



January 25, 2010

Dear Senators and Members of Congress:

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) is the voice for state rural health concerns representing all 50 states. State Offices of Rural Health are in a unique position to work at a grassroots level in each state to convene stakeholders, provide information and help implement the federal health reform legislation so health reform works for rural America. State Offices of Rural Health have the capacity to build partnerships and deliver services that address health workforce, health information technology and health disparities challenges. One-fourth of America's population lives in rural areas. Compared with urban America, rural and frontier communities have higher poverty rates, a larger percentage of elderly, poorer health and fewer doctors and nurses, leading to fewer services and slower adoption of health information technology.

We are grateful for your support of the programs and funding that help rural communities and respectfully request your support as we continue our work on their behalf. Programs supported through HRSA's Office of Rural Health Policy are of particular importance to meeting rural health care needs. State Offices of Rural Health are key focal points for addressing rural health issues across the nation and are the flagship programs of HRSA's Office of Rural Health Policy.

We are committed to speak on behalf of rural Americans and give voice to their need for quality health care services. Funding for State Offices of Rural Health is authorized under Title 42 of the Public Health and Welfare Chapter 6a-Public Health Service Act. We are recommending reauthorization for State Offices of Rural Health and a change in some of the authorization language. The attached fact sheet provides a thorough outline of the issue and our recommended revisions.

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health members, in all 50 states, are very proud of the many members of Congress and Senate who are active participants in the Congressional Rural Health Care Coalition and Senate Rural Health Caucus. If you have not worked with either of these groups, we encourage you to join. They have a strong understanding of the challenges involved in creating access to health care for rural America and play a key role in advancing rural priorities in health care policy. We will continue to work with the Coalition and Caucus to explore solutions to many of these challenges. Please do not hesitate to contact us for more specific information. Thank you for our continued support.

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