



PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK 2019



Wednesday, April 3rd: *Rural Health*

For science.

Rural communities face a range of health disparities, (a “health disparity” refers to a higher burden of illness, injury, disability, or mortality experienced by one group relative to another, in this case, rural versus urban communities) from higher burdens of chronic disease to limited access to primary care and prevention services. When compared to people living in urban areas, rural Americans face a greater risk of death from the five leading causes of death — heart disease, cancer, unintentional injury, chronic lower respiratory disease and stroke. Suicide rates are also higher in rural America than in urban areas, with that gap growing steadily since the early 2000s. The opioid addiction and overdose crisis has hit rural communities especially hard — the rate of fatal overdoses is higher in rural communities than in metropolitan ones. Complicating matters, rural residents are often more likely to face social determinants that negatively impact health, such as poverty, transportation barriers and lack of jobs that pay well.

For action.

Mendocino County's Health and Human Services Agency's Public Health Branch is initiating efforts that connect rural residents to medical and supportive services through telemedicine systems, which is the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of telecommunications technology. Public Health is advocating for supportive and evidence-based public health policies, such as easier access to naloxone, and is providing Suicide Prevention Training called Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR). Public Health is also working in community partnerships to target the social determinants of health, which are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.

For health.

Please contact Barbara Howe, Public Health Director at howeb@mendocinocounty.org, 707-472-2789, if you would like to learn more about any of the activities mentioned in this article. To attend or sponsor a QPR Training please contact: LIVE WELL Program at (707) 467-5292 or email: 4marvelharrison@gmail.com.