TITLE: A New Map of Health Care Access For Rural And Underserved Areas.

FACULTY MENTOR: Jaclyn Hall Ph.D.
jaclynha@ufl.edu
262 -9099

FACULTY MENTOR DEPARTMENT   Health Outcomes and Policy

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:
In the United States, the rural health disparity has been a recent focus of attention and made a priority for improvement. While many standardized categorizations of urban and rural geographic areas exist (RUCA, US Census, etc) they have not been created to represent differences in public health care access, yet the need to focus on the underserved rural population is great.

Objective: Standard methods to differentiate rural and urban areas/populations in the US do not properly represent the variation in access to public health care resources experienced by rural and urban populations. We will use distance to primary (e.g. PCP, dentist), secondary (regional hospitals) and tertiary (e.g. NICU, sickle cell center, pediatric hospital) health care resources to design a new rural urban map for public health studies in the U.S.

Role of medical student: The medical student is expected to have the desire and ability to learn basics of the ArcMap— a GIS and spatial analysis software. Software and tutorials to this powerful analytical tool will be provided. The student will be expected to work critically to help determine measures of spatial access to health care which will contribute to a new map/categorization of rural and urban across the nation, with FL and Texas being test studies. Health outcomes from multiple studies will be evaluated with this new rural urban categorization.

Expected outcomes include a poster presentation at UF and faculty mentorship (with co-authorship) in manuscript preparation.

Funding and relevant publications: Current funding of the department of Health Outcomes and Policy through its External Quality Review Organization and OneFlorida DataTrust allow for this new research endeavor.