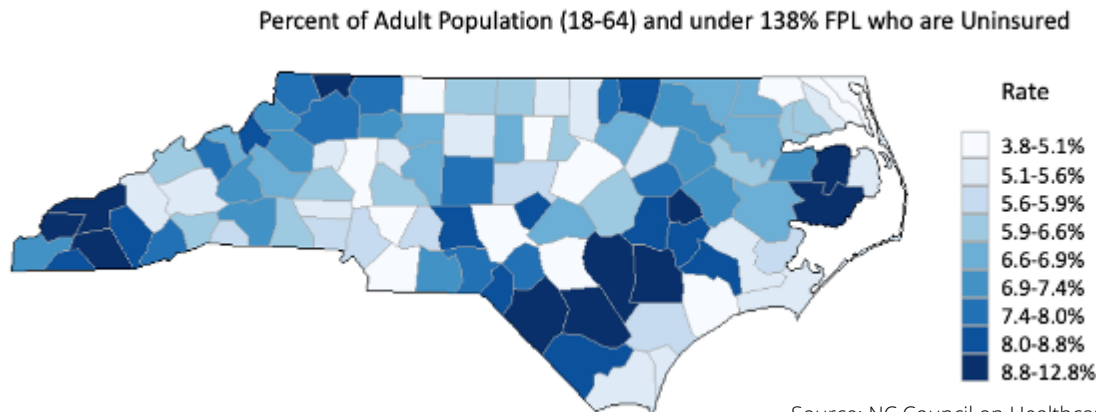


**Rural residents are 40% more likely to fall in the health insurance coverage gap.<sup>1</sup>**



Source: NC Council on Healthcare Coverage, 2020

## Rural residents stand to benefit most from closing the coverage gap.

- There are 14 counties in NC where over 20% of workers are uninsured. All 14 of these counties are rural.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2019, 18% of rural residents in NC lived in poverty, compared to 12% of urban residents. Closing the gap has been linked with increased financial stability among low-income adults.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Rural areas have higher rates of substance use, suicide, injury, and preventable hospitalizations—all of which have shown to improve as a result of closing the gap.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

## Closing the gap improves rural hospital finances.

- States that have already closed their coverage gap have seen a 62% decrease in likelihood of rural hospitals closing.<sup>8</sup>
- There are currently six rural hospitals in NC considered at high risk of closure.<sup>1</sup>
- Closing the only hospital in a county leads to a decrease of about \$1,300 in per capita income.<sup>1</sup>

## Closing the gap increases access to healthcare in rural areas.

- Closing the gap has been associated with greater use of community health centers and increased behavioral health staff in rural areas.<sup>9</sup>
- In states that closed their coverage gap, rural clinics scored better on quality metrics and were able to provide more frequent and consistent care.<sup>10</sup>

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