



WORLD-CLASS CLINICAL TRAINING FOR RURAL HEALTHCARE. ANY TOWN. ANY FACILITY.

How SimX VR Medical Simulation Helps States
Put Rural Health Transformation Act Funding to
Work

Executive Summary

- By 2037, the rural primary care [supply is expected to meet only 68%](#) of demand.
- A 2023 report found that, on average, there was [1 rural physician per 2,881 residents](#).
- [Rural residents are more likely to die prematurely](#) from the top causes of death (heart disease, cancer, lung disease, stroke).
- About [38% of rural adults](#) used the emergency room for care that could have been provided at a primary care practice.
- Only [19% of rural adults used telehealth for primary care](#) in 2025, significantly lower than the 29% national average.
- Medicaid covers nearly [50% of children and 18% of adults](#) in rural communities.





A Strategic Guide for State Health Agencies and Rural Healthcare Leaders

The **Rural Health Transformation Act** represents a once-in-a-generation commitment to closing the healthcare gap between rural and urban communities in the United States. States have received their funding. Now comes the harder question:

How to deploy it to create lasting, measurable change?

The answer lies in investing in a critical resource: your state's healthcare workforce. SimX, a leading virtual reality (VR) medical simulation platform, is purpose-built for this exact moment. This brief explains how SimX aligns with each of the Rural Health Transformation Act's five Strategic Goals, and why state health officials, hospital administrators, workforce program directors, and academic partners should consider VR simulation training as a cornerstone of their rural health investment strategy.

1 Make Rural America Healthy Again: Improving Care through Innovative Healthcare Workforce Training

Rural communities face disproportionately high rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, opioid use disorder, and depression, requiring clinicians to deliver care across a broad range of medical and behavioral health needs. According to the CDC, [preventable early deaths from the five leading causes](#)—heart disease, cancer, unintentional injury, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory disease—are more common among people living in rural communities. The challenge is not just access to facilities, but also access to providers trained and confident in diagnosing, stabilizing, and managing complex conditions in low-resource settings.

How SimX Helps

SimX provides the largest library of virtual patient encounters, spanning behavioral health, chronic disease management, primary care, and preventive screenings. Clinicians at rural critical access hospitals can practice diagnosing and managing conditions they rarely see in volume, but must be ready to treat. SimX's tagline, Load, Learn, Repeat™, isn't just a catchy phrase. It embodies our mission to help clinicians build clinical judgment and teamwork skills in a realistic, safe, repeatable environment.

What sets SimX apart is that our fully immersive training platform runs on standalone VR headsets, no simulation center required. Providers train in existing spaces—break rooms or conference rooms—removing a major barrier to rural teams' access to high-quality simulation training and continuing education. SimX also supports multiplayer training, allowing physicians, nurses, EMS providers, and other clinicians to practice together, strengthening team-based skills needed in real clinical settings.

2 Sustainable Access: Strengthening Long-Term Rural Care Systems

[46 million](#) people live in rural America, one in five of whom are 65 or older. This aging population is being served by a shrinking network of rural hospitals. Between 2005 and 2023, [146 hospitals in rural U.S. counties](#) closed or were converted to non-acute care, with 81 shutting down completely. Nearly half of those that remain operate at a financial loss, putting more than 400 additional facilities at risk.

To keep care accessible and sustainable, rural systems must run efficiently, collaborate regionally, and absorb patient surges without exhausting their clinical teams. Investing in well-trained, high-performing clinical staff and ongoing workforce development is one of the most powerful ways to protect both financial stability and community health.

How SimX Helps

SimX's multiplayer technology allows providers across multiple sites, even across state lines, to train together simultaneously in the same virtual environment. For rural health systems, this capability is transformative.

- Interprofessional learning: Nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and other clinicians practice shared communication skills and coordination habits that prevent errors.
- Lower costs: No manikins, dedicated sim labs, or lengthy resets reduce overhead and setup time.
- Scalable onboarding: Rural hospitals deliver consistent, high-quality simulation training for every new hire, regardless of budget or location.

3 Workforce Development: Attracting, Training and Retaining a High-Skilled Workforce

The rural workforce crisis is acute and worsening. In 2023, [92% of rural counties](#) were designated primary care health professional shortage areas, according to the Commonwealth Fund. The projected supply of rural family physicians is expected to fall short of patient demand by 2037, according to the same source. Why the decline? An aging clinician workforce, urban-centered medical training pipelines, and mounting burnout are driving more providers out of rural practice than those entering it.

How SimX Helps

In a market where rural clinicians worry about isolation, limited growth, and burnout, SimX offers high-fidelity, team-based simulation training that matches or exceeds what clinicians receive in major academic centers. By giving providers access to cutting-edge clinical scenarios, frequent interprofessional practice, and convenient, on-demand skills refreshers, rural facilities gain a meaningful recruiting and professional development differentiator. Research supports this: a [systematic review of 27 studies](#) found that continuing employee development and training opportunities were associated with increased intention to stay in a current job, decreased intention to leave, and lower employee turnover. Notably, professional development opportunities were scarce, especially in remote and rural areas, making SimX's ability to deliver them in those settings all the more valuable. SimX helps health systems recruit clinicians who want to keep advancing and gives existing staff a compelling reason to stay, with ongoing opportunities to build confidence, expand competencies, and remain engaged in rural practice.



4 Innovative Care: Training for Better Outcomes and Lower Costs

According to the Commonwealth Fund, [38% of rural adults use the emergency room](#) for care that a primary care provider could have handled. Under value-based care, rural health systems are increasingly measured on outcomes they've historically had the least support and training resources to improve: reducing avoidable ER visits, preventing complications, and coordinating care across long distances.



How SimX Helps

SimX helps clinicians practice the competencies increasingly valued in value-based care: team-based handoffs, SBAR communication, and shared decision-making, which can help reduce complications and readmissions. Providers build readiness for high-acuity, low-occurrence events before they face them in practice. Difficult conversations, from delivering bad news to motivating patients with chronic diseases, can be practiced in a safe, consequence-free training environment. Built-in performance analytics help administrators identify skill gaps, monitor training progress, and direct continuing education where it will have the most impact.

5 Technology Innovation: Training the Rural Workforce for Digital Healthcare

The Rural Health Transformation Act recognizes that the future of rural healthcare is increasingly digital and technology-enabled. Around one in five rural adults currently use telehealth for primary care. This is substantially lower than the [national average of 29%](#). Expanding digital fluency and technology training among rural providers is a prerequisite for closing that gap. SimX is itself a flagship digital health technology, and its adoption signals institutional readiness for broader digital transformation.

How SimX Helps

- SimX's AI Assistant powers dynamic, conversational patient interactions that prepare providers for the AI-augmented workflows that are becoming more common in modern care.
- Communication breakdowns between clinicians, patients, and families are among the most common contributors to adverse events in healthcare. SimX's multiplayer technology puts entire care teams inside shared virtual scenarios, allowing them to practice interprofessional communication skills—handoffs, family conversations, and real-time coordination with colleagues—that help improve outcomes and reduce errors.
- The platform runs on standalone VR headsets with no dedicated server infrastructure, making it a natural fit for rural facilities with limited IT resources.
- SimX scenarios are developed by on-staff clinicians in collaboration with leading healthcare systems and universities, ensuring content remains current, evidence-informed, and clinically relevant.
- Built-in analytics allow administrators to track training completion, monitor skill progression, and document training outcomes.

Your Funding Deserves a Workforce Strategy That Works

The **Rural Health Transformation Act** represents a historic opportunity, but funding alone does not transform health outcomes. What transforms outcomes is a trained, confident, and well-supported workforce operating within efficient, collaborative systems.

SimX provides state health agencies and rural healthcare facilities with a scalable, evidence-based, and cost-effective solution that **directly addresses each of the Act's Strategic Goals**. From the nursing student at a rural community college to the EMS crew responding to a farm accident, SimX makes high-quality clinical simulation training available anywhere, without the manikins, travel requirements, or dedicated simulation centers that many rural facilities cannot afford.

States that invest Rural Health Transformation Act funding in VR simulation training can accelerate workforce development, support provider retention, strengthen chronic disease management, improve value-based care performance, and help build a rural healthcare system prepared for the future.





READY TO PUT YOUR FUNDING TO WORK? START TODAY

Schedule a SimX demo for your state health leadership or rural hospital network today.

Visit simxvr.com/get-started to schedule your consultation today.

