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## **NRHA to honor Congressional Rural Health Champions**

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) is pleased to announce the winners of its 2015 Legislative Awards, which recognize outstanding leadership in rural health issues by both members of Congress and congressional staff.

The awards will be presented during NRHA's 26th annual Rural Health Policy Institute, which will bring more than 400 rural health professionals and advocates to Washington, D.C., Feb. 3-5. It's the largest rural advocacy event of the year.

This year's member recipients are Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.) and Rep. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.).

Staff awards will be presented to Brian Perkins of the Office of Sen. Jerry Moran and Colin Brainard of the Office of Rep. Lynn Jenkins.

**Sen. Michael Bennet** has long championed legislation to expand access to quality and affordable health care in rural areas. His dedication to rural Colorado providers, and providers across the nation, make Bennet an inspiring leader in the Senate. NRHA is grateful for his leadership.

**Sen. Charles Grassley** has a long history of fighting on behalf of rural Americans. His continued work to protect rural hospitals in Iowa and throughout the country serves as a wonderful example to all members of Congress. Grassley's efforts to preserve and protect rural providers, including the Medicare-Dependent and Low-Volume Hospital programs, make him a longstanding champion for rural America.

**Rep. Ron Kind** truly understands the needs of rural providers in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. He has protected and preserved the rural health care safety net while serving on the Ways and Means Committee. His leadership as co-chair of the Rural Health Care Coalition is valued by NRHA.

**Rep. Adrian Smith** plays an important role in rural health legislation. His leadership in the House by introducing and advocating for the Critical Access Hospital Relief Act is appreciated by rural hospitals throughout the nation. Smith truly understands the needs and challenges of rural hospitals and continues to be a vital advocate on Capitol Hill.

**Brian Perkins** is consistently one of rural America's greatest champions on the Hill. He serves as a vital staff member for Jerry Moran. Often serving in the background supporting his boss' strong efforts to fight for rural America's needs, Perkins is a driving force behind many accomplishments for rural America made on Capitol Hill. His knowledge of and dedication to rural health care is inspiring and an example to staff in both chambers.

**Colin Brainard** is a critical voice for rural hospitals on Capitol Hill. His unwavering efforts and attention to Rep. Lynn Jenkins's legislation to put a moratorium on the physician supervision of outpatient services requirement at rural hospitals until the end of 2014 is greatly appreciated by NRHA. Rural providers and NRHA members are better off for his dedicated service as a defender of rural health care.

NRHA greatly appreciates the hard work and dedication displayed by this year's Legislative Award winners.

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.