

Personal care aides in rural America: Are they available where needed?

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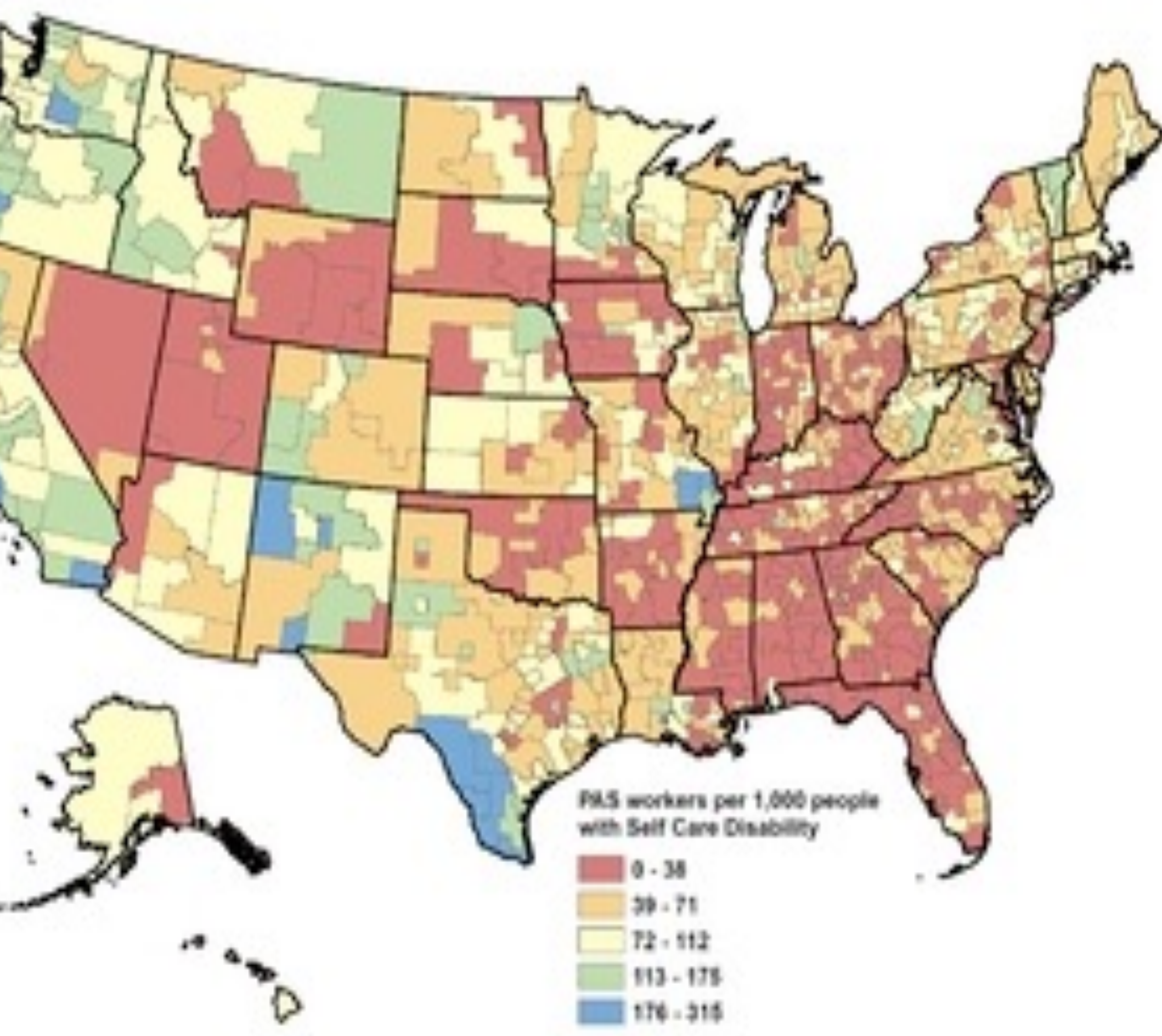
Introduction

- Despite national mandate for states to shift dollars towards HCBS, spending remains lower in rural areas compared to urban settings
- Institutional LTC makes up a larger percentage of expenditures for rural adults than in urban settings (Coburn et al., 2016; Coburn et al., 2017)
- Even if there is a willingness to shift funding to HCBS, a community needs enough workers

Methods

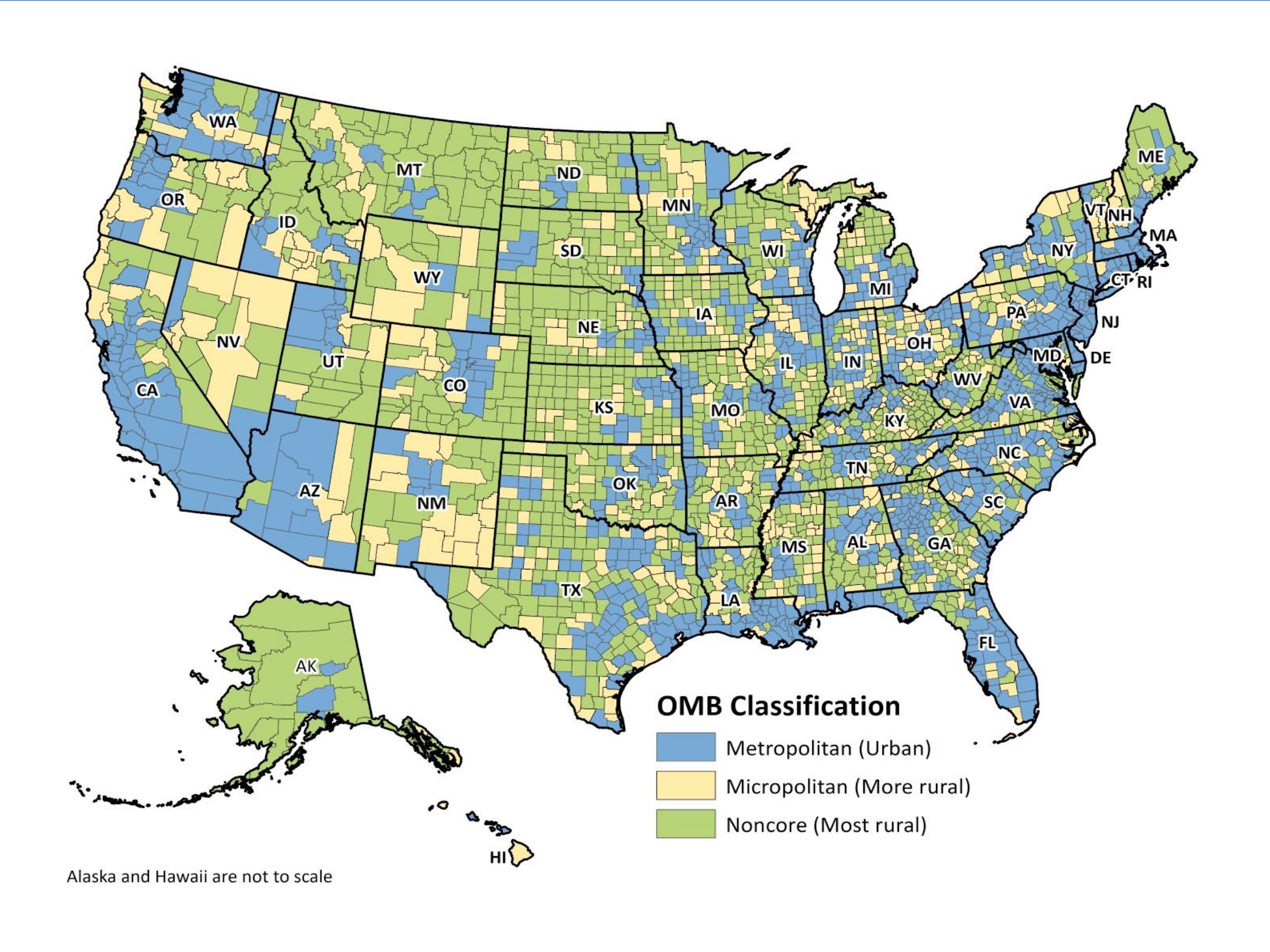
- Data from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, county level estimates on disability & need for help
- Data from the American Community Survey 2013-2017 Public Use Microdata sample on PCA workers and location

Results: PCA workers per 1,000 persons with self care need

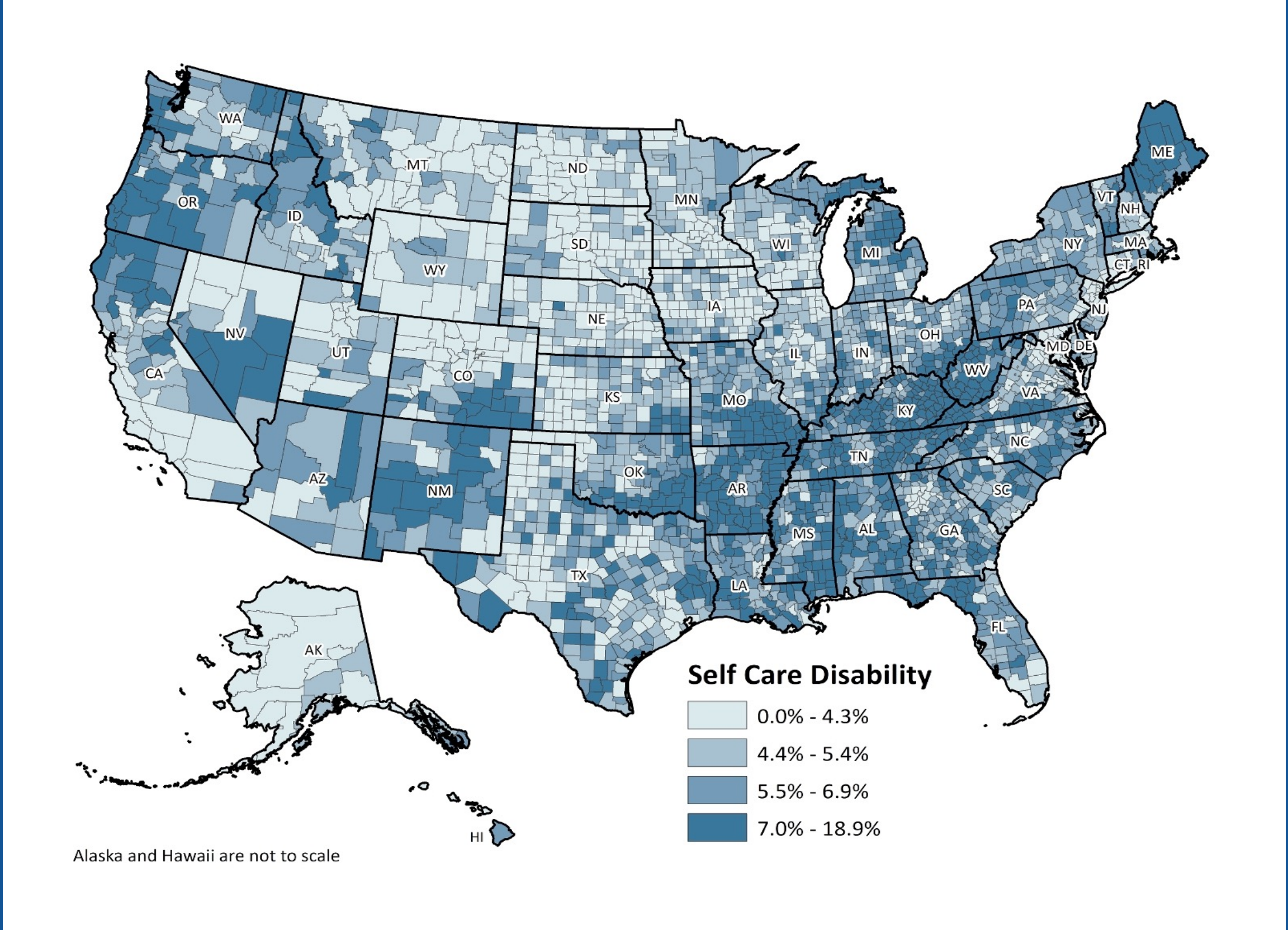


Many people with self-care disabilities live in rural areas where there are not enough Personal Care Aides (home care) workers to support care at home

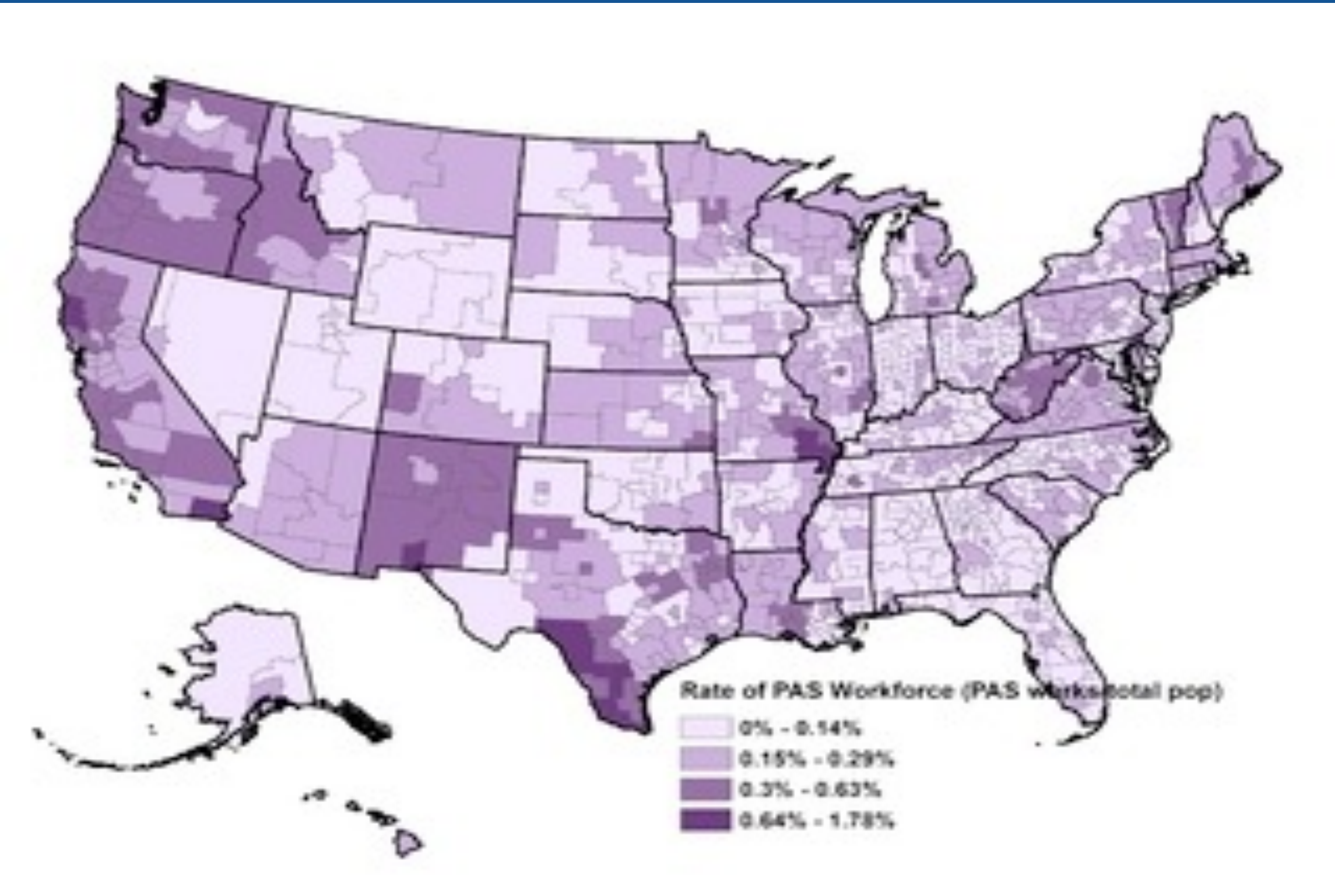
Green shaded areas are most rural



Darker blue areas have higher self care disability



Lighter areas have fewer workers



Why does this matter?

- Rural America has a critical need for more workers to meet the demand for care
- Policymakers and service providers need to address the mismatch between areas of PCA need and worker supply
- Despite mandate to shift spending from LTC facilities to home-based services, rural areas will continue to struggle
- Attracting and retaining rural PCAs is challenging; low wages, few to no benefits, isolated work environment, and unpredictable schedules (Kusmaul et al., 2020).



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