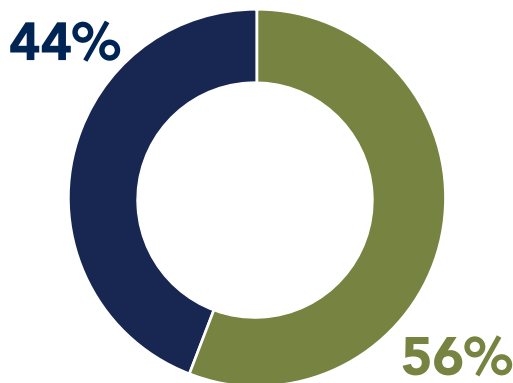


HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED SC'S RURAL HEALTH CLINICS

South Carolina's federally designated Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) are facing new challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These clinics are experiencing reductions in patient visits and elective procedures ranging from 50-75%. Despite this loss of revenue, these clinics are working to implement COVID-19 testing and telehealth options for their patients.

RHC PARTICIPATION IN COVID-19 TESTING

Nearly half of our RHCs are providing in-house COVID-19 testing. Those that are not able to test at this time have arrangements with partner testing facilities. Some have difficulty in obtaining testing supplies. Some report a shortage of PPE for their staff. Still others have had to reduce their staff.



- RHCs conducting COVID-19 testing in-house
- RHCs coordinating with other facilities for COVID-19 testing

- **36%** of the RHCs not testing are sending patients to the hospital within their system
- **64%** of the RHCs not testing have developed standard workflows to send patients to nearest community or regional hospital(s) conducting testing
- **13%** respondents indicated that they are having difficulty getting tests
- **3-5 days** most frequent testing turnaround time. Testing turnaround times vary widely; ranging from 3-14 days

RHC PARTICIPATION IN TELEHEALTH

Clinic staff have worked to quickly implement telehealth services and determine payment criteria in this rapidly changing landscape. But it's not always a smooth transition from in-person visits to remote visits.

90%
respondents
using telehealth
to reach
patients

- **59%** of those using telehealth are reaching patients by phone
- **74%** of those using telehealth are reaching patients by telehealth platform
- **48%** of practices using a telehealth platform are using doxy.me

Difficulties in adopting these new technologies include:

- Inconsistent broadband access in rural areas
- Uncertainty regarding payment for services
- Patients who do not have smart phones to access telehealth apps and other features
- Elderly patients often have trouble understanding the technology or setting up apps
- Lack of self-monitoring equipment (scales, blood pressure cuff, thermometer) in homes