



Increasing Number of Hospitals Close in Pennsylvania, Texas, and Kansas

According to the United States Government Accountability Office, 64 rural hospitals closed between 2013 and 2017 (1). Since 2010, the number totals 120 across the U.S. (2). These hospitals were mostly (1):

- Located in southern states
- Medicare-dependent
- For-profit institutions

Where are hospital closures taking place?



Rural hospitals are being shut down because they are found to be in “financial distress.” The majority of these instances of financial distress result from Medicare payment reductions, as well as fewer patients seeking inpatient care. Commonly, the healthcare systems will then



contract in these cases. Rural hospitals all over the country are taking a hit, especially in places like Texas, which has seen 20 rural hospitals close in recent years.

Hospitals close up in Pennsylvania

A recent article explained the surprising uptick in closures of rural hospitals in Pennsylvania (3). Mid-Valley Hospital in Lackawanna County was closed in 2012, and Schuylkill County Hospital in Ashland closed in 2014. Most recently, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Susquehanna Sunbury Hospital announced that it will be closing this Spring (3).

Pittsburgh Business Times explained that 154 employees are predicted to be impacted by the closing of the Sunbury hospital as of March 31. However, the UPMC Susquehanna system has been hiring many of these individuals in other hospitals (4).

Residents in the Sunbury area are unsure how they will get the medical services they need after their hospitals close. The issue of not having a community hospital has been exasperated by the area's limited transportation and slow internet speeds (3).

Dangers of rural hospital closures

When Mercy Hospital in Fort Scott, Kansas closed down last year, several physicians stayed in the area. Its emergency department is set to remain open and will be run by a hospital nearby for the next two years (2). Otherwise, residents of Fort Scott would need to travel 30 miles south to Pittsburg, Kansas, or 90 miles north to Kansas City, Kansas to visit a hospital.



This is a huge change for residents, especially new mothers. The president of nearby Ascension's Pittsburgh hospital came to a recent Fort Scott Chamber of Commerce gathering to encourage doctors to counsel pregnant women regarding preparations for delivering at a hospital out of their area.

Beyond women in need of urgent care for labor and delivery, entire communities of people in need are suffering. One study found that, while urban hospital closures had little to no impact on residents, rural hospital closures increased their population's mortality rates by 5.9% (5). The mortality risk is higher for poorer individuals who lack access to transportation to get to the specialists they need.

About the HIE Help Center

The HIE Help Center is run by [ABC Law Centers](#) (Reiter & Walsh, P.C.), a medical malpractice firm exclusively handling cases involving HIE and other birth injuries. Our lawyers have over 100 years of combined experience, and have been advocating for children with HIE and related disabilities since the firm's inception in 1997.

We are passionate about helping families obtain the compensation necessary to cover their extensive medical bills, loss of wages (if one or both parents have to miss work in order to care for their child), assistive technology, and other necessities.

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