

# Health Affairs

## MEDIA ADVISORY

**EMBARGOED UNTIL**  
**Wednesday, November 20, 2019**  
**4:00 PM Eastern Time**

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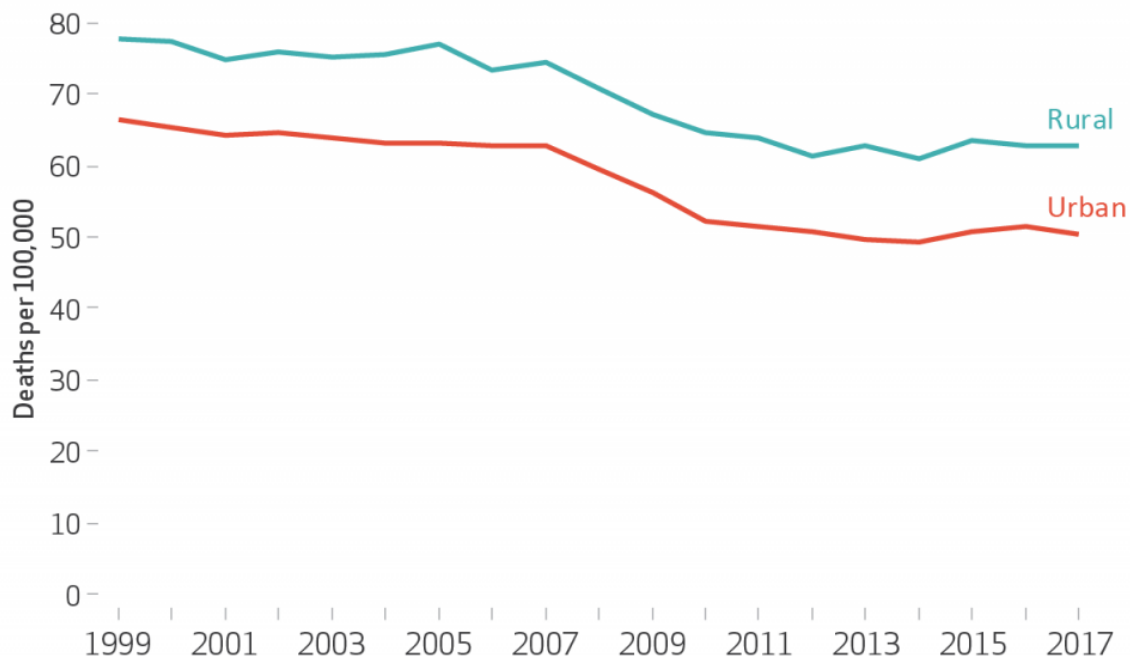
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**From *Health Affairs***

**Growing Rural-Urban Disparities In Pediatric Deaths Since 1999**

**Bethesda, MD**—Reducing mortality among US infants, children, and young adults has been a governmental priority. While pediatric death rates have declined nationally, disparities remain for some groups of children. A [new study](#), released ahead of print by *Health Affairs*, found that rural youth ages 0–19 were more likely than urban youth to die during childhood throughout the entire period from 1999 through 2017 (see the exhibit below). In addition, while the death rate for rural children dropped 19 percent between 1999 and 2017, from 77.6 per 100,000 to 62.9 per 100,000, the decline among urban children was significantly greater—a decrease of 24 percent, from 66.4 per 100,000 to 50.2 per 100,000. Among rural children, non-Hispanic black infants and American Indian/Alaska Native children were particularly at risk. The authors used mortality data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their analysis.

Deaths per 100,000 population among children and adolescents ages 0–19, by rurality of county of residence, 1999–2017



Janice Probst et al. Health Aff 2019; published online

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HealthAffairs

### **Declines In Pediatric Mortality Fall Short For Rural US Children**

*By Janice Probst, Whitney Zahnd, and Charity Breneman*

<http://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00892>

All authors are affiliated with the University of South Carolina. Probst is with the Arnold School of Public Health, and Zahnd and Breneman are with the Rural and Minority Health Research Center.

This study will also appear in the journal's December issue, a theme issue with studies focusing on rural health.

"To reduce the disproportionate number of rural children's lives lost, various public health activities are critical, including addressing the burdens of unintentional injury and suicide among rural youth and surveilling health outcomes among rural children in racial/ethnic minority groups to address ongoing disparities," the authors conclude. "Reducing deaths due to [motor vehicle] crashes would require the integration of safe road design, proactive legislation regarding safe driving behavior, and improvements in EMS response.... Two state-level policy changes—protecting children from access to firearms and addressing

mental health coverage under insurance plans—could contribute to reducing youth suicide mortality."

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#### **About Health Affairs**

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