



July 18, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

On behalf of the members of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), we write to express our support for maintaining the USDA Rural Health Liaison position. We commend the work of the USDA Rural Health Liaison in supporting the health of rural communities.

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.

Rural communities across the United States face unique barriers to health care, including health care provider shortages, long travel distances to care, limited transportation options, lack of broadband, and limited access to healthy food.<sup>1</sup> These barriers lead to disparate health outcomes between rural and urban communities with rural residents experiencing shorter life expectancies and higher incidences of the top leading causes of death.<sup>2</sup> An essential way the USDA addresses access to care and supports the health of rural communities is through the Rural Health Liaison, who can strategize and coordinate with health agencies across the federal government.

Since the creation of this position in 2018, the Rural Health Liaison has facilitated the development and coordination of resources to support rural communities, participated in interagency working groups to develop health-related strategies and policies, collaborated with over 40 partners and made more than 50 new connections to promote health advocacy and equity in rural America, and assisted with rural health outreach. The Rural Health Liaison's collaborative work is vital to ensuring the health of rural Americans is represented within the USDA portfolio. As the only agency solely dedicated to rural America, USDA is a key player in cross-agency work to improve the health outcomes of rural Americans.

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<sup>1</sup> Healthcare Access in Rural Communities Overview - Rural Health Information Hub. Accessed July 17, 2025.

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/healthcare-access>

<sup>2</sup> Curtin SC, Spencer MR. Trends in death rates in urban and rural areas: United States, 1999–2019. NCHS Data Brief, no 417. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2021. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:109049>



We thank you for your leadership on rural issues. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the importance of the USDA Rural Health Liaison further, please contact NRHA's Government Affairs and Policy Director Alexa McKinley Abel at [amckinley@ruralhealth.us](mailto:amckinley@ruralhealth.us).

Sincerely,

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

Alan Morgan  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Rural Health Association