

Rural America

Since 2010 the amount of bad debt at rural hospitals has jumped 50%, according to the National Rural Health Association.

It sets a vicious cycle in motion:

A depressed economy leads to unpaid bills; unpaid bills lead to hospital closures; the closures strip the local economy of higher-wage jobs; and the economy gets more depressed.

The National Institutes of Health estimates that when a rural hospital closes, per capita income in the surrounding county dips an average of 4%.

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