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**Tom Morris appointed as director of Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
NRHA applauds Administration for appointment**

Tom Morris, MPA, has been named the Health and Human Services Administration's (HRSA) associate administrator for rural health policy. He served as acting director for the Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) since January. In this position, Morris oversees the office, with its \$174 million fiscal year 2008 budget.

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) applauds this week's formal appointment.

"Tom Morris is the right man for this job," said Alan Morgan, NRHA CEO. "He knows rural health and is viewed by his peers as a national expert on rural health policy. Tom can certainly be counted on as being a champion for improving the health care services we deliver on a daily basis in rural America."

Morris is responsible for 16 grant programs that focus on building rural health care capacity at the state and community level. He will coordinate ORHP's response to policy issues, especially the impact of Medicare and Medicaid regulations on the rural health workforce and service delivery.

"In the nine years I've worked with him I've always found Tom to be well-informed on the issues, accepting of diverse perspectives and committed to the health policy activities which are crucial to so many rural Americans," says NRHA President Paul Moore. "Tom is a forward thinker, and his appointment to lead the ORHP will have a positive impact on rural health policy for years to come."

Morris joined ORHP in 1998 and has worked in several capacities since, including deputy director, policy coordinator and grants project officer. He began his work with the federal government in 1996 and has worked on the Federal Intra-Agency Telemedicine Committee, in the Senate and at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

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.