



American Heart Association  
Bernard J. Tyson  
Office of Health Equity



**JOURNEYS IN FILM**<sup>™</sup>  
educating for global understanding



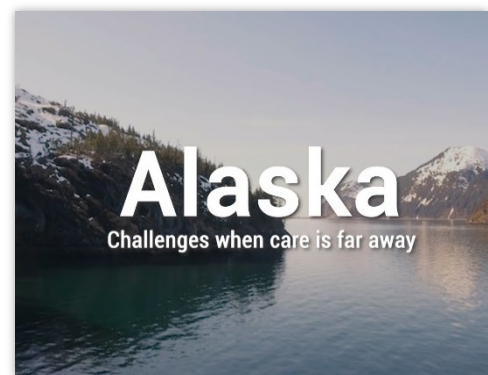
*Health*  
**HELP  
WANTED**  
FINDING CARE IN RURAL AMERICA

## DISCUSSION GUIDES: OVERVIEW

*Health Wanted: Finding Care in Rural America* is a six-part docuseries that uses compelling, on-location storytelling from Alaska to Appalachia to explore the challenges of delivering equitable health care to rural populations. The series focuses on barriers to preventing and treating heart disease, addressing mental health and reducing maternal mortality in rural areas, where access to care is limited and resources are scant.

By highlighting efforts by health care professionals, patients and communities to improve care and access, the series aims to raise awareness and inspire systems change, innovation and advocacy.

In rural areas, the death rate from heart disease is 21% higher than in urban settings. There is a three-year life expectancy gap between rural and urban populations.



Through the docuseries, the American Heart Association seeks to mobilize viewers and stakeholders to recognize and address such disparities, underscored by the AHA's 2020 Call to Action on Rural Health.



*Health Wanted: Finding Care in Rural America* was developed by the American Heart Association's content production team, American Heart Association Creative Studios. American Heart Association Creative Studios aims to be a media powerhouse that harnesses the transformative power of storytelling to bring the benefits of science to everyone, drive continued support for the AHA's mission and uplift diverse voices and experiences.

The AHA's Bernard J. Tyson Office of Health Equity is central to the mission of the *Health Wanted* docuseries, aligning the content with broader efforts to dismantle systemic barriers to equitable health care access and outcomes in rural America. By collaborating with communities and health professionals and leveraging Office of Health Equity resources, the series illuminates a sustainable approach to improving care systems, enhancing workforce capabilities and creating long-term health improvements for rural populations.

Ultimately, the goal is to ignite a national dialogue about rural health inequities and to support advocacy for policies that expand access to care, improve health outcomes and ensure that geography and resource allocation are not barriers to equitable health.





## FILMS AND CONTEXT

***Health Wanted: Finding Care in Rural America* is a free docuseries from the American Heart Association featuring six short episodes that highlight rural communities' health care challenges.**

In the rural U.S., uncontrolled, traditional heart disease risk factors are more prevalent and death rates from cardiovascular disease and stroke are higher. These factors are interconnected with others, such as more limited access to preventive and specialty care, challenges with local roads and terrain, and shortages of health care workers and first responders. The video series spotlights specific challenges in rural Alaska, Kansas, Kentucky, the Dakotas and West Virginia. The series also showcases solutions that people and organizations are implementing to save lives.

The video series spotlights five regions across America: **Alaska, Kansas, Kentucky, the Dakotas and West Virginia.**

Community viewings of the series, followed by discussion, can yield valuable insights into the obstacles facing rural communities and suggest opportunities for developing local solutions, inspired by initiatives showcased in each feature. The AHA hopes such conversations can serve as catalysts for community action and improved health care for rural Americans.



## DISCUSSING THE FILMS

### ***Screening Objectives:***

The primary objective is to raise awareness about health disparities and challenges facing rural U.S. communities. Additional goals include:

- Examining health care challenges specific to various rural regions.
- Highlighting community-driven innovations and solutions addressing rural health issues.
- Encouraging community engagement in rural health initiatives.
- Highlighting the AHA's successful programs in areas including CPR education, access to automated external defibrillators, routine preventive care, nutrition insecurity and health care legislation and policy.

### ***Framing the Conversation***

The *Health Wanted* video series goes beyond statistics to explore how limited access to health care affects the well-being, resilience and sense of security of people and their communities.

Viewers will gain a sweeping view of rural health care issues and the experiences of people in underserved areas. Exploring topics as varied as medevacs, AED access and regenerative agriculture, the series delves into how different regions face distinct obstacles in accessing quality health care. It shows how local culture, geography and economic factors shape each area's challenges and solutions, articulating why one-size-fits-all approaches can fall short in addressing rural health care needs. Community members can work toward new solutions through a lens combining local knowledge and broader health care expertise.



### ***How to Use the Discussion Guides***

The *Health Wanted* series contains six films, each about 10 minutes long and accessible on YouTube. Your group can watch one or curate several around a theme for a viewing session. The films are:

- [“Health Wanted: Finding Care in Rural America”](#) (Introductory Video)
- [“Alaska: Challenges When Care Is Far Away”](#)
- [“Kentucky: Location, Transportation and Limited Resources”](#)
- [“Kansas: Addressing Food Insecurity Through Regenerative Agriculture”](#)
- [“The Dakotas: CPR and AED Availability in Rural Areas”](#)
- [“West Virginia: Addressing High Blood Pressure, Diabetes and Obesity”](#)

Each film's guide contains the following material:



**Overview and background:** Framing language and helpful insights about the topic



**Discussion questions:** Guided prompts to help get the conversation started



**Resources:** Organizations to contact and sources to research as you prepare for your event, or information to share with participants to expand learning opportunities



**Potential partners:** Community groups and partners that can contribute additional knowledge during moderated conversations



**Engagement activities:** Ideas to promote active participation in film topics and discussion questions that support in-depth conversations and personal reflection