

Headquarters
521 E. 63rd St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110
816-756-3140
Fax: 816-756-3144



Government Affairs Office
1108 K Street NW
2nd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-639-0550
Fax: 202-639-0559

For immediate release
Jan. 22, 2009

Contact: Maggie Elehwany
202-639-0550

NRHA to honor congressional rural health champions

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 NRHA Legislative Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership in rural health issues by both U.S. Congressional Members and Congressional staff. This year's recipients are Sen. Blanche Lincoln, Sen. Pat Roberts, Rep. Jerry Moran, Rep. Pete Stark and Congressional staffers Jenelle Krishnamoorthy and Michael Park. Recipients will be honored during the NRHA's 20th annual Policy Institute, January 26-28 in Washington, D.C.

As a Senate leadership member and head of the Senate Democrat Steering Committee on Rural Outreach, **Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.)** has been a champion of rural health care and made the health of rural Americans a centerpiece of her efforts. She is also presenting to rural health advocates during the NRHA and Partners Policy Institute.

"Sen. Lincoln has taken the lead by hosting forums for the sole purpose of educating other Senate Democrats on important rural health care issues and has made it part of her responsibility to understand the intricacies of rural health care," says NRHA CEO Alan Morgan.

As Republican head of the Senate Rural Health Caucus and a member of the Senate Finance and HELP committees, **Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.)** has been instrumental in advancing rural health issues. In the last Congress, he was the lead Republican on the comprehensive rural Medicare bill, and will again champion similar legislation in the 111th Congress.

"Sen. Roberts has always had a strong commitment to rural health that NRHA members relate to and respect," says Morgan.

Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) has long been a leader in the House Rural Health Care Coalition and champion of rural health care issues. He also is a prominent member of the House Veteran's Affairs Committee, where he has worked to improve the health care of rural veterans.

"This year, Congressman Moran introduced successful legislation to provide more health care opportunities for veterans living in rural areas," says Morgan. "Moran's bill, the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act, will enable rural veterans to receive care locally."

As chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, **Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.)** has been instrumental in crafting every major health care reform bill since Democrats regained control of the House. Under Stark's craftsmanship of health care reform bills, the largest rural health care improvement packages in the history of the U.S. House of Representatives came to light. Stark will speak at the Policy Institute, where he will outline his plan for health care.

“Congressman Stark will again be a critical player in health care reform in the new Congress,” says Morgan. “We look to him to remember and value rural constituents.”

The NRHA also recognizes the dedication of congressional staff members.

Jenelle Krishnamoorthy, who works for Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), has helped promote funding for rural safety net programs and assisted with Medicare legislation.

Michael Park is a key Republican staffer for the Senate Finance Committee, where he has worked to ensure strong bipartisan support for a rural health agenda.

The NRHA is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health and well-being of rural Americans and providing leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research. The NRHA membership is made up of 18,000 diverse individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health.

www.RuralHealthWeb.org