

# Mapping Mobile Health Care Units:

## A Data Profile of Health Center Deployment and Growth

### Introduction

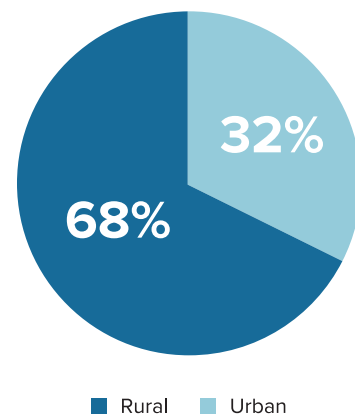
Mobile health units (MHUs) are a flexible way for Health Centers<sup>1</sup> to deliver care directly to communities that face challenges accessing services due to distance, transportation, or other barriers. Studies have shown that MHUs represent a cost-effective care delivery model, producing savings and improved health outcomes in medically underserved communities.<sup>2</sup> Examples of cost savings include avoided emergency department visits, hospitalization and hospital readmission rates, and quality-adjusted life years.<sup>2</sup> Improved health outcomes associated with MHUs include establishing preventative and prenatal care, managing chronic conditions, and increased screenings, especially in rural communities.<sup>2</sup>

The data below highlights how health centers are using mobile units nationwide, including where they operate, how they've grown, and where gaps remain.<sup>3</sup>

### Overall National Landscape of Mobile Health in Health Centers – 2023

Mobile health has surged in urban areas: a major shift from the nearly even rural-urban distribution 10 years ago.

Mobile Sites Serving:  
Urban vs Rural



**98%** of US states have health centers with mobile units

**1093** mobile units operate under the health center scope nationwide

**41%** of health centers operate at least one mobile unit

**30 hours/week:** average operating time per health center mobile program

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this infographic, "health centers" refers specifically to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQHC Look-Alikes—primary care providers that meet the requirements of Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act and deliver comprehensive care to underserved communities. While the term "health center" is sometimes used more broadly, all data presented here reflects only those organizations receiving 330 funding or designated Look-Alikes by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

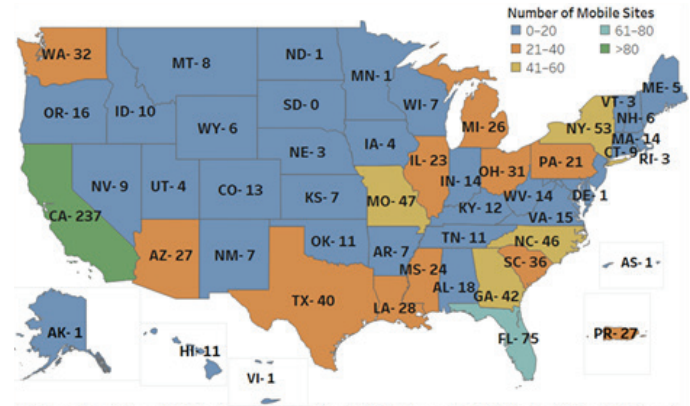
<sup>2</sup> Yu SWY, Hill C, Ricks ML, Bennet J, Oriol NE. The scope and impact of mobile health clinics in the United States: a literature review. *Int J Equity Health*. 2017 Oct 5;16(1):178. doi: 10.1186/s12939-017-0671-2. PMID: 28982362; PMCID: PMC5629787.

## Mobile Health Units by State<sup>3</sup>

California leads the nation with **237 mobile health units**, followed by Texas and Florida.

In **Wyoming**, 25% of all health center sites are mobile health units—demonstrating mobile’s critical role in reaching rural communities.

In **Puerto Rico**, nearly 1 in 5 health center sites are mobile—key to serving geographically isolated populations.



\*U.S. territories Guam (GU), Northern Mariana Islands (MP), Micronesia (FM), Marshall Islands (MH), and Palau (PW) have no reported mobile health sites. American Samoa (AS) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (VI) each report 1 mobile site.

## Mobile Health Unit Growth: 10-Year Trend (2013-2023)

Mobile units are not just expanding—they're evolving to meet changing health needs on the ground.

	National	Rural	Urban
% change 2014 to 2023	<b>227%</b>	<b>109%</b>	<b>348%</b>
% change from 2019 to 2023	<b>94%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>93%</b>

Nationwide, health center mobile units have **more than tripled** since 2013.

Since 2019, the number of mobile units has **nearly doubled** across rural and urban settings.

Urban growth is driving the trend: mobile units in urban areas have increased **348%** in the past decade.

### Acknowledgement

Capital Link resource and support was made possible by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,168,750 with 0 percent financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [www.HRSA.gov](http://www.HRSA.gov).

NACHC resources and support were made possible through support from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation. Founded in 1941 in New York, New York, the Leon Lowenstein Foundation funds and supports projects nationwide. The Foundation’s program areas include education, health, and the environment, with a particular interest in innovation and bringing good ideas to scale.

### ABOUT CAPITAL LINK

Capital Link is a national, non-profit organization that has worked with hundreds of community health centers and primary care associations for over 30 years to plan for sustainability and growth, access capital, improve and optimize operations and financial management, and articulate value. For more information, visit us at [www.caplink.org](http://www.caplink.org).

### ABOUT NACHC

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) represents over 1400 health center organizations, 350,000 health center staff and board volunteers, delivering care to 32.5M patients across the country. NACHC envisions a future where health centers are the nation’s employers, providers, and partners of choice.

<sup>3</sup> Map colors represent the percentage of mobile health sites relative to the total number of health center organizations in each state. Darker shades indicate a greater reliance on mobile service delivery to reach populations with limited access to care. Health Center geography is defined as either rural or urban, according to their 2023 UDS designation. It is important to note that some health centers have multiple sites serving both rural and urban communities.