

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 \$38 million specifically for cybersecurity preparation. Total funding for the **Flex line for FY25 would be \$102 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.
- **Support 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 core CDC ORH 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 program at \$12 million in FY 2025.**
- **Increase 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 44 new accredited rural residency programs or rural track programs in family medicine, internal medicine, psychiatry, and general surgery and received approval for approximately 575 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	<a href="#">President's FY25 Budget</a>	<a href="#">HAC FY 2025 Mark Up</a>	<a href="#">SAC FY 2025 Mark Up</a>	<a href="#">FY 2024 Omnibus</a>
<i>Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Programs</i>					
Rural Health Research & Policy Development	<b>11</b>	11	11.5		11
Rural Hospital Stabilization Pilot Program	<b>10</b>	--	15		4
Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants	<b>102</b>	64	74		64
State Offices of Rural Health	<b>13</b>	13	13		12.5
Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Network & Quality Improvement Grants <i>Within line:</i>	<b>103</b>	93	109		101
Rural Maternity & Obstetrics Management Strategies Program(s)	<b>12</b>	10	14		12
Rural Residency Planning & Development	<b>13</b>	13	14		13
Rural Communities Opioid Response	<b>148</b>	145	145		145
<i>Critical HRSA Safety Net Programs</i>					
National Health Service Corps	<b>128<sup>+</sup> 790<sup>~</sup></b>	126 <sup>+</sup> 790 <sup>~</sup>	130 <sup>+</sup>		128 <sup>+</sup> 297 <sup>~</sup>
Area Health Education Centers	<b>47</b>	47	47		47
Nursing Workforce Development	<b>320</b>	320	287		305
Oral Health Training	<b>43</b>	43	43		41
Behavioral Health Workforce Development Programs	<b>254</b>	254	158		193
Teaching Health Center GME	<b>320</b>	320 <sup>~</sup>	--		164 <sup>~</sup>
Telehealth	<b>48</b>	38	44.5		42
Community Health Centers	<b>1,858<sup>+</sup> 6,340<sup>~</sup></b>	1,738 <sup>+</sup> 6,340 <sup>~</sup>	1,858 TBD		1,858 <sup>+</sup> 4,000 <sup>~</sup>
340B Drug Pricing Program/Office of Pharmacy Affairs	<b>12</b>	12	12		12
<i>Centers of Disease Control and Prevention</i>					
Office of Rural Health	<b>10</b>	5	5		5
<i>USDA Rural Development Programs</i>					
Rural Hospital Technical Assistance	<b>2</b>	--	--	--	- --
Communities Facilities Loans and Grants	<b>1,948</b>	1,948	1,932	254	3,455
Broadband ReConnect Program	<b>112</b>	112	112.5	75	90
Rural Partners Network	<b>10</b>	10	--	1.5	1.5
<small>* Numbers in millions  + Discretionary request  ~ Current/proposed law mandatory request</small>					