



For immediate release  
July 27, 2015

Contact: Lindsey Corey  
816-756-3140

### **NRHA endorses Save Rural Hospitals Act**

Fifty-five rural hospitals have closed since 2010, and 283 more are on the brink of closure, risking access to much-needed health care for more than 700,000 Americans.

That's why the National Rural Health Association supports the bipartisan Save Rural Hospitals Act, introduced today by U.S Reps. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Dave Loebsack (D-Iowa).

"If Congress doesn't act soon, almost 20 percent of Missouri's rural hospitals could close, forcing tens of thousands of rural Missourians to lose access to their local emergency rooms," Graves says. "My bill will save rural lives in rural communities in Missouri and across America."

The Save Rural Hospitals Act will provide these hospitals with financial and regulatory relief to allow them to stay open and care for rural residents who are older, poorer and have higher rates of chronic disease than their urban counterparts. Yet, CMS actually spends 2.5 percent less on rural beneficiaries than on urban beneficiaries.

"Rural hospitals are bedrocks of their communities, providing more than just high quality, local access to health care," Loebsack explains. "Rural hospitals stimulate the local economy, creating jobs in the hospital and the community. Without local health care, lives and communities are lost. Our bill will save rural Iowans as well as the communities where they have built their lives."

Since January 2013, more rural hospitals have closed than in the previous 10 years combined. If Congress doesn't act now to prevent further closures, rural hospitals will be forced to lay off workers, cut wages, reduce services and close doors. Lives will be lost, and local economies will suffer. The average critical access hospital creates 195 jobs and generates \$8.4 million in annual payroll.

"The National Rural Health Association has led the fight to stop rural hospital closures across the nation," says Jodi Schmidt, 2015 president of the nonprofit organization. "We're calling on Congress to pass this comprehensive legislation to save rural hospitals and patients and to provide a pathway to the future for rural health."

NRHA is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health and wellbeing of rural Americans and providing leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research. NRHA membership is made up of more than 21,000 diverse individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health.