

**TITLE:** Data and capacity needs for addressing rural health disparities

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**STUDENT SUBMISSION:** No

**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** Local public health directors, administrators, program managers, epidemiologists

**ABSTRACT:** Statement of problem: Public health leaders in the rural communities of the Northwest report challenges in identifying and promoting health equity due to inadequate data and limited capacity. The Solutions in Health Analytics for Rural Equity across the Northwest (SHARE-NW) project at the University of Washington supports evidence-based decision making by working with local health department (LHD) personnel to identify and address the data needs of public health practitioners in rural areas of Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Idaho.

Approach: We conducted 25 qualitative interviews with key informants working in Northwest rural communities, including health department directors, administrators, epidemiologists, and program managers. Interviews focused on current practices and needs regarding data sources, health disparities, and data visualizations.

Summary of Results: Preliminary findings include current strategies and challenges in the following areas: data and analysis needs; currently used data sources for tracking health disparities; training needs for tracking disparities and visualizing data; and current approaches for communicating data to stakeholders.

Implications: These findings inform SHARE-NW's strategy to support rural LHDs in receiving the necessary data for decision-making, designing training programs for data use training, and building visualization tools that facilitate data use by rural public health leaders.

**OBJECTIVE(S):** Identify current strategies and challenges regarding data use in rural Northwest public health departments.

Formulate strategies to address data needs among rural Northwest public health departments.

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