

# Rural Foreign-Trained Health Professionals

NRHA Factsheet and Talking Points



## Who is the rural immigrant population?

During 2007 to 2011, an average of 2.1 million foreign-born people lived either in nonmetro counties. Rural immigrants tend to be of working-class age, between age 18 to 64, and more racially and ethnically diverse in comparison to native-born rural populations. More than half of all rural immigrants are Hispanic (54.2 %) and one-quarter (25.9%) are non-Hispanic white. .

## Impact on Rural

Many rural communities rely on immigrants to meet health care provider shortages, offering incentives to those willing to work in underserved communities. One report shows that 22.4% of all healthcare workers in rural areas are foreign trained compared to only 18.2% in urban areas, underscoring their importance to these understaffed areas. Physicians, nurses, and others from immigrant backgrounds make up an important component of rural health care access.

## NRHA Stance

NRHA supports the continuation and expansion of the J-1 Visa Waiver program. Foreign medical graduates (FMG) seeking entry into the U.S. for graduate medical education (GME) should be required to seek classification as J-1 nonimmigrant aliens.