

Now, more than ever before, it is crucial that Congress support programs that seek to address growing health care crises in rural America. Relief to address the unique needs of rural America is needed through the FY2024 and FY2025 appropriations bills.

Rural health discretionary spending is a relatively small amount but is vitally important for maintaining access to care for individuals living in rural America. In addition to core rural health programs, NRHA urges Congress to support the following priority requests to significantly improve rural health care access and affordability.

- **Continue funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Rural Health.** Given the devastating outcomes of COVID-19 in rural areas, NRHA worked with Capitol Hill to create the CDC Office of Rural Health in the FY 2023 appropriations bill. The office enhances implementation of CDC's rural health portfolio, coordinates efforts across CDC programs, and has developed a strategic plan for rural health that maps the way forward. NRHA urges Congress to increase funding to \$10 million for implementation of these essential functions.
- **Support rural hospital infrastructure and sustainability.** Since 2010, nearly 170 rural hospitals have closed or discontinued inpatient services. To help keep rural hospital doors open, NRHA urges Congress to fund 1) USDA Rural Hospital Technical Assistance Program at \$5 million; 2) proposed the Financial and Community Sustainability for At-Risk Hospital Program at \$10 million; and 3) proposed the Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program at \$20 million.
- **Increase funding for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Management Strategies (RMOMS) programs.** To improve rural maternal health outcomes, it is critical Congress fully funds all three components of the HRSA RMOMS programs including 1) \$8.8 million to continue established RMOMS grantee program cohorts; 2) \$10 million for the new Rural Obstetric Network Grants Program; and 3) \$6 million for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Care Training Demonstration.
- **Expand physician training by supporting the Rural Residency Planning and Development Program.** Support the development of new rural residency programs to address the ongoing workforce shortages faced by rural communities. Since 2019, this program has created 39 new accredited rural residency programs or rural track programs in family medicine, internal medicine, psychiatry, and general surgery and received approval for approximately 521 new residency positions in rural areas. NRHA urges Congress to increase funding to \$14.5 million this essential program.
- **Reauthorize the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant Program.** Flex grants are used by states to implement new technologies, strategies, and plans in Critical Access Hospitals. The program provides crucial funding for updating equipment, implementing new sustainable care delivery models, and enhancing the quality of care provided. Included in the \$73 million request is technical assistance funding to support the buildout of the Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) model to ensure these struggling small rural hospitals can transition efficiently to REH status.
- **Expand rural behavioral health and SUD treatments.** The opioid and mental health crisis has hit rural communities hard. Barriers to treatment and prevention services limit access to care. Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) is a multi-year initiative that addresses barriers to treatment for substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD). NRHA urges robust funding for the RCORP programs at \$165 million in appropriations.

Rural Health Appropriations Requests & Allocations

Discretionary Funding Program	NRHA FY 2024 Request	President's FY24 Budget	HAC FY 2024 Mark Up	SAC FY 2024 Mark Up	FY 2023 Omnibus
<i>Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Programs</i>					
Rural Health Research & Policy Development	12.1	11	TBD	11	11
Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Network & Quality Improvement Grants	90	95.4	TBD	95	86
Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants	73	64.3	74.3	64.3	64.3
State Offices of Rural Health	18	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Rural Maternity & Obstetrics Management Strategies Program(s)	24.6	10.4	TBD	8	8
Rural Residency Planning & Development	14.5	12.7	12.7	12.5	12.5
Rural Communities Opioid Response	165	165	TBD	155	145
New! Rural Health Clinic Behavioral Health	10	10	TBD	-	N/A
New! Financial and Community Sustainability for At-Risk Hospital Program	10	10	-	-	N/A
New! Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program	20	20	-	-	N/A
<i>Critical HRSA Safety Programs</i>					
National Health Service Corps	176.6	176.6	126	135.6	125.6
Area Health Education Centers	67	47	TBD	47	45
340B Drug Pricing Program/Office of Pharmacy Affairs	17.2	17.2	TBD	12.2	13.2
Telehealth	45.5	45.5	45.1	38	38
Community Health Centers	2b	1.839b	TBD	1.859b	1.859b
Oral Health Training	42.7	42.7	42.7	42.7	42.7
<i>Centers of Disease Control and Prevention</i>					
Office of Rural Health	10	-	-	-	5
<i>USDA Rural Development Programs</i>					
Rural Hospital Technical Assistance	5	2	TBD	2	2
Communities Facilities	3.8b	3.3b	TBD	2.8b	3.45b
ReConnect Broadband	700	400	TBD	600	635
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	7.5b	7.1b	6b	6.3b	6b
<i>* Numbers in millions</i>					