



For immediate release
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283-mile journey culminates in Capitol rally to save hospitals

Fifty-three rural hospitals have closed since 2010, and 283 more are on the brink of closure, risking access to much-needed health care for more than 700,000 patients.

Belhaven, N.C., Mayor Adam O’Neal and Walk for Rural Hospitals participants from 14 states will arrive at the east grounds of the U.S. Capitol at the end of their 283-mile journey, one mile for each at-risk hospital, at **11 a.m. EDT Monday, June 15**.

The National Rural Health Association, civil rights activists Bob Zellner and Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul and Mary, and other rural health advocates will lead a rally at the conclusion of the walk, which began June 1 in rural Bellhaven, where the critical access hospital closed last year.

Together, they’ll ask Congress to protect rural hospitals and patients.

Since January 2013, more rural hospitals have closed than in the previous 10 years combined. If Congress doesn’t act now to prevent further closures, rural hospitals will be forced to lay off workers, cut wages, reduce services and close doors. Lives will be lost, and local economies will suffer.

“The National Rural Health Association has led the fight to stop rural hospital closures across the nation,” says Alan Morgan, CEO of the nonprofit organization. “We’re calling on Congress to pass comprehensive legislation to save rural hospitals and patients and to provide a pathway to the future for rural health.”

NRHA is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health and wellbeing of rural Americans and providing leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research. NRHA membership is made up of more than 21,000 diverse individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health.