



July 14, 2026

The Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means
1129 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), thank you for your leadership in advancing the *Medicare Access to Rural Anesthesiology Act*. Rural hospitals and critical access hospitals continue to face profound challenges in recruiting and retaining physician anesthesiologists, directly affecting surgical access, obstetric care, trauma response, and the overall stability of rural health systems.

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

The legislation addresses a long-standing oversight in Medicare payment policy. By allowing eligible rural subsection (d) hospitals and critical access hospitals to receive reasonable cost reimbursement for physician anesthesiology services, the bill recognizes the unique workforce realities of low-volume rural facilities. NRHA is particularly supportive of the bill's alignment of Part A and Part B policy to ensure that anesthesiologists practicing in qualifying rural hospitals are not penalized for choosing to serve in low-volume settings. The bill's structure will help stabilize rural surgical capacity, support safe obstetric and emergency care, and strengthen the financial viability of rural hospitals that struggle to maintain essential services.

This legislation is both timely and urgently needed. Rural hospitals continue to close at alarming rates, and workforce shortages remain one of the most significant drivers of service reductions. Ensuring that rural communities have access to physician anesthesiology care is essential to maintaining surgical access and protecting patient safety.

NRHA applauds your commitment to addressing rural access and workforce shortages with practical, targeted policy solutions. If you have any questions, please contact Reese Lyan, NRHA's Government Affairs and Policy Coordinator, at rlycan@ruralhealth.us. Thank you for your continued leadership on behalf of rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Morgan", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer
National Rural Health Association

RuralHealth.US

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