



National Rural Health Association

The National Rural Health Association is a national nonprofit and nonpartisan membership organization with more than 21,000 members. NRHA membership consists of a diverse group of individuals and organizations, all of whom share the goal of improving rural health. NRHA strives to improve the health of the 60 million who call rural America home. **Our mission is to provide leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research.**

WE FIGHT FOR ACCESS TO CARE

Rural populations are per capita older, sicker, and poorer than their urban counterparts. Continued payment cuts have devastated the financial viability of rural practices, disrupted rural economies, and eroded availability of care. Medical deserts are appearing across rural America, leaving many without timely access to care.

WE FIGHT FOR A ROBUST RURAL WORKFORCE

Rural areas struggle to recruit and retain an adequate health care workforce. Seventy-seven percent of rural counties are Health Professional Shortage Areas, and nine percent have no physicians at all. With far fewer physicians per capita, the maldistribution of health care providers between rural and urban areas results in unequal access to care and negatively impacts rural health.

WE FIGHT FOR A STRONG RURAL SAFETY NET

The federal investment in rural health programs is a small portion of federal health care spending, but it is critical to rural Americans. These safety net programs expand access to health care, improve health outcomes, and increase the quality and efficiency of health care delivery in rural America.

2020 Rural Health Champion Award Winners

Senator Tina Smith (D-MN)

Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)

Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)

Representative Dave Loebsack (D-IA-2)

Representative Brad Wenstrup (R-OH-2)

Representative Adam Kinzinger (R-IL-16)

2020 Legislative Staff Award Winners

Paul Laurie - Office of Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL-16)

Jay Eberle - Office of Sen. John Barasso (R-WY)

Max Kanner - Office of Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)

Dominique Spadavecchia - Office of Rep. Arrington (R-TX-19)



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NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

HEALTH IN RURAL AMERICA

What challenges do rural Americans face?

OLDER

Approximately 10 million people ages 65 and older live in rural America.

A quarter of older Americans live in a small town or other rural communities.

SICKER

According to the CDC, rural Americans are more likely to die of the five leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory disease).

POORER

Nineteen percent of rural Americans, including 25% of rural children, are living in poverty.

Rural economies are still struggling to recover from the Great Recession.

VULNERABLE

Suicide rates have increased 33% since 1999: Rural suicide rates are almost twice as high as urban, and they are accelerating at a quicker rate.

Rural mothers have a 9% higher chance of experiencing 'severe maternal morbidity and mortality.'

Why is rural health care disappearing?

PROVIDER SHORTAGES

Over three-fourths of rural counties are primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). While 20% of the population lives in rural America, only 9% of physicians practice in rural communities.

Twenty million rural residents live in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas, leaving many rural Americans with the emergency room as their only source of dental care.

RURAL HOSPITAL CLOSURES

Over 120 rural hospitals have closed since 2010, and the latest research suggests that 453 are currently vulnerable to closure.

Rural hospitals provide access to care, as well as jobs and other economic opportunities; these hospitals are often one of the largest employers in a rural community.

EMS SHORTAGES

In an emergency, rural patients travel twice as far as urban residents to the closest hospital. As a result, 60% of trauma deaths occur in rural America, even though only 20% of Americans live in rural areas.

A new study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that rural hospital closures increased inpatient mortality by 5.9%, while urban closures had no impact.

How do we fix it? By empowering Rural Americans.

Stop multiple Medicare cuts to rural providers.

Invest in the rural health care safety net.

Allow providers to utilize innovative technology to improve access.



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