



# Rural Health Topics & Health Resources

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# Objectives

- Understand issues facing rural healthcare, including attributes of residents in rural areas, and rural health disparities
  - Understand health literacy and how it effects overall health outcomes
  - Be able to describe the differences between seemingly valid websites and authoritative resources for health information
- 



# What is the Definition of Rural?

## Administrative

- Used by rural development programs
- Defines rural/urban among municipal or other jurisdictional boundaries

## Economic

- Used in most rural research
- Recognizes its influence on cities (labor, trade, & media markets) that extend beyond densely settled cores

## Land Use

- Used by U.S. Census Bureau
- Defines rural/urban based on how densely settled the area is.

Sources: Office of Management & Budget, U.S. Census Bureau, USDA Economic Research Service



# Population & Other Factors

- ▶ [Map of Population Density](#)
    - ▶ Provided by the U.S. Census Bureau <https://www2.census.gov>
  - ▶ 65% for the 3,141 counties in the U.S. are designated non-metro
  - ▶ 25% of U.S. population live in rural areas
  - ▶ 75-80% of land in the U.S. is considered rural
- 



# Attributes Found in Rural Populations

- ▶ Value their independence
- ▶ Self-Reliant
- ▶ Proud (can be proud of hardships, troubles, afflictions)
- ▶ Travel long distances for amenities (high fuel costs can effect nutrition and overall health and well-being)
- ▶ Tend to have lower incomes, and lower educational attainment
- ▶ May be older, on Medicaid, & are under insured or uninsured

[Uninsured Population Graphic](https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/data/incpovhlth/2014/uninsbystate.pdf)

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Disclaimer: not universal to everyone living in a rural area



# Health Disparities in Rural Areas

Rural residents are more likely to:

- Experience unintentional injuries and injury-related deaths
- Suffer premature death from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and suicide
- Suffer from chronic illness
- Experience higher rates of depression

[Suicide rates by state](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6345a10.htm)

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6345a10.htm>



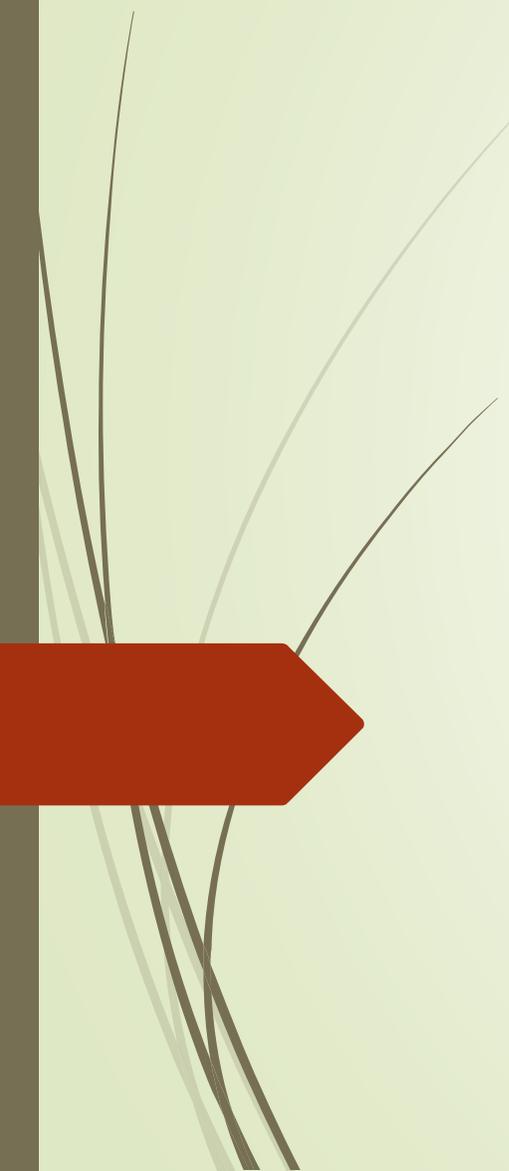
# Health Literacy = Better Health Outcomes

- ▶ Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and the services needed to make appropriate health decisions
  
- ▶ **Low health literacy can affect an individual's ability to:**
  - Navigate the healthcare system
  - Share pertinent health history information with providers
  - Engage in self-care and chronic-disease management
  - Understand probability and risk
  - Can have negative psychological effects
  
- ▶ **Those with higher health literacy tend to:**
  - Use preventative services
  - Can manage chronic health issues more effectively
  - Have lower rates of hospitalization



# Health Literacy = Better Health Outcomes

- ▶ Those most likely to experience low health literacy are older adults, racial and ethnic minorities, people with less than a high school education, lower income, non-English speakers and those with an already compromised health status.
- ▶ How can libraries and librarians help improve health literacy in their communities?
  - ▶ Encourage the use of reputable health resources (Posters, Health Information Icons on Desktops, Health Related programming, etc.)
  - ▶ Use Disease prevention toolkits provided by the CDC, NIH, etc. to help plan library programs
  - ▶ Participate in Community Health Initiatives



**Searching for Health  
Information in the Wild, Wild  
West -oops, I mean World  
Wide Web**

# What about Wikipedia?

- ▶ Authors in the biomedical sciences receive academic credit for sharing their research by publishing it in reputable journals such as the *JAMA*, or *Neuroscience Research*, etc.
- ▶ When research is federally funded, it is required to be published in an open-access manner, meaning accessible to the public and not behind a pay-wall
- ▶ Items published in reputable journals have been reviewed by peers who are also experts in the field (peer-reviewed)
  - ▶ Wikipedia contributors have various levels of subject expertise- this includes those with NO expertise. However, some pages are updated by Librarians who are Wikipedians in residence at Universities (Yay!) However, it can be hard to tell which pages those are exactly.
- ▶ Wikipedia may be a good starting point for research in emerging topics, but should only be consulted in conjunction with additional authoritative resources. Use references to link to direct sights –example [Diabetes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diabetes_mellitus)



# What about Wikipedia?

- ▶ In a study published in the Oct. 2011 *JAMA* entitled Accuracy and Completeness of Drug Information in Wikipedia: An Assessment
  - ▶ Five drugs were searched for information:
  - ▶ Only 1 drug listed drug contraindications
  - ▶ Only 3 drugs listed (some) drug interactions
  - ▶ None of the drugs researched listed any suggestions for lifestyle modifications



“Much of the drug information searched was incomplete in ways that could cause harm to the consumer”

Kupferberg, N., & McCrate Protus, B. (2011)

# What about Wikipedia?

- ▶ In a July, 2015 article published in BMJ studied cardiovascular disease entries in Wikipedia
- ▶ The authors looked at the accuracy and readability of cardiovascular entries/articles on Wikipedia
- ▶ Found deficiencies in the pathophysiology of diseases, signs and symptoms, diagnostic approaches, and treatment of disease
- ▶ Written at a college level or higher



# Ga Ga over Google? Not so fast

"Sleep-related deaths are the third leading cause of infant mortality, responsible for more than 3,500 deaths each year," Goodstein (2015).



- A 2012 study published in *The Journal of Pediatrics* regarding the accuracy of information found on infant sleep safety using Google:
  - ▶ **1,300** Web sites were examined for suggestions/guidelines that would accurately reflect the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for sleep safety
  - ▶ **28.1%** of the Websites found using Google provided inaccurate information (That's nearly 400 Websites providing potentially deadly information!)
  - ▶ **28.4%** of the Websites found using Google provided irrelevant information
- ▶ So... over half of the websites accessed through a Google search on infant sleep safety provided inaccurate or irrelevant information on this important topic
- ▶ "Sponsored link Web sites, such as eHow.com and About.com, often use hired experts... for specific topics. Thus, the frequency of inaccurate information presented on these Web sites was surprising."

Chung, et al. (2012)



# Be Cyber-skeptical

## ➤ Consider the Source

- Use Wikipedia in conjunction with information from authoritative sources such as the National Institutes of Health(NIH):
    - ❑ MedlinePlus
    - ❑ NIH Senior Health
    - ❑ Household Products Database
  - OR
  - ❑ Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
  - ❑ World Health Organization (WHO)
  - ❑ South Dakota Department of Health
- 
- Sources like WebMD are not a reliable source of information...btw it's a for-profit site



# Be Cyber-skeptical

- ▶ Any Web resources must be checked for:
  - ▶ **Authority**-Does the site have an editorial board? Is it made up of experts?
  - ▶ **Bias**- Who paid for the sight? Is there advertising?
  - ▶ **Currency**- How recently was the Website updated? How current is the information housed there?
  - ▶ **Dot extension** – dot com, vs. dot org or dot gov
  - ▶ **Selection**- Does the site have a description of the process of selecting or approving information on the site or links?



**Let's practice our Cyber-  
Skeptic Skills  
Group Sharing Exercise**



# Be Cyber-skeptical

## Helpful Hints:

- Look at “About Us” – what is it really telling you? Reputable Websites will likely share editorial board information and credentials, selection process, goals of the organization, etc.
- Look for dates. When was the page last updated?
- Look for “references” or “works cited”
- What if anything is being advertised?
- Who is the Website designed for? What is it designed to do? (Educate, recruit, entice you to purchase?)
- Are users given a warning upon clicking on a link that they are leaving the current Website?
- Is it research being shared, or is it opinion?



# Examples of Free Reliable Health Resources

- ▶ **Medline Plus** <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>
  - Health Topic Pages
  - Medical Dictionary
  - Drug/Supplement Info
  - Games to improve health knowledge
  - Surgical Videos
- ▶ **NIH Senior Health** <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>
  - Trainer's toolkit
  - Topics and inspiration specific to aging adults
- ▶ **World Health Organization** <http://www.who.int/en/>
  - Statistical information and health statuses of other countries
  - Disease prevention tools
  - Outbreak surveillance



# Additional Free Reliable Health Resources

- ▶ American Indian Health <https://americanindianhealth.nlm.nih.gov>
- ▶ Centers for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- ▶ Health Finder [healthfinder.gov](http://healthfinder.gov)
- ▶ Household Products Database <https://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>
- ▶ National Center for Complementary & Integrative Healthcare <https://nccih.nih.gov/>
- ▶ NIH Senior Health <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>
- ▶ Rural Health Info <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org>
- ▶ South Dakota Department of Health <http://doh.sd.gov/>



# Exploring Websites Activity

## Group Sharing Exercise





# Contact Me

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**LibGuides (Library Guides) – Additional vetted resources for your consideration:**

<http://libguides.usd.edu/public-health> (Websites, organizations, toolkits)

<http://libguides.usd.edu/affordablecareact> (Understanding Health Insurance and the Affordable Care Act)

<http://libguides.usd.edu/ads> (Addiction Studies) Internet resources

<http://libguides.usd.edu/social-work> Websites, statistics, Government Info

