



July 26, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) applauds the House of Representatives for prioritizing telehealth flexibilities by scheduling a vote on [H.R. 4040, the Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act of 2022](#). This legislation will extend important telehealth flexibilities enacted in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and extended for 151 days post-public health emergency in the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2022, until December 31, 2024. NRHA supports the extension of telehealth flexibilities to show providers that telehealth is here to stay but urges rural friendly tweaks to the legislation.

NRHA is a non-profit membership organization with more than 21,000 members nationwide that provides leadership on rural health issues. Our membership includes every component of rural America's health care, including rural community hospitals, critical access hospitals, doctors, nurses, and patients. We provide leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education, and research.

As the text is currently written, H.R. 4040 includes the extension of distant-site status for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and Rural Health Clinics (RHC) at their current reimbursement level. While continuation of this flexibility is necessary, the reimbursement level for virtual services is significantly lower than in-person services under current statute. Should reimbursement remain as it is currently written, by 2028 there will be nearly a \$100 discrepancy between services provided in-person and virtually at RHCs. NRHA believes this will cause rural communities to utilize these important services less often than their urban and suburban counterparts moving forward and will cause harm to an already fragile rural safety net.

To remedy this discrepancy, NRHA urges this text be amended to incorporate reimbursement updates as reflected in [Section 9 of H.R. 7876, the Connecting Rural Telehealth into the Future Act](#), introduced by Representatives Adrian Smith (R-NE) and Terri Sewell (D-AL). Incorporating this legislative text will bring payment parity between in-person and virtual care at RHCs and FQHCs and ensure that rural communities have access to the same health care delivery methods as their urban and suburban counterparts.

NRHA applauds the House of Representatives for acting on telehealth to show providers long-term stability. However, to ensure that rural providers, and their patients, can properly utilize these services tweaks are needed. To discuss this issue further, please contact Josh Jorgensen (jjorgensen@ruralhealth.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Morgan", written over a light grey rectangular background.

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer

[RuralHealthWeb.org](https://www.RuralHealthWeb.org)

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