National Rural Health Association

Rural Health Extenders

Many programs, including Medicare Dependent Hospitals and the Low Volume Hospital payment adjustment, require periodic reauthorization by Congress—every few years or more recently every few months. The lack of program permanence contributes to financial instability and complicates hospital long-term planning for finances, staffing, and operations. HHS staff have also noted that the absence of permanence hinders efforts to integrate these designations into new payment or care delivery models, as the Department must assume they will expire.

Medicare Extenders

Medicare Dependent Hospital & Low Volume Hospitals

Expiring October 1, 2025.
Ensure a long-term extension for MDH and LVH Medicare designations for at least 5 years in recognition of their low volumes and significant Medicare population

S. 335/H.R. 1805

Medicare Telehealth Flexibilities

Expiring October 1, 2025.
Make Medicare telehealth flexibilities put in place during the pandemic including RHC/FQHC distant site status, audio-only, & more

H.R. 5081

Rural Ground Ambulance Payments

Expiring October 1, 2025.
Ensure a long-term extension for ground ambulance additional reimbursement services in rural areas for 5 years to ensure access to vital emergency services

S. 1643/H.R. 2232

Safety Net Program Extenders

Expiring September 30, 2025.
Extend federal funding for critical programs providing training and services in underserved rural areas:
- National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program
- Community Health Centers
- Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education

S. 2308, H.R. 2559
In the 118th Congress

Avoid Harmful Site Neutrality Proposals

NRHA opposes implementation of site-neutral payments and disproportionate share hospital (DSH) cuts given rural hospital vulnerabilities.
- Current proposals would cost rural hospitals $272 million in the next 10 years
- Nearly 50% of rural hospitals have negative operating margins
- Over 180 rural hospitals have closed, or stopped inpatient services, since 2010

https://www.ruralhealth.us/advocate
@nrha_advocacy
9/3/25