

Independence Through Interdependence

Washington State Rural Palliative Care Initiative
Gregg VandeKieft, MD, MA
Adie Goldberg, PhD, LICSW



PROBLEM STATEMENT

1 in 5 Americans or 20% of the US population live in rural areas. Compared to urban populations, rural residents face more likely to have chronic medical conditions and/or physical disabilities than urban residents. The lack of access to palliative care creates significant inequities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Launched in 2016 on a fiscal shoestring as a public–private partnership

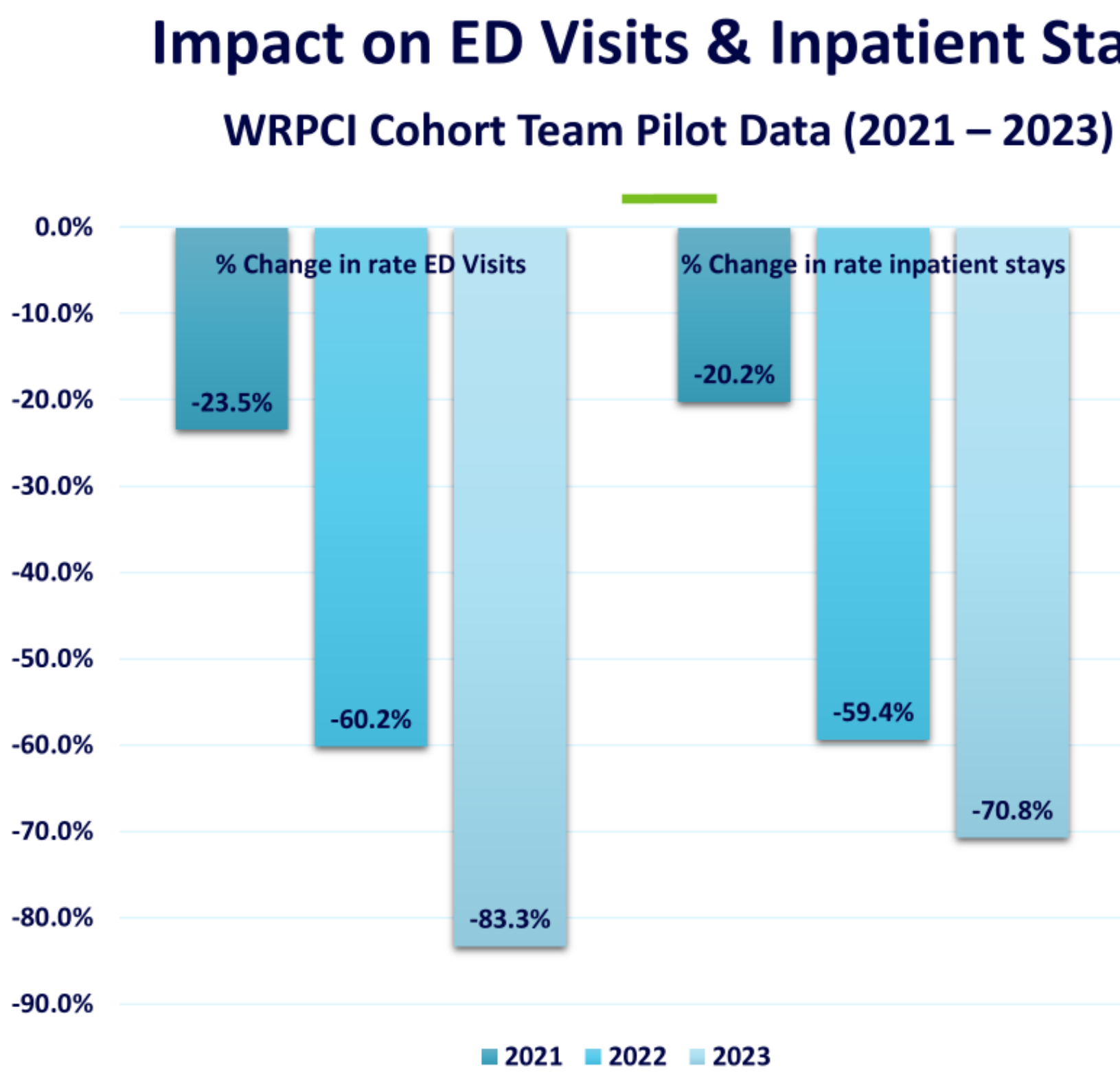
Led and funded by: Washington State Department of Health, Office of Rural Health

20+ partner organizations statewide

Core Strategies
Community asset–gap analysis
Learning Action Network – *all teach, all learn*
Targeted collaboration across communities
Resource portal
Virtual case consultations & office hours with palliative IDT
Didactic education sessions
Tailored team mentoring

Impact: Building scalable, sustainable palliative care capacity in Washington’s rural communities.

RESULTS



Growth and Impact

- WRPCI began with 7 communities in 2016
- By 2025, expanded to 4 cohort groups with 24 communities
- 2024 focus group feedback highlights:
 - Overwhelming satisfaction with WRPCI support
 - Increased sense of empowerment and reduced isolation
 - Improved access to new resources
- Quantitative data (2021–2023):
 - Significant reduction in emergency room visits
 - Decrease in hospitalizations among cohort medical systems

REFERENCES (OPTIONAL)

Portal: Washington Rural Palliative Care Initiative | Healthier Washington
Collaboration Portal: <https://waportal.org/partners/washington-rural-palliative-care-inistitative>

WRPCI Handbook : <https://waportal.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/WRPCIHandbook02-02-2023FINAL.pdf>

Palliative Care Roadmap: <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/Pubs/609013.pdf>

gregg.vandekieft@providence.org

adie.goldbergwrpci@outlook.com

DISCUSSIONS

Flexible Models & Shared Resources

- Models for palliative care delivery vary significantly across communities.
- A shared resource portal supports all participants with:
 - Library of tools on team development, legal issues, and telehealth capacity
 - Guidance on improving revenue streams
 - WRPCI Handbook
 - Palliative Care Roadmap

INSIGHTS

