



July 25, 2022

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Diana Harshbarger
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representatives O'Halleran and Harshbarger,

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit organization of 21,000 members that represents the health interests of rural Americans, applauds your introduction of the *Rural Physician Workforce Production Act*. This important legislation would address doctor shortages in rural America through critical changes in graduate medical education (GME).

Patients in rural communities often lack access to primary care physicians and specialists compared to their urban and suburban counterparts. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated workforce shortages and accelerated the need for rural solutions. One of the most promising solutions to this problem is increasing physician training in rural areas. We know that physicians are more likely to locate in the area where they train. Because rural hospitals often operate on narrow, and sometimes negative, margins, resources to commit toward residency training costs are scarce.

The *Rural Physician Workforce Production Act* provides the first substantive update to Medicare's GME policies in over two decades. The legislation enhances rural hospitals' ability to pay for residency training by establishing a new payment system, entitled the 'Elective Rural Sustainability Per Resident Payment' (ERS-PRP). Further, the bill gives critical access hospitals (CAH) and sole community hospitals (SCH) the ability to obtain the updated payment methodology. It also allows urban and suburban hospitals to claim training time for residents they send to CAHs.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Josh Jorgensen (jjorgensen@ruralhealth.us). We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation and being stalwart champions for rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Morgan", is written over a light gray circular watermark that contains the NRHA logo.

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer