

## Call for Papers

### ***Rural Veteran Healthcare: Research and Innovative Practices to Improve Veteran Access to High-Quality Comprehensive Care in Rural Settings***

The *Journal of Rural Health* is launching a special issue focused on rural U.S. military veteran healthcare and health outcomes. This issue aims to highlight research and innovations that:

1. Support the delivery of **accessible, high-quality, integrated healthcare** to rural veterans;
  2. Optimize the **Veterans Health Administration (VHA) workforce capacity** to meet the needs of rural veterans;
  3. Develop and evaluate **care coordination strategies** across VHA and non-VHA healthcare systems to ensure a **cohesive network of care** in low-resource settings; and
  4. Improve rural veterans' access to **resources addressing social drivers of health**, thereby reducing inequities caused by geographic distance.
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## Guest Editors

- **Travis Lovejoy, Ph.D., M.P.H.** – VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR (*Point of contact for questions related to this special issue*)
  - **Jan Lindsay, Ph.D.** – Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX
  - **Carolyn Turvey, Ph.D.** – Iowa City VA Health Care System, Iowa City, IA
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## Aims of the Special Issue

Approximately 4.4 million veterans live in rural areas, representing 24% of all U.S. veterans. Rural veterans experience higher rates of chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, compared to their urban counterparts. The VHA is committed to providing high-quality healthcare to veterans in rural settings; however, these veterans face significant access challenges and often rely on a combination of VHA and community-based care to meet their healthcare needs.

Additionally, rural veterans encounter access barriers related to social drivers of health, such as:

- Transportation challenges
- Limited broadband internet access, which is essential for video telehealth
- Suboptimal care coordination across healthcare systems
- Workforce shortages

This special issue is intended for:

- Healthcare and policy leaders focused on rural health improvements
- VHA and community healthcare partners collaborating in veteran care

- Rural health researchers
  - Veterans receiving or providing healthcare in rural areas
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## Topics of Interest

Articles in this special issue will explore topics including, but not limited to:

- **Telehealth and digital health innovations** that enhance rural veterans' access to care
- **Coordination between VHA and community providers**, including VHA-purchased care, and its impact on healthcare delivery
- **Urban-rural differences in social drivers of health**, along with interventions addressing **broadband access and other rural-specific challenges**
- **Workforce disparities in rural healthcare** and strategies to improve **rural healthcare employee recruitment and retention**

For this special issue, we will accept full-length articles, brief reports, and systematic reviews. Please refer to “Types of Submissions” at the journal website for a description of these submission formats.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/17480361/homepage/forauthors.html>

We encourage submissions of original empirical research, evaluations, and quality-improvement studies. Priority will be given to manuscripts employing robust quantitative and/or qualitative methods. We will also consider secondary data analyses if they provide clear operational or policy recommendations. Studies analyzing interventions targeting rural-urban disparities in healthcare access are also welcome.

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## Submission Process and Guidelines

Authors interested in submitting an article for this special issue should first submit an abstract outlining their proposed manuscript. The abstract should explicitly describe how the manuscript aligns with the goals of this special issue.

### Key Dates:

- **Abstract submission deadline:** April 30, 2025
- **Notification of acceptance:** May 31, 2025
- **Full manuscript submission deadline:** September 30, 2025

### Submission Requirements:

Submissions must include a single document containing the following elements:

- Proposed article title

- List of all contributing authors, with institutional affiliations
- Name and email of the corresponding author (Point of Contact - POC)
- Abstract in a structured format (Purpose, Methods, Findings, and Conclusions), not to exceed 400 words
- Three to five keywords related to the manuscript topic

### **Submission Instructions:**

Submissions should be emailed to [Ayushi.Gulati@va.gov](mailto:Ayushi.Gulati@va.gov) with the email subject heading “JRH Special Issue”.