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PUBLIC HEALTH
TEXAS A&M HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Office of the Dean

Fall 2015

Greetings from the Texas A&M School of Public Health:

The Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health is committed to outreach and education to address rural disparities. It is clear that "being rural" presents many unique challenges due to critical shortages of health care providers, public health workers, and a decaying public health care infrastructure.

Are we closing the gap on rural-urban health disparities? In many areas, like access to health insurance, the answer is yes. Unfortunately, in many other areas such as chronic disease, immunizations, and maternal childcare, rural residents continue to lag far behind residents living in suburban and urban areas.

Inside these pages, you'll find the most up-to-date literature on the prevalence of disease in rural areas, variations by rural regions and by race/ethnicity, barriers to rural health care, causes of the problem, and models that have been proven to work. Topics include primary care, emergency medical services, mental health, diabetes, tobacco use, family planning, injury and violence prevention, technology, and much more.

We hope that these two volumes of *Rural Healthy People 2020*, published by our Southwest Rural Health Research Center, provide you with a helpful guide to America's top 20 rural health priorities and allow you to serve the needs of your constituents nationally and locally.

It is our expectation that *Rural Healthy People 2020* will enhance your efforts to support federal, state, and local health policies that address the needs of rural Americans and to work to provide the best possible health care in rural areas. Together we can strengthen the capacity of Texas and the nation to address the needs of our rural communities.

On behalf of the A&M Community,

Jay Maddock, Ph.D.
Dean, Texas A&M School of Public Health