



Rural Task Force

Why Rural Surgical Care?



Location

Nearly two-thirds of Wisconsin counties are defined as rural. Almost one-third of counties in Wisconsin have fewer than 20 surgeons per 100,000 people, and 14 percent of counties have no surgeons at all.



Evidence-based guidelines have impact

There are unique challenges to practicing in a rural setting, including lack of access to resources and specialists for consultation. Additionally, rural surgeons often have a broad scope of practice, making it difficult to stay current with ever-changing evidence-based guidelines and best practices.



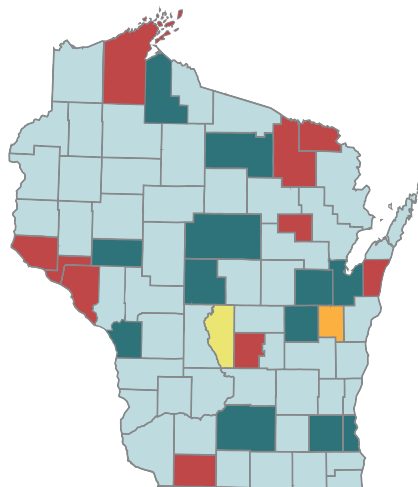
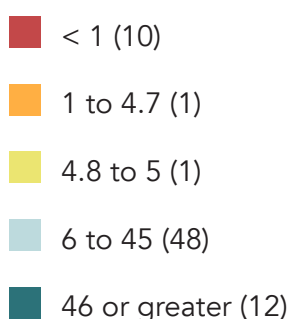
Ensure equal access to high-quality surgical care

The Rural Task Force was created in response to feedback from our members who practice in rural settings, with the goal of creating a collaborative learning network with quality measures and initiatives that are relevant to rural surgical practice.

The Problem

- Many rural surgeons are in solo practice or have a limited number of surgical partners, leading to unique challenges.
- The patients served by rural hospitals are often older, more medically complex, less likely to seek timely medical care, and more economically disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts.
- Rural surgeons are often unable to participate in registries and quality improvement initiatives due to case volume thresholds required for quality measurement and a relative lack of hospital resources.

Surgeons per 100,000 Population (Number of Counties)



How can SCW support rural surgeons?

- Engage and partner with surgeons practicing in rural counties to identify the unique challenges and opportunities associated with the rural practice setting and develop appropriate, relevant quality-improvement initiatives.
- Develop surgical quality measures with reduced volume thresholds to allow surgeons in rural practice to receive benchmarked performance reports.
- Work to address barriers to effective and efficient patient transfers between tertiary facilities and local facilities.
- Create a network for collaborative virtual and in-person learning opportunities to discuss and refine best practices for surgeons practicing in rural settings.

Interested in participating?

- We welcome participation by surgeons, nurses, quality improvement specialists, and others involved in the care of patients undergoing surgery in rural settings.
- To receive a benchmarked performance report, a Participating Hospital/Facility Agreement must be signed.
- For more information, please contact us: info@scwisconsin.org or (608) 263-3381