

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 stops 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.

I have changed Material and Methods to just Methods. See below regarding references for the uninsured.

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

The reference was listed in the references list (Cohen 2025) but it was not cited in the body of the paper. This has been fixed with the Cohen reference now cited in the second sentence of paragraph 2 in the introduction.

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

Basic relevant demographic information has been added to the methods section for both Springfield and Polk County, Missouri.

Reviewer-2

Barriers exist in the United States which potentially prevent 46 million Americans from having reliable access to healthcare.

The introduction is overly lengthy. The participants selection process and time period are unclear, especially how to select 2 local clinics.

These locations were selected because they are either the primary FQHC (Springfield) or the county wide health clinic (Polk County). This has been addressed in the Methods section.

A statement related to the length of data collection (6 months) has been added to the methods. The calendar time period is not stated due to IRB constraints but does not influence the outcomes of any statistical analyses.

In table 1, the age should show as mean + SD. In tables, the authors should show number in addition to percentage The generalizability of this study is lacking due to only enrolling two clinics.

Standard deviations and raw numbers have been added as requested. Issues with generalizability are discussed in the last paragraph of the manuscript.