

## **Reviewer-1**

Understanding and the reducing barriers that prevent rural communities from accessing healthcare is an essential public health issue.

Overall, this is a well written and informative manuscript. The sections are appropriate.

The introduction is well written, the references support the author's statement. It might be useful to find a more current reference to the number of uninsured people as 2024/25. The current statement stopes at 2010. I'd suggest changing "Material & Methods "to just "Methods." Methods section is straight forward and concise Results section makes good use of graphs and highlights the most important findings.

The references are fine. Suggest authors find an more current reference for the number of uninsured people.

While not essential I would have liked to know more about Polk and Springfield county (demographics, location, largest employer, etc).