

# Policy Collaboration: The NRHA Perspective

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## NRHA Mission

The National Rural Health Association is a national membership organization with more than 18,000 members whose mission is to **provide leadership on rural issues** through advocacy, communications, education and research.

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**NRHA Policy on  
Economic Development**

- Strengthen rural and frontier capacity for meaningful, community-driven economic development.
- Rural health and economic viability of rural communities are integrally connected.

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**Guided by Four Pillars:**

- Public Infrastructure (including health)
- Social Infrastructure
- Education
- Entrepreneurship

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**Why This Work is Important**

- 85% of this nation's high poverty counties are non-metropolitan (rural)
- Healthcare is (reluctantly) one of the biggest employers in rural America, with good-paying jobs and benefits
- Rural and Frontier America is increasingly multi-racial and multi-cultural

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### Why This Work is Important

- Poverty rates for rural African and Native-Americans are 10% higher than their urban counterparts
- Rural mortality is 50% higher than the overall U.S. rate
- Provider shortages: 25% of population lives in rural America, yet only 9% of physicians practice in rural America

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### NRHA Economic Development Action

- Policy Paper passed at the Rural Health Congress May, 2009 (Handout)
- NRHA President, Beth Landon, formed an internal task-force in developing the rural health/economic development linkage

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### Linkages

- Articles on Economic Development in each Rural Roads issue
- Inserting educational content on topic at all Conferences
- M&M Meeting in December, 2009 is devoted to this theme

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### Linkages

- Meetings with USDA, Commerce, and HHS (HRSA, ORHP, BHP and Office of Minority Health)
- Horizontal connections between agencies for synergies of resources

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### NRHA Legislative Agenda: Economic Development

- Workforce
- Payment
- Health Disparities

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### Conclusion

- NRHA's agenda is to leverage rural healthcare to facilitate and foster the incubation of innovation, entrepreneurship and enhance the overall quality of life in our rural communities.

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Thank you!

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