

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF STATE OFFICES OF RURAL HEALTH



January 31, 2012

Dear Congressional Delegate:

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) is a voice for state rural health concerns representing all 50 states. We are grateful for the support you have given for the programs and funding initiatives that help rural Americans, and respectfully request your continued support as we continue to work towards creating access to high quality health care for all of our rural communities. One-fourth of America's population lives in rural areas. Compared with urban Americans, rural residents have higher poverty rates, a larger percentage of elderly, tend to be in poorer health, have fewer doctors, hospitals, and other health resources, and face more difficulty getting to health services.

We understand the challenges of reducing the federal deficit. The attached listing of specific funding recommendations is the result of many discussions among state offices of rural health leaders, all of whom recognize the challenges associated with meeting the needs of competing interests for federal funding and the need to reduce the federal deficit. We recommend level funding for the rural programs most important to rural communities.

We know that there are still efforts to accomplish deficit reduction, outside the proposed 2% sequestration. Ensuring rural health providers, physicians, rural health clinics and critical access hospitals can continue to provide services to rural people is a high priority. The economic viability and future of rural communities and their health care provider cannot be jeopardized by any cut to reimbursement to these providers. We estimate that a reduction in bad debt allowance or reduction in reimbursement could have a potentially devastating impact resulting in a loss of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in small towns across the country.

NOSORH members are extremely proud of the many members of Congress who are active participants in the Congressional Rural Health Care Coalition and the Senate Rural Caucus. If you have not worked with the Coalition, we encourage you to join. These groups have a strong understanding of the challenges involved in creating access to health care for rural America. We look forward to working with you and your staff to explore solutions to the challenges facing health care providers and communities in rural areas. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss how we can assist you in this mission. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Barnas".

John Barnas
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Teryl Eisinger".

Teryl Eisinger
Director