

Provider Notice

To: **All Providers**
From: **PerformCare**
Date: **November 6, 2025**
Subject: **AD 25 120: Cultural Considerations of Rural Communities**

Culture involves values and norms that impact decision making, communication with others, skills, how we view ourselves, and how we view our environment. It is a way of life that is passed down from one generation to the next and can impact how one relates to resources within that culture, including behavioral health resources. Characteristics of a rural culture have been identified as

- Strong sense of independence
- Influence of faith
- Profound work ethic
- Connection to the land or place
- Importance of family
- Conservatism
- Use of informal resources, such as friends, family, and faith-based community

It is important to note that these characteristics might not apply to everyone who resides in rural locations. Engaging Members who reside in rural communities in discussions related to how culture could impact behavioral health treatment is recommended as opposed to making assumptions.¹

The variability in the demographics within rural communities is also important to consider within the context of culture. While the population in rural areas of the United States remains predominantly Non-Hispanic Caucasian, there has been an increase in racial and ethnic diversity within these regions. The greatest increase in the variability of demographics has been observed among children in these areas. When providing behavioral health services to Members, consideration should be given to their unique cultural variables, and the resulting impact on how they view and engage in services. ^{1,2}

¹ <https://reachhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/REACH-RCC-White-Paper-Final-2016.pdf>

² <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/growing-racial-diversity-rural-america-results-2020-census#:~:text=In%20part%2C%20the%20recent%20uptick,to%2020.2%20percent%20in%202010>

Recommendations when providing behavioral health services in rural communities consist of the following:

- Engage with local and regional organizations who understand local culture
- Build relationships and trust with leaders in the community and those from marginalized populations
- View behavioral health communication and treatment through the cultural lens of the community being served. ³

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³ https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/pdfs/Practice%20Brief_Culture%20and%20History_2-5-18_long.pdf