The Southwest Rural Health Research Center (SRHRC) was established in 2000. Its mission is to conduct policy-relevant research focused on:

- Understanding the health needs of rural, underserved, and special populations;
- Addressing the health needs of minority and underserved populations, including reducing health disparities;
- Maintaining and building capacity of rural health systems; and
- Evaluating health services delivery.

SRHRC research projects have focused on chronic disease (including development and dissemination of diabetes self-management technology and education), mental health and substance abuse services, community health workers in rural and border regions, Medicaid policy, quality differences in rural and urban nursing homes and assisted living centers, health professional shortages, patient-centered medical homes, and reducing barriers to cancer screenings including colonoscopy. In the last five years alone, the SRHRC has supported 82 research publications on a variety of topics.

The SRHRC was responsible for producing the historic Rural Healthy People 2010, a companion document to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Healthy People 2010, establishing significant rural health priorities for the first decade of the 21st century. The SRHRC recently conducted a nationwide survey of rural stakeholders – which served as the basis for the updated Rural Healthy People 2020 published in 2015 and available free-of-charge from http://sph.tamhsc.edu/srhrc/

Examples of other recent or current projects include:

- An NIH-funded P20 study examining disparities in strategies for diabetes self-management;
- Three projects on breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer prevention and screening for underinsured populations, funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas;
- A collaboration with Christus Health System to examine economic and clinical outcomes associated with disease management, counseling, and support provided by community health workers to patients with diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease;
- A collaboration with Southeast Texas Health System and its Gulf Bend Access Partners to evaluate implementation of strategies for improving access to health services in the service region; and
- A multi-year EPA/HRSA-funded research project to develop and test a methodology for assessing the impact of environmental health education – via training and deployment of community health workers – for children who might be subject to pesticide exposure.

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