

# OCRH Series on Rural-Urban Disparities

## AGE MATTERS: Who Lives in Rural Washington?

### Facts:

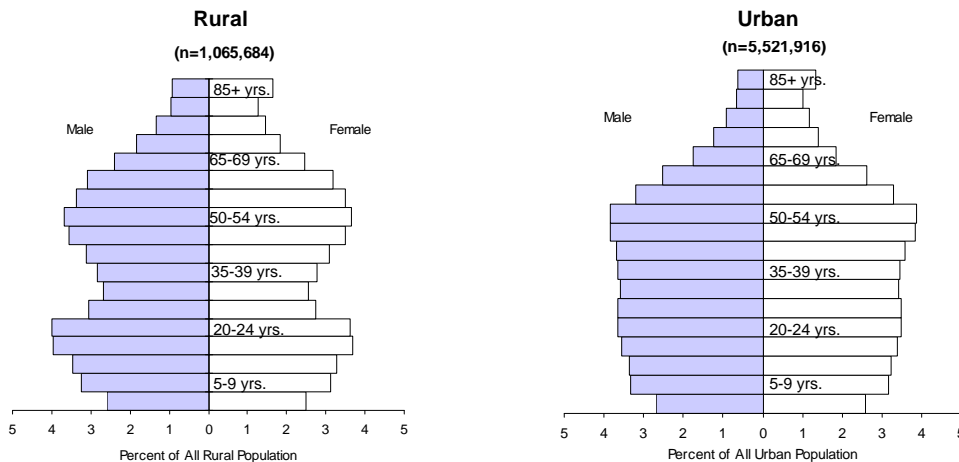
Rural Populations are both younger and older, with fewer in the middle:

- **Older and more likely to be Medicare eligible.** Population over age 65 is 16% vs. 12% in urban areas.
- **Younger.** Rural population between age 15-24 is 15% vs. 14% in urban areas.
- **Fewer working-age residents.** Working-age population between age 25-64 is 51% vs. 56% in urban areas.

### Comparison of age groups in rural and urban Washington State, 2008 (%)

Age groups	Rural	Urban
Children (ages 0-14)	17.1	17.3
Young adults (ages 15-24):	15.5	14.3
Working age adults (ages 25-64)	51.1	56.3
Retired and elderly (ages 65+)	16.4	12.1
<b>Total population</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Population Pyramids for Rural and Urban Areas, 2008**  
(Percent of total rural and urban populations by age)



### Rural Policy Implications:

- We need health services for a rural population that is both younger and older than the average for the state.
- Older people tend to use services for chronic care management such as diabetes and heart disease while younger people need services for reproductive health and childbirth.
- Lack of working-age adults means fewer employment-financed options for rural health care services. Health services in rural Washington depend heavily on federal and state subsidies.

Rural and urban areas are defined using the Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) system. Rural is large rural towns and small town/isolated rural areas combined. Urban is urban core and sub-urban areas

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