

# NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF STATE OFFICES OF RURAL HEALTH

---



• 44648 Mound Road, #114 • Sterling Heights, MI 48314-1322 •  
• Phone: 586-739-9940 • Fax: 586-739-9941 • Email: nosorhpd@comcast.net •

December 4, 2009

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
United States Senate  
SH-702  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) and the 50 State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) we represent, I want to thank you for your sponsorship of the Rural Health Access and Improvement Act of 2009. NOSORH endorses and supports this bill.

The Rural Health Access and Improvement Act would, among other things, ensure the continued operation of the State Office of Rural Health grant program. Section 5 of the legislation eliminates a provision in the statute authorizing the SORH grant program that jeopardizes the SORH grant program's long-term existence.

As you know, the general purpose of each SORH is to help their individual rural communities build health care delivery systems. While funding levels and sources vary from state-to-state, each state receives a portion of their funding from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy through the SORH Grant program. With this grant a SORH is expected to:


- Encourage recruitment and retention of health professionals
- Coordinate rural health resources and activities state-wide
- Provide technical assistance
- Collect and disseminate information
- Strengthen state, local, and federal partnerships


For more than a decade, federal matching grants have been available to the states for the purpose of supporting the work of state offices of rural health. Enactment of the Rural Health Access and Improvement Act will ensure the continuation of this important program.

The State Offices of Rural Health are a vital link between providers, patients and those government programs aimed at improving access to healthcare in rural underserved areas.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. NOSORH wholeheartedly endorses your efforts and looks forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

  
Lynette Dickson  
President

  
Mark Schoenbaum  
President-elect