



For immediate release
Feb. 3, 2017

Contact: Lisa Inman
linman@NRHArural.org
816-756-3140

Rural Health Crisis Brings Advocates to Washington

Washington, D.C. – A record number of rural advocates are coming to Capitol Hill in response to growing evidence that rural America faces a worsening health crisis, from higher mortality rates to less access to care as more rural hospitals across the country close. As rural hospital closures continue to escalate, the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) calls on Congress and the Administration to act swiftly.

During the [Rural Health Policy Institute](#) – the largest rural advocacy event in the country- 500 rural providers and advocates will ask Congress and members of the Administration to stop the catastrophic rural hospital closure crisis; make the Affordable Care Act (ACA) work for all rural Americans and end the tragically increasing mortality gap between rural and urban Americans.

“Now, more than ever, the voice of rural America is speaking,” said Alan Morgan, CEO of NRHA. “Rural America is facing a national health crisis, and it’s time that Washington listens.”

Since 2010, 80 rural hospitals have closed. Right now, 673 additional facilities are vulnerable and could close—this represents over 1/3 of rural hospitals in the U.S., according to data from Chartis Center for Rural Health. The rate of closure has steadily increased since devastating Medicare cuts, the lack of Medicaid expansion in certain states, lack of private plan competition and exorbitant deductibles in ACA exchanges all collided, leaving rural providers without adequate compensation for care. In fact, 41% of rural hospitals operate at a financial loss and at the current escalating rate of closure, 25% of all rural hospitals will close in less than a decade if Congress does nothing.

Due to the closure crisis, medical deserts are forming across rural America, where populations are per capita, older, poorer and sicker. According to a January 2017 [Center for Disease Control Report](#), the mortality gap between rural and urban America is widening with many rural populations life expectancy rates on a tragic decline.

The Policy Institute will be held Feb. 7-9 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC.

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. NRHA membership consists of more than 21,000 individuals and organizations.

For more information or to learn more about NRHA, visit ruralhealthweb.org