

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 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.

- **Devote resources towards Rural Hospital Cybersecurity.** The Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP), within the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant Program, is used to assist rural hospitals with purchase of HIT and equipment, among other activities. In FY25, NRHA calls for an increase in funding to support small rural hospital readiness against cyber security attacks. Rural health care organizations are in urgent need of increased cybersecurity measures to address the growing threats and vulnerabilities present with the increase of digital patient records. As such, Congress should provide \$60 million in SHIP Program funding, an increase of \$37,000 specifically for cybersecurity preparation. Total funding for the Flex line for FY25 would be \$101,877 million.
- **Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program (Under Rural Health Policy Development).** Since 2010, nearly 170 rural hospitals have closed or discontinued inpatient services. Currently half of rural hospitals are operating in the red. To help keep rural hospital doors open, NRHA urges Congress to fund the Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program at \$10 million for FY25. The purpose of the program is to improve health care in rural areas by providing in-depth technical assistance (TA) to rural hospitals to enhance and/or expand service lines to meet local need and keep health care services available locally.
- **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.
- **Sustain funding for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Management Strategies (RMOMS) programs.** Between 2011 and 2021, 267 rural hospitals dropped OB services, representing nearly 25% of America's rural OB units. NRHA requests Congress provide funding to continue the critical work of maternal healthcare in rural America through funding for the Rural Maternal and Obstetric Management Strategies (RMOMS) program at \$12 million in FY 2025.
- **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 sustain funding to \$12.8 million this essential program.
- **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 \$148.5 million in appropriations.

Rural Health Appropriations Requests & Allocations

Discretionary Funding Program	NRHA FY 2025 Request	President's FY25 Budget	HAC FY 2025 Mark Up	SAC FY 2025 Mark Up	FY 2024 Omnibus
<i>Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Programs</i>					
Rural Health Research & Policy Development	11	11			11
Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program	10	--			4
Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants	102	64			64
State Offices of Rural Health	13	13			12.5
Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Network & Quality Improvement Grants <i>Within line:</i>	103	93			101
Rural Maternity & Obstetrics Management Strategies Program(s)	12	10			12
Rural Residency Planning & Development	13	13			13
Rural Communities Opioid Response	148	145			145
<i>Critical HRSA Safety Net Programs</i>					
National Health Service Corps	128⁺ 790[~]	126 ⁺ 790 [~]			128 ⁺ 297 [~]
Area Health Education Centers	47	47			47
Nursing Workforce Development	320	320			305
Oral Health Training	43	43			41
Behavioral Health Workforce Development Programs	254	254			193
Teaching Health Center GME	320	320 [~]			164 [~]
Telehealth	48	38			42
Community Health Centers	1,858⁺ 6,340[~]	1,738 ⁺ 6,340 [~]			1,858 ⁺ 4,000 [~]
340B Drug Pricing Program/Office of Pharmacy Affairs	12	12			12
<i>Centers of Disease Control and Prevention</i>					
Office of Rural Health	10	5			5
<i>USDA Rural Development Programs</i>					
Rural Hospital Technical Assistance	2	-			-
Communities Facilities Loans and Grants	1,948	1,948			3,455
Broadband ReConnect Program	112	112			90
Rural Partners Network	10	10			1.5
* Numbers in millions + Discretionary request ~ Current/proposed law mandatory request					