

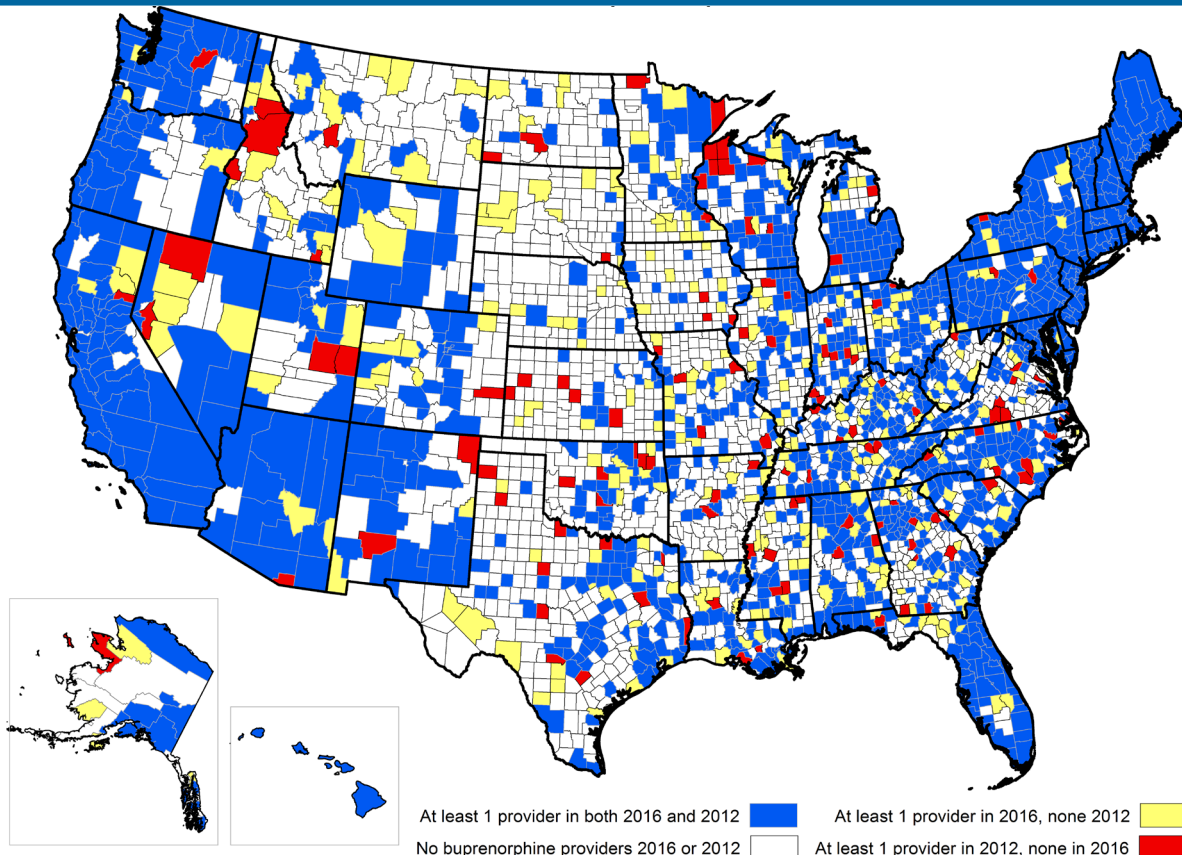
Changes in the Supply of Physicians with a DEA DATA Waiver to Prescribe Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder

KEY FINDINGS

- 1648 counties (52.5%) nationally had at least 1 waived provider in 2016, up from 1465 (46.6%) in 2012.¹
- 1188 rural counties (60.1%) had no waived providers in 2016, down from 1377 (67.1%) of rural counties in 2012.¹
- 319 counties with no waived providers in 2012 gained at least 1 waived provider in 2016 and 136 counties that had at least 1 waived provider in 2012¹ had no waived providers in 2016.

The US is in the midst of a significant opioid abuse epidemic. In 2015, an estimated 2.0 million Americans were suffering from opioid use disorder (OUD) and an estimated 828,000 were using heroin.² Buprenorphine-naloxone is an effective treatment for OUD that can be provided in an office-based setting. The Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 allows physicians who complete training to prescribe buprenorphine to treat OUD. However, rural populations face challenges in accessing this treatment. While access to waived physicians has increased since 2012, more than half of rural counties nationally (60.1%) still lack a physician with a Drug Enforcement Agency waiver to prescribe buprenorphine.

US Counties with Buprenorphine Providers



Data Source: DEA Waivered physician list, July 2012 & April 2016
Map Date: May 2016

Table 1. Supply of Physicians with DEA DATA Waivers in US Counties, by Rural-Urban Status

Characteristic	Metropolitan ^a	Adjacent to Metropolitan ^b	Micropolitan, Not Adjacent to Metropolitan ^c	Small and Remote Rural Counties ^d	Total
	Urban	Rural	Rural	Rural	
US population, No. (%)	275,252,217 (85.6%)	30,345,392 (9.4%)	8,881,459 (2.8%)	6,939,752 (2.2%)	321,418,820
Total Counties	1,166	1,027	269	680	3,142
Counties with ≥1 physicians with waivers, No. (%)	860 (65.9%)	466 (45.4%)	160 (59.5%)	162 (23.8%)	1648 (52.5%)
(% change from 2012 ¹)	(+1.4%)	(+5.8%)	(+12.7%)	(+6.3%)	(+5.9%)
Counties with no physician with a waiver, No. (%)	306 (26.2%)	561 (54.6%)	109 (40.5%)	518 (76.2%)	1494 (47.5%)
Physicians with waivers per 100,000 residents, No.	9.7	5.2	6.8	5.6	9.1
Physicians with waivers, %	91.2%	5.4%	2.1%	1.3%	29,235

DATA = Drug Addiction Treatment Act; DEA = Drug Enforcement Administration; UIC = Urban Influence Code

Note: counties were classified as urban or into 1 of 3 categories of rural using the US Department of Agriculture UIC.

a Counties with an urban core with a population of at least 50,000, UIC 1-2.

b Counties that are geographically adjacent to a metropolitan area whose largest town/urban cluster has 10,000-49,999 residents, UIC 3-7.

c Counties that are not adjacent to a metropolitan area and whose largest town/urban cluster has 10,000-49,999 residents, UIC 8.

d Counties whose largest town has fewer than 10,000 residents regardless of proximity to a micropolitan county, UIC 9-12.

DATA AND METHODS

This study used the DEA lists of physicians with a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder, (April 2016, July 2012), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service Urban Influence Codes, (UIC) (2013), the Claritas U.S. population data (2015, 2011) and the American Medical Association (AMA) Physician Masterfile (2012).

All U.S. counties were categorized into one of the following four geographic categories using the UICs: Metropolitan (UIC 1, 2), Adjacent to Metropolitan (UIC 3-7), Micropolitan, not Adjacent to Metropolitan (UIC 8), and Small and Remote Rural Counties (UIC 9-12). All physicians on the DEA list in April 2016 were included in the analysis. Physicians who were determined to be over 80 years of age or who had an inactive practice status in the 2012 AMA Physician Masterfile were excluded from the 2012 analysis. Similar information was not available for the 2016 data.

REFERENCES

1. Rosenblatt RA, Andrilla CHA, Catlin M, Larson EH. Geographic and specialty distribution of US physicians trained to treat opioid use disorder. *Ann Fam Med.* 2015;13:23-26.
2. SAMHSA. Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2015/NSDUH-FFR1-2015/NSDUH-FFR1-2015.pdf>.

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