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Thad Shunkwiler is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Science at Minnesota State University, Mankato. In addition to his academic work, he is a licensed behavioral health provider with over a decade of experience in treating people with mental health and substance use disorders in Minnesota communities.

In 2021, he founded the Center for Rural Behavioral Health, whose mission is to improve access to mental healthcare for agricultural and rural communities in Minnesota. At a time in which the mental health of our country has never been worse, his innovative work in developing partnerships within healthcare, academic, and agricultural industries has sparked solution-oriented initiatives that have benefited the mental wellbeing of rural communities across the country. The outcomes of these transformational projects have influenced policy at both the state and federal levels of government.

His commitment to rural healthcare has garnered him several accolades to include being one of seventeen healthcare professionals in the country to be named a Fellow of the National Rural Health Association in 2021. And in 2022 he was awarded the Emerging Rural Health Leader honor by the Minnesota Rural Health Association.

He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, the Minnesota Rural Health Association, and holds a Governors appointment to the licensing board for Marriage and Family Therapy.

As a peer-reviewed published author, TEDx speaker, and a national and international conference keynote presenter, Professor Shunkwiler is a recognized leader in behavioral healthcare.