Many rural communities in Arizona are isolated from human services and health care providers, which are concentrated in the urban areas around Phoenix and Tucson.

“We are very honored and excited to receive competitive continuation funding from the HRSA over the next five years to build on the more than 30-year history of the State Office of Rural Health Program here in Arizona,” said Dan Derksen, MD, director of the Center for Rural Health in the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at UArizona Health Sciences. “This program shows how federal, state and community collaboration can really make a difference in the lives of rural Arizonans.”

Daniel Derksen, MD, is the director of the Arizona Center for Rural Health.
Arizona is the sixth-largest state by land mass, with 55% of the state’s 114,000-square-mile area owned by the federal and state government, 28% owned by 22 federally recognized Native American tribes, and 17% owned privately and fragmented by large swaths of sparsely populated public and tribal areas.

This distribution results in many rural communities being isolated from human services and health care providers, which are concentrated in urban areas surrounding Phoenix and Tucson. As a result, rural Arizonans have unique challenges that result in significant health disparities, particularly for Native American and Latinx populations.

The goal of the State Office of Rural Health program is to assist states in strengthening rural health care delivery systems by maintaining a focal point for rural health within each state. The Center for Rural Health has been federally designated as the Arizona State Office of Rural Health since 1990. The Arizona State Office of Rural Health has three core areas of focus:

1. Collect and disseminate information to rural health care providers and agencies regarding grant opportunities, research findings, policy updates, best practices and other rural health issues;

2. Coordinate rural health care activities in the state to avoid redundancies to include community, regional, statewide and national partnerships;

3. Provide technical assistance to public and nonprofit entities to increase capacity in rural communities to develop and sustain successful rural health programs and services.

This new funding will enable the continuation of programming to serve the state’s rural, underserved communities and deliver the most up-to-date research, practices and resources to support health services providers in rural Arizona.

https://healthsciences.arizona.edu/newsroom/news-releases/2021/uarizona-center-rural-health-receives-44m-federal-grant-continue-health