

## **Findings from rural site visits**

**ISSUE:** The Patient Protection and Affordability Act (PPACA) of 2010 requires MedPAC to evaluate Medicare payments to rural providers, access to care, and the quality of care in rural areas. The mandated report is due June 15, 2012. As a first step, we visited three states to gain the perspectives of people who receive and deliver health care in rural areas. In this session, we report on beneficiary focus groups and site visits we conducted this summer in these rural areas.

**KEY POINTS:** We visited hospitals, federally qualified health centers, rural referral centers, and individual physician offices in three states. We also conducted beneficiary focus groups to assess their experiences, with particular emphasis on access to care. The purpose of these visits was to get the perspective of beneficiaries and rural providers on questions of access and quality of care. We also asked about the challenges and benefits of providing and receiving care in rural areas. This presentation will summarize what beneficiaries and providers in these visits told us.

**ACTION:** Commissioners should discuss the issues raised by these visits and consider next steps.

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