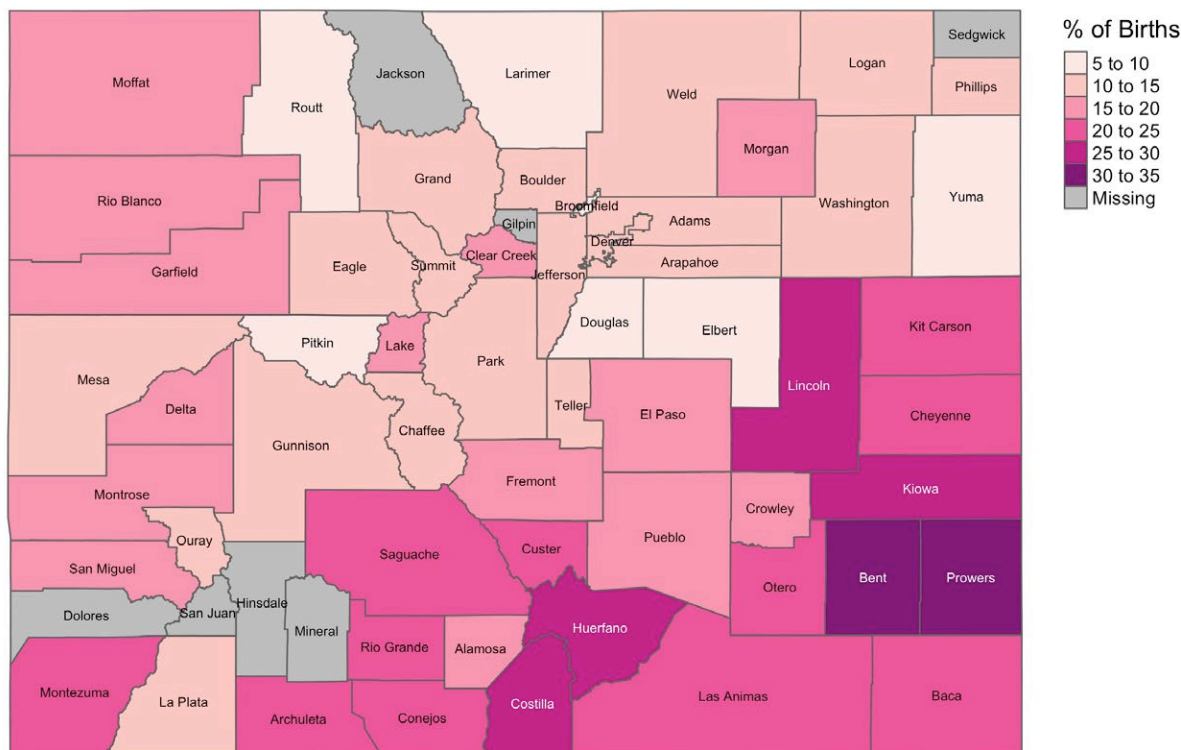
# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (2022)



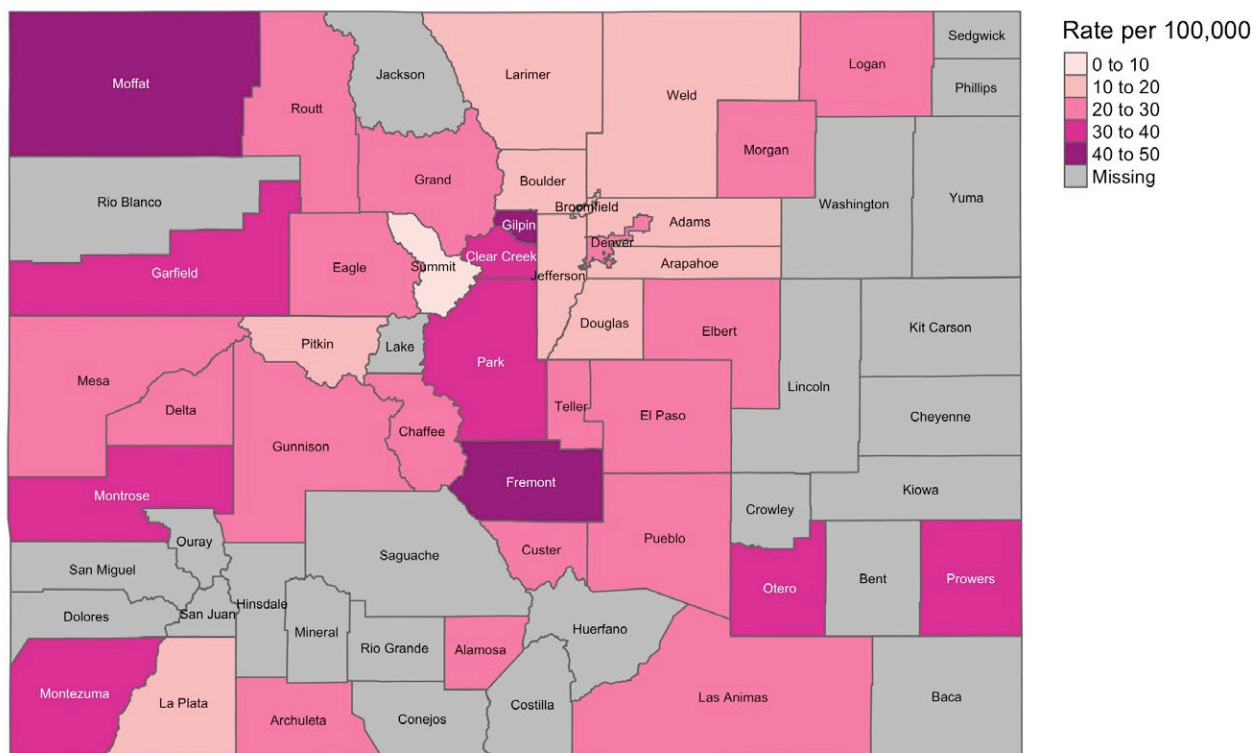
# Cancer (2022)



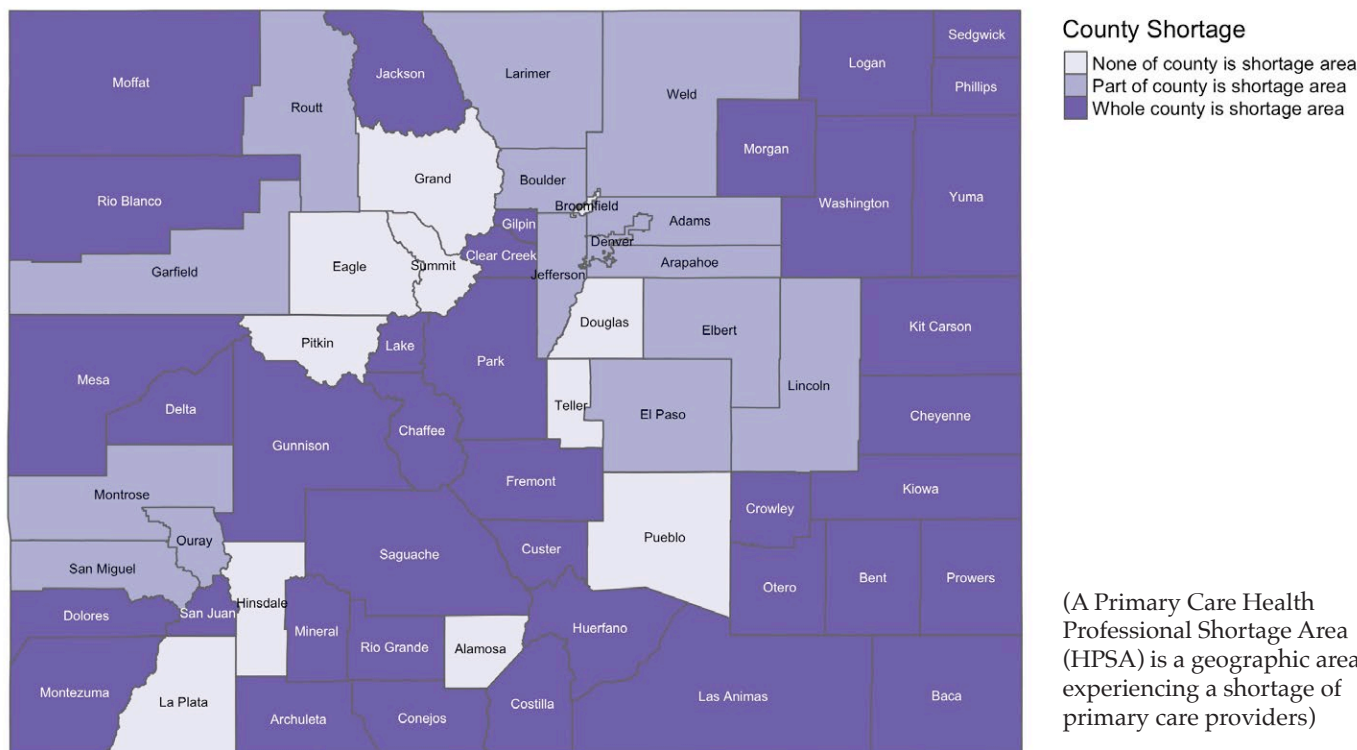
# Inadequate Prenatal Care (2022)



# Age Adjusted Suicide Rate (2023)

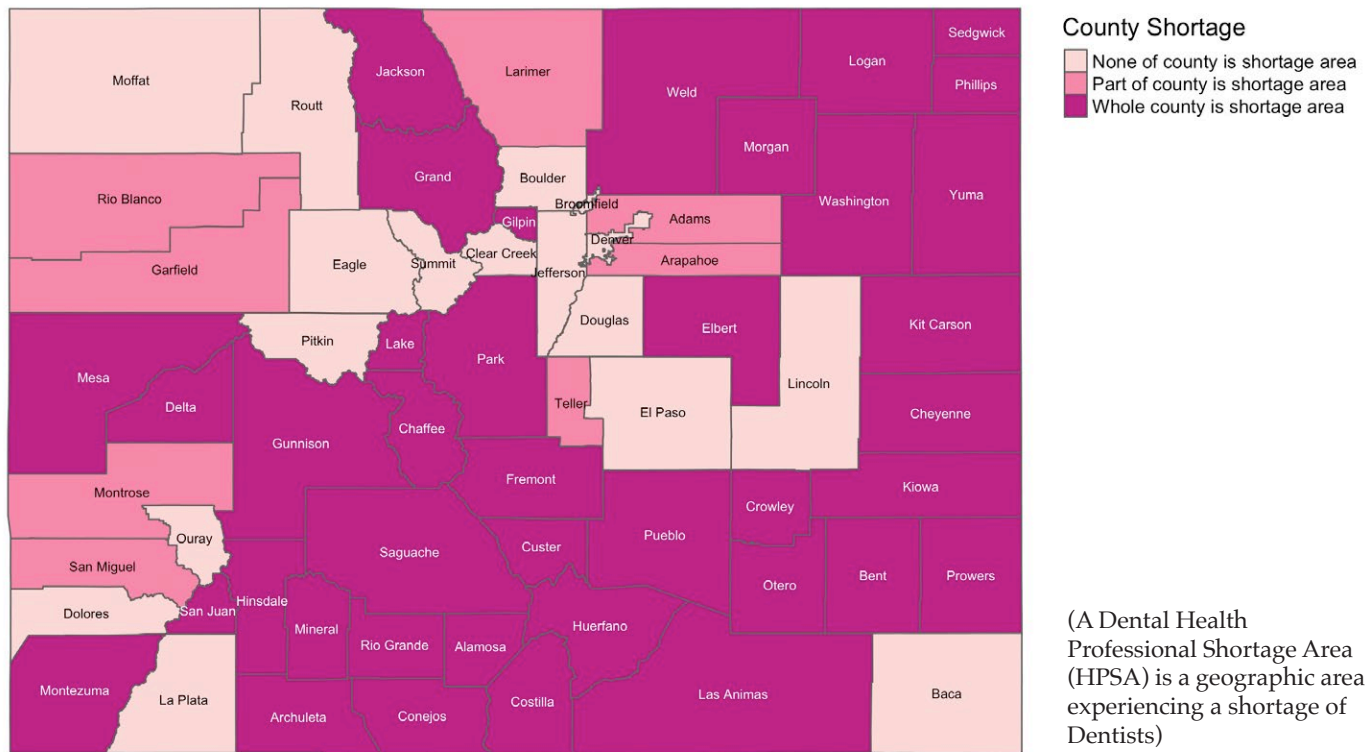


# Primary Care HPSA (2024)

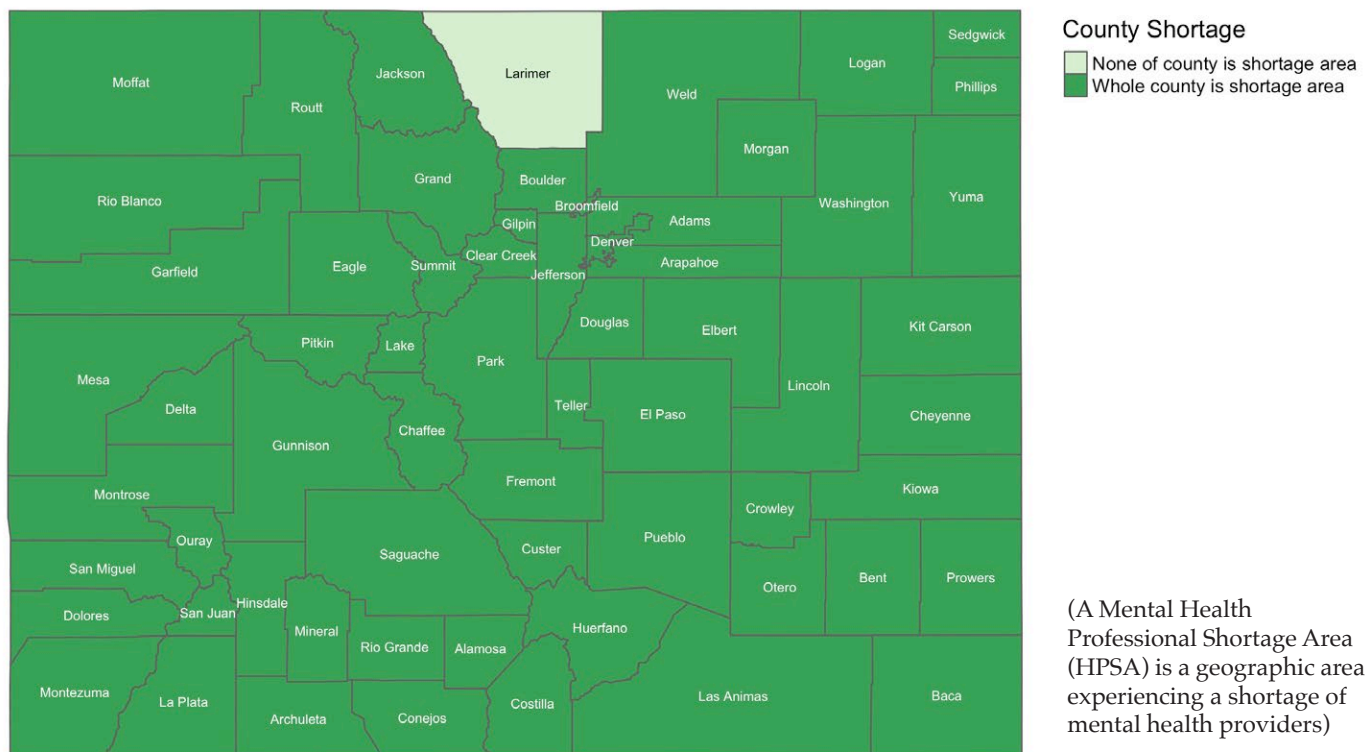




# Dental HPSA (2024)

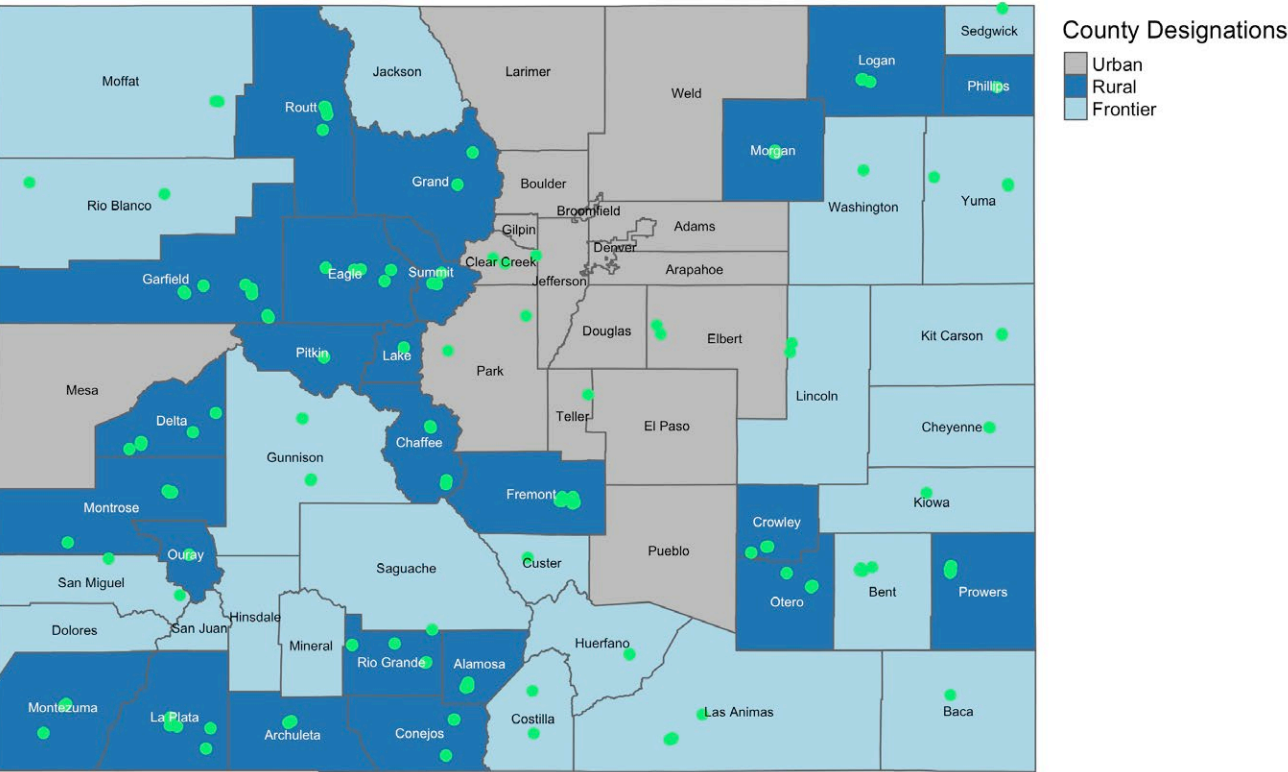


# Mental HPSA (2024)

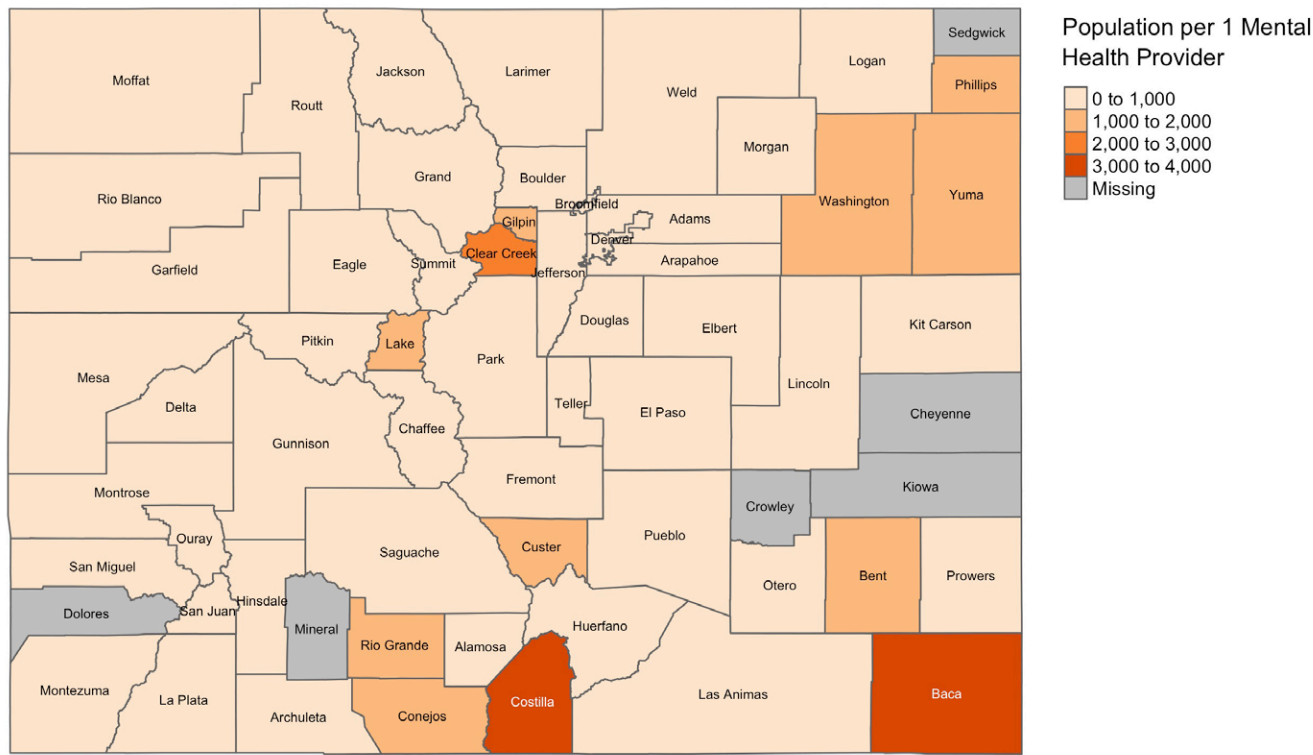




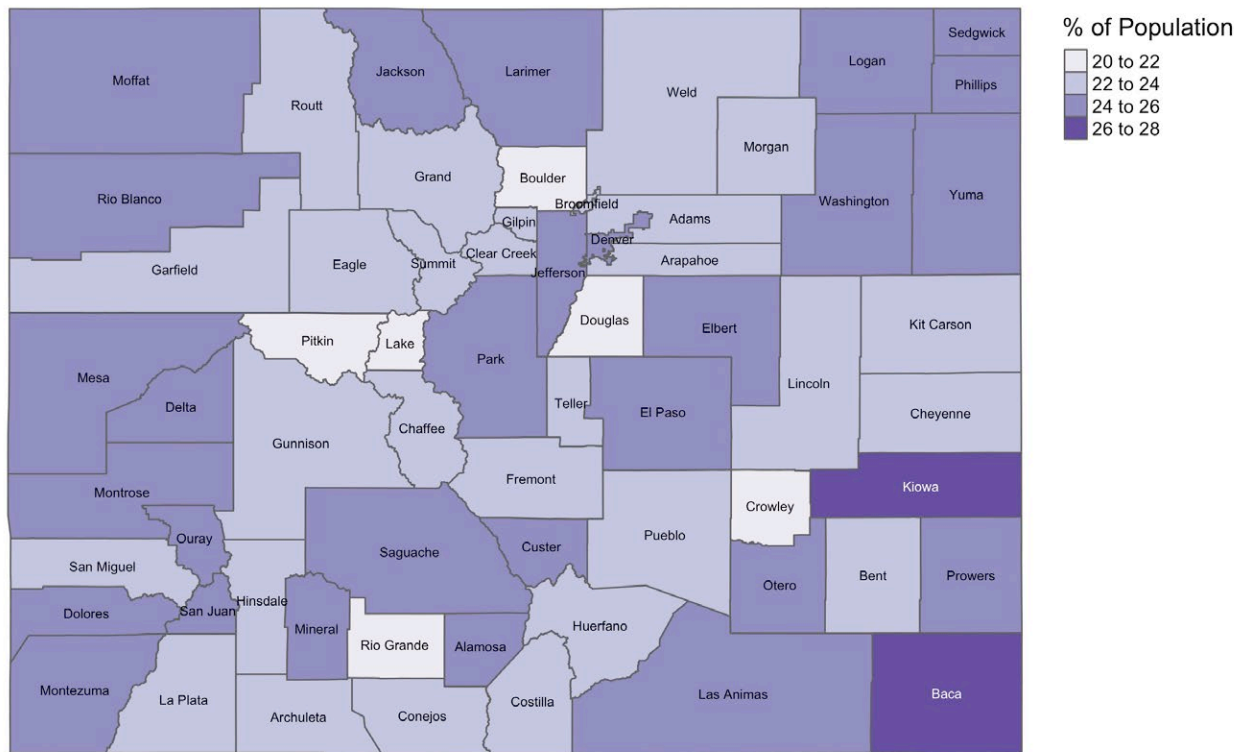
# Substance Use/Mental Health Facilities



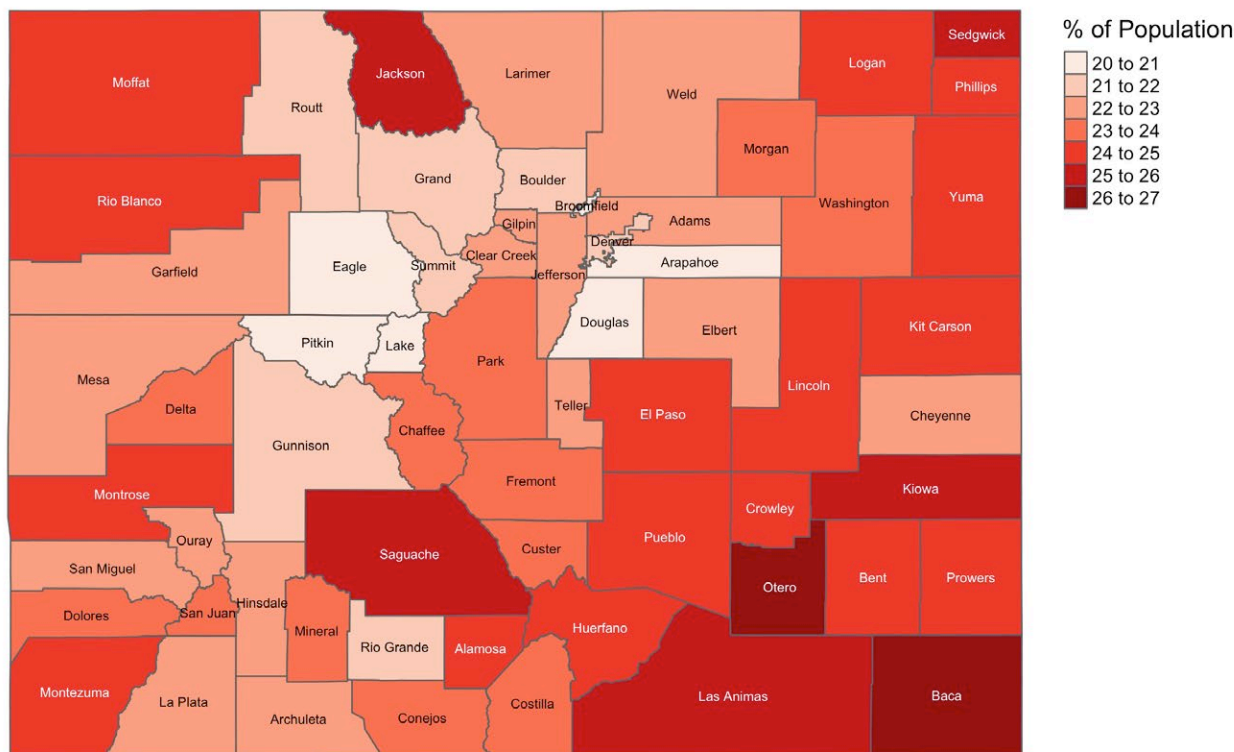
# Mental Health Provider Ratio (2023)



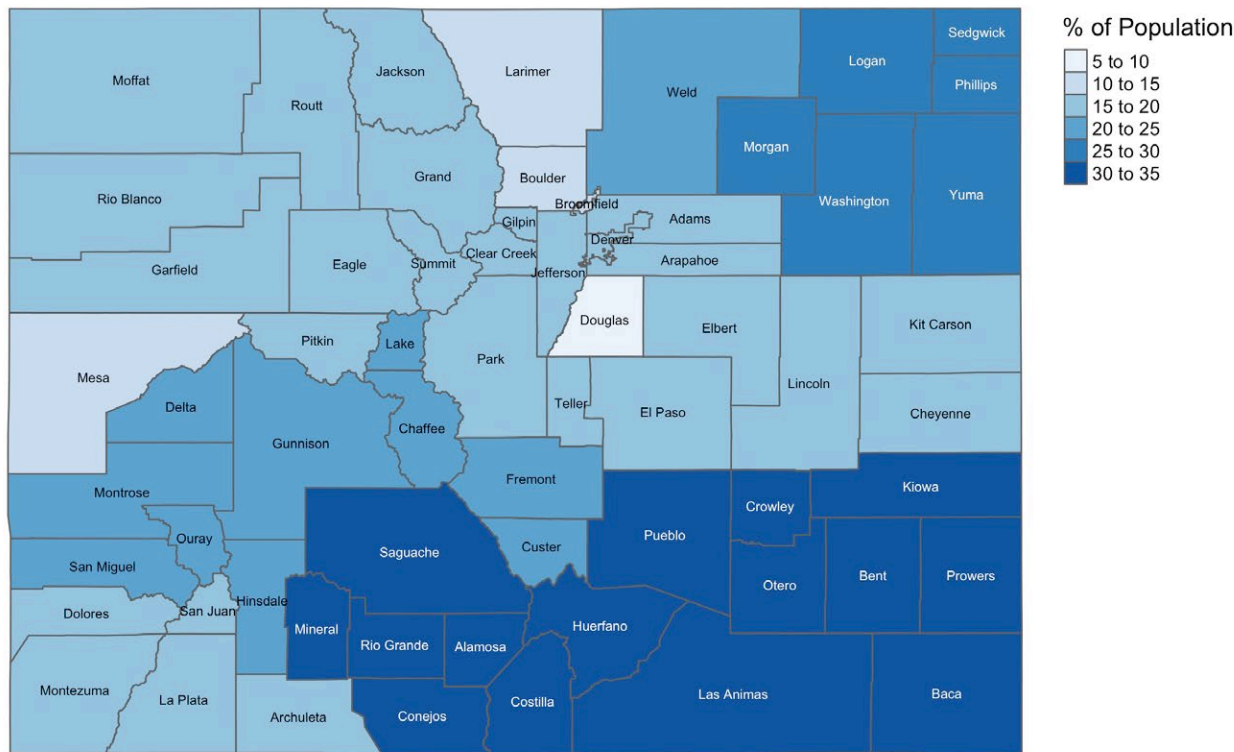
# Depression (2022)



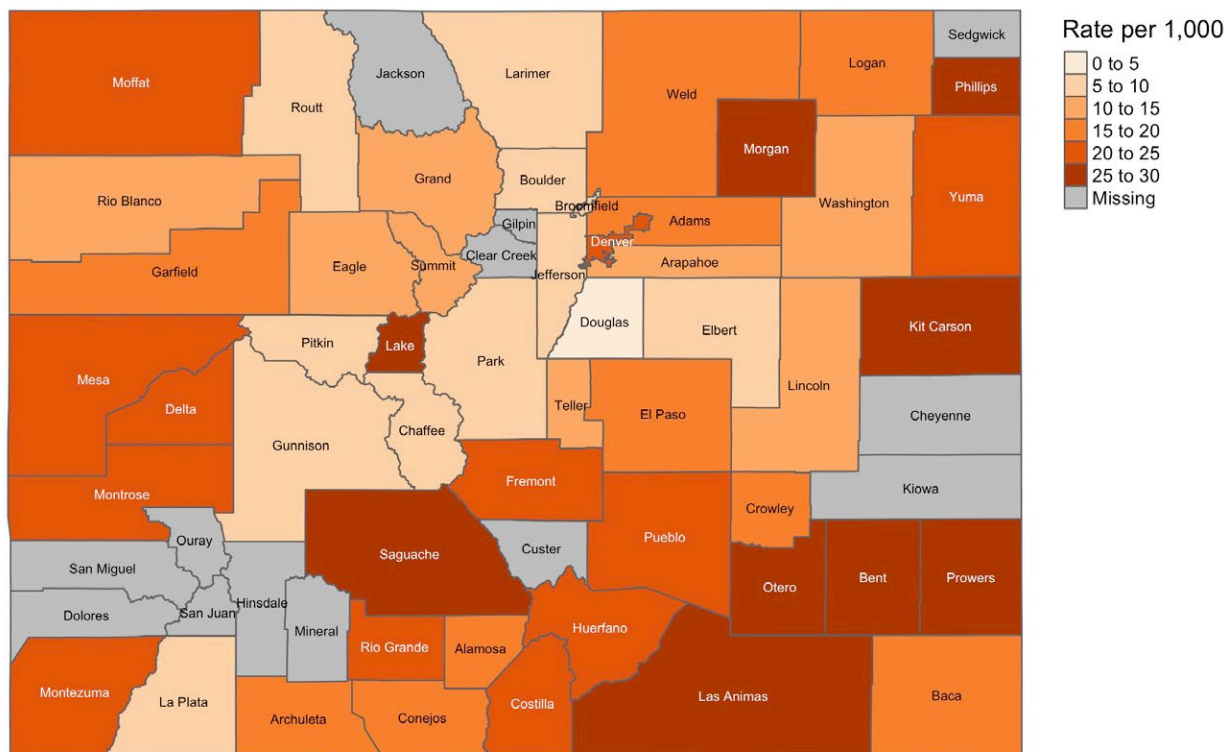
# Arthritis (2022)



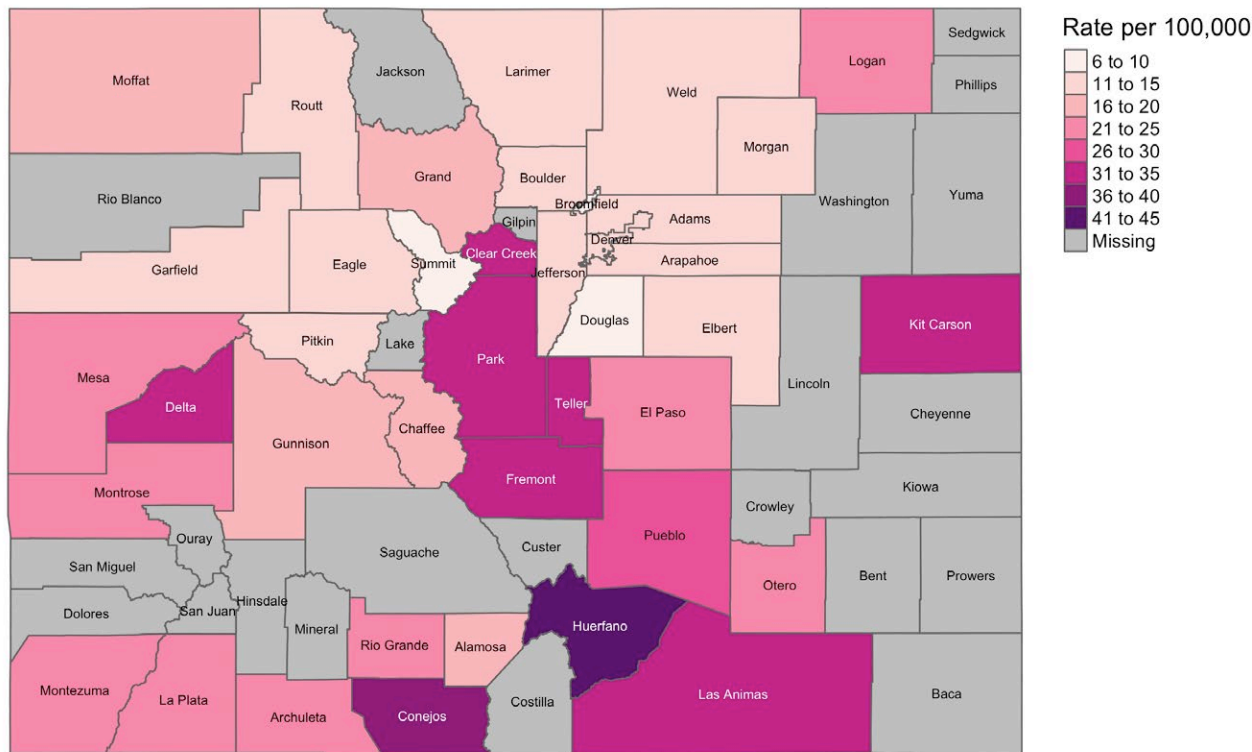
# Fair or Poor Oral Health (2023)



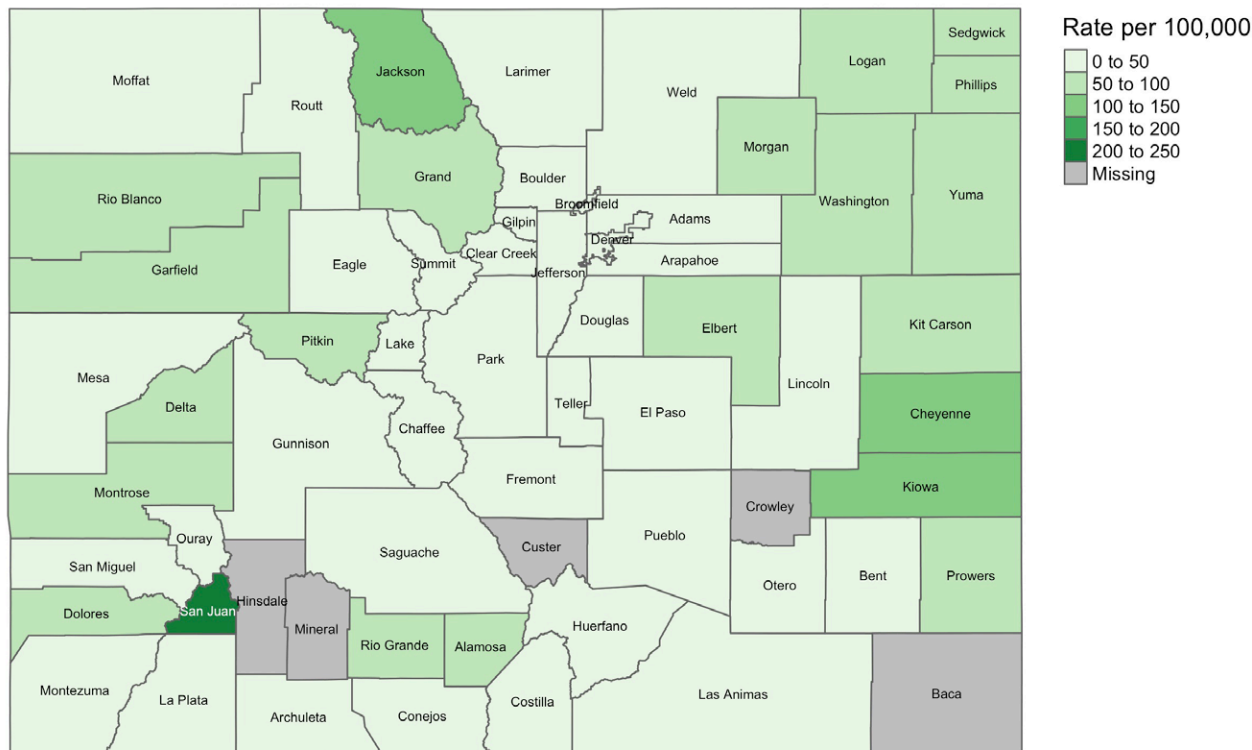
# Teen Birth Rate (Females aged 15 to 19 in 2022)



# 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](https://coruralhealth.org/snapshot-data-2025).



# COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CENTER

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