Wisconsin Health Service Areas

The Wisconsin Health Service Areas were developed by Wisconsin AHEC for health workforce data analysis. The service areas also provide a useful geography for monitoring local program outcomes related to health workforce development and population health status. Each service area consists of a hub city and neighboring municipalities. With some exceptions (in northern Wisconsin and border communities) each service area has a population of at least 10,000, with most of the service area population within 30 minutes travel time of the hub city. While most hubs include a hospital, inclusion of a municipality in a service area is determined by travel time to the hub, not actual hospital or clinic utilization data. A ZIP Code version of the service areas has also been developed. For more information on the development of the service area geography, see *Introduction to Wisconsin Health Service Areas*, available at [www.ahec.wisc.edu/healthserviceareas](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/healthserviceareas). The website also has maps and data related to the HSAs available for download.

This map compares the two versions of the Health Service Areas, one using municipality (township) boundaries and the other using zipcode boundaries. Because healthcare data is often available by zip code, a zip code (or ZCTA) version of the HSAs may be more convenient to use. Although boundaries may vary, incorporated areas (and physician locations) are kept within the same HSA in both the municipality and ZCTA versions. The ZCTA version seeks to match the population of the municipality version as closely as possible. Of the 135 HSAs, 94 have a less than 5% variation in the population total between the two versions, 28 have a 5-10% variation, and 12 have a 10%-20% variation. In two places (Oconomowoc-Summit and the northern suburbs of Milwaukee) HSAs are combined in the ZCTA version due to zip codes that cross municipality lines and include large segments of the population in two HSAs. For population totals on the two versions of the Health Service Areas, see *Comparing Geographies: Zip Codes* at [www.ahec.wisc.edu/healthserviceareas](http://www.ahec.wisc.edu/healthserviceareas).

The Service Areas are grouped into 17 regions for data summary purposes. With the exception of Rhinelander, each region includes a city of >50,000, or is adjacent to a metropolitan area in a neighboring state (Duluth, Minneapolis, Dubuque).

The Service Areas are also grouped by type using data on urban density from the 2010 U.S. Census. The Census defines an Urbanized Area (UA) as a densely developed territory of 50,000 people or more, and an Urban Cluster (UC) as a densely developed territory of at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people. The UA and UC population data was used to classify Wisconsin Health Service Areas as "Metro" (> 50% of the population in UAs), "Urban" (<50% UA but >60% in UAs or UCs), "Mixed" (40% to 60% living in UAs and UCs), and "Rural" (<40% UA and UC population). Areas that include a large academic/research center with high numbers of health professionals engaged in administration, research and teaching are identified for separate analysis.