



Examining The Impact Of The Public Option On Rural Health Care

The [Partnership for America's Health Care Future](#) and Navigant Consulting examined the impact the public option would have on rural health care with the release of a study, "[The Potential Impact of a Medicare Public Option on U.S. Rural Hospitals and Communities](#)."

The public option would put as many as **1,037 rural American hospitals in 46 states at high risk of closure**. That's 55 percent of all rural hospitals closing their doors.

[Since 2010](#), 108 American rural hospitals have closed, and the public option would further disrupt the care millions of Americans rely on every day. Some of the study's other findings include:

- The **1,037 hospitals** at risk represent more than **63,000 staffed beds and 420,000 employees**.
- To protect hospitals from the financial impact of the public option, Medicare would need to **increase reimbursement levels between 40 and 60 percent** above current rates, **costing between \$4 billion and \$25 billion annually**.
- Rural Americans **are nearly five times as likely** to live in a county with a primary care physician shortage compared to other citizens.
- When a rural community loses its hospital, **per capita income falls 4 percent and the unemployment rate rises by 1.6 percent**.

As candidates and policymakers continue to discuss government-run health insurance systems such as the public option, Medicare for All, and Medicare buy-in, it's important the conversation is informed by thoughtful data that illustrates these far reaching proposals' impact on some of America's most vulnerable communities. A copy of the full report can be found [here](#) and a link to all of the Partnership's resources can be found [here](#).