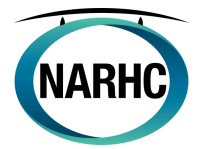


RURAL HEALTH LEGISLATION

Bipartisan Legislative Efforts Supported by NARHC



Several rural health-related bills have been introduced in the 119th Congress with bipartisan support, NARHC supports efforts to increase access to quality healthcare for rural patients and continues to monitor this legislation.



TELEHEALTH: REIMBURSEMENT PARITY

Each of the following bills includes the language necessary to achieve reimbursement parity for RHC telehealth visits:



CONNECT for Health Act of 2025 (S.1261 and H.R. 4206)



Save America's Rural Hospitals Act (H.R.3684)



Telehealth Modernization Act (S.2709 and H.R.5081)



Helping Ensure Access to Local TeleHealth (HEALTH) Act (H.R.5496)



WORKFORCE

- **Modernizing Rural Physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner Utilization Act (H.R.5199)**
 - Modernizes RHC physician supervision requirements by aligning them to state scope of practice laws governing PA and NP practice.
- **Rural America Health Corps Act (S.4208 and H.R.1127)**
 - Supports workforce recruitment and retention in RHCs by reimbursing clinicians with student loans up to \$200,000 if they work full-time in a rural health professional shortage area for 5 years.
- **H-1B's for Physicians and the Healthcare Workforce Act (H.R.7691)**
 - Exempts physicians and other health care workers from the \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas and prohibits new H-1B fees from being imposed on health care workers that exceed this fee.
- **Health Workforce Innovation Act (S.4254)**
 - Establishes a new federal grant program to support RHCs and FQHCs in creating innovative, community-driven partnerships to educate and train more health care workers
- **Physical Therapist Workforce and Patient Access Act of 2025 (H.R.5621/S.4420)**
 - Expands Medicare coverage for Physical Therapy services at RHCs.
- **Improving Care and Access to Nurses Act (H.R.1317)**
 - Under Medicare and Medicaid, this act removes various barriers to practice for several RHC professionals, including NPs, certified nurse-midwives, and advanced practice registered nurses.
- **Registered Nurses (RNs) for Rural Health Act (H.R.3878)**
 - Allows RNs at RHCs to conduct Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs) and receive reimbursement from Medicare.
- **Medicare Audiology Access Improvement Act of 2025 (H.R.2757)**
 - This bill adds audiologists as Medicare-covered providers in RHCs.



MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

- **Medicare Advantage Improvement Act (H.R. 8375)**
 - Reduces Medicare Advantage administrative burdens by accelerating prior authorization timelines (24-72 hours), limiting payment clawbacks, and increasing overall transparency and oversight of MA plans.
- **Prompt and Fair Pay Act (H.R.4559)**
 - Requires Medicare Advantage plans to provide reimbursement that is comparable to Traditional Medicare.
- **Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2025 (S.1816 and H.R.3514)**
 - Streamlines the prior authorization process to reduce administrative burden on providers and improve access to care for seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) plans.
- **Reducing Medically Unnecessary Delays in Care Act of 2025 (H.R.2433)**
 - Requires Medicare, Medicare Advantage, and Part D prior authorization decisions to be made by physicians in the same specialty as the requesting provider



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- **Rural Behavioral Health Improvement Act (H.R.5217)**
 - Removes statutory barrier that limits the amount of behavioral health services an RHC can provide, allowing clinics to fully treat their patients and better integrate services.
- **Promoting Effective and Empowering Recovery Services (PEERS) in Medicare Act (H.R.6841)**
 - Requires Medicare coverage of peer support services furnished by trained specialists to individuals with mental health conditions, psychological trauma, or substance use disorders in RHCs and other eligible facilities.

RURAL HEALTH LEGISLATION

(CONTINUED)



GRANT & OTHER FUNDING

- **Strengthening Pathways to Health Professions Act (H.R.593)**
 - Provides tax relief for certain health professional scholarships and loan payments intended to increase availability of health care services in underserved or health professional shortage areas.
- **Rural Health Resilience Act of 202 (H.R.8504)**
 - Creates a low-interest loan program to help RHCs and other rural providers avoid closures or reductions in essential services, preserving access to care in underserved areas.
- **Rural Health Innovation Act (S.4204 and H.R.1480)**
 - Establishes the Rural Health Center Innovation Awards Program, which would directly support RHCs in providing walk-in urgent care, triage, and emergency stabilization services.
- **Urban and Rural Diabetes Initiative Act (H.R.6241)**
 - Authorizes grants to provide diabetes treatments in rural communities.
- **Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Reauthorization Act of 2026 (S.3861 and H.R. 7533)**
 - Reauthorizes and improves the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) RISE Program, which provides federal grant funding to rural job accelerator partnerships that support job training, business formation and expansion efforts, and overall economic growth.
- **Health Care Cybersecurity and Resilience Act (S.3315)**
 - Provides grants to RHCs and other health entities to strengthen cybersecurity and educate them on best practices.
- **Community Training, Education, and Access for Medical Students (TEAMS) Act of 2025 (H.R. 3885)**
 - Creates a new HRSA grant program for medical schools to partner with RHCs and other healthcare facilities in medically underserved communities for medical student clinical rotations.



LOCATION & RURAL ELIGIBILITY

- **Rural Health Clinic Location Modernization Act (H.R.5198)**
 - Maintains status quo policy as to where an RHC can be located, ensures that RHCs can continue to be located in an area that is less than 50,000.
- **Rural Health Care Access Act of 2025 (H.R.771)**
 - Removes the requirement that prevents hospitals from pursuing a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) designation if it falls within 35-miles of another CAH.
- **Save Struggling Hospitals Act (H.R.8109)**
 - Adjusts the Medicare Area Wage Index for hospitals in rural and low-wage areas to better account for the unique cost pressures they face.



CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT

- **H.R.8261 - Chronic Care Management Improvement Act of 2026**
 - Removes cost-sharing responsibilities for chronic care management services under Medicare.



OTHER

- **Critical Access for Veterans Care Act (S.1868)**
 - Removes prior authorization and referral requirements for covered veterans seeking care under the Veterans Community Care Program at provider-based RHCs affiliated with CAHs.
- **Premium Tax Credit Extension Act (H.R.5145)**
 - Extends enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies which expired December 2025.
- **Patients' Right to Know Their Medication Act of 2025 (H.R.5133)**
 - Ensures that printed medication instructions and details are provided with prescriptions.



For questions about this legislation, please contact NARHC Director of Government Affairs Sarah Hohman at sarah.hohman@narhc.org.