

Abstract

Exploring options to strengthen rural health care: comparing the United States of America and United Kingdom

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Abstract

Introduction: The USA has long wrestled with the challenges of delivering high quality care to rural areas and has developed an extensive set of policy interventions to support rural providers. The release of the results of a Parliamentary inquiry into rural health and care in the UK provides an opportunity to compare US and UK efforts to support rural health and share lessons learned from the USA.

Methods: This presentation reviews the results of a study of US federal and state policy efforts to support rural providers dating back to the early 1970s. The lessons learned from these efforts can inform the work of the UK as it addresses the recommendations discussed in the February 2022 report from the Parliamentary inquiry. The presentation will review the major recommendations identified in the report and compare US efforts to address similar challenges.

Results: The results of the inquiry indicate that the USA and UK share common challenges and inequalities in rural healthcare access. The Inquiry Panel made 12 recommendations for change under four broad headings:

- Build understanding of the distinctive needs of rural areas;
- Deliver services suited to the specific needs of rural places;
- Develop a structural and regulatory framework that fosters adaption and innovation; and
- Develop integrated services that provide holistic, person-centered care.

Discussion: This presentation will be of interest to policymakers in the USA, the UK, and other countries working to improve rural healthcare systems.

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