

THE RESPONSE OF HINSDALE COUNTY, COLORADO TO THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY.

**Abstract**

Historically, it has been recognized that urban solutions to public health issues have not easily been translated to rural areas and often lose their effectiveness in rural settings. Therefore, with the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increased need to examine rural areas directly and highlight strategies and challenges in those areas. As such, we sought to examine Hinsdale County, one of the most rural counties in Colorado, and evaluate its response. The primary aim of this study is to identify different strategies utilized by Hinsdale County and their effectiveness in combating the pandemic; the secondary aim is to identify areas of weakness that exacerbated the pandemic and placed strain on the community's response. Various community members were interviewed, and their responses were then examined in a qualitative manner using Framework Analysis. Numerous underlying themes in each interview were noted, with the most common being the importance of partnerships, the concern of limited resources, the economic impact on the town, and the lack of applicable public health information for rural areas. As such, the study demonstrated the importance of rural areas creating an interlinked network between their public health, medical, and civilian agencies in preparation for public health emergencies.