



September 9, 2021

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
374 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blackburn and Senator Hickenlooper:

The National Association of Rural Health Clinics thanks each of you for your leadership introducing the Rural Health Innovation Act of 2021 (S. 2450).

Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) have long since provided essential care to residents of rural medically underserved communities and alongside rural hospitals provide an irreplaceable safety net of care to this population. In rural areas where hospitals may not be located, RHCs are also well situated as trusted providers within their communities to provide after-hours and urgent care.

Utilizing and expanding upon the infrastructure of existing rural health care facilities can increase access to urgent care in rural communities. Therefore, we believe that the Rural Health Innovation Act, which establishes grant programs for existing, or newly established, RHCs and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to provide urgent and triage health services, would be beneficial for the advancement of the RHC program and the provision of quality, comprehensive care in rural America.

The legislation would cover staff, equipment, construction and renovation, and other activities deemed appropriate for enhancing rural urgent care services, in the amount of \$500,000 or \$750,000 per year, for existing and new RHCs, respectively. Passing this legislation would give RHCs and FQHCs the opportunity to expand or establish an essential role within their communities, as they will now be explicitly empowered to provide additional life-saving, urgent and triage care.

The National Association of Rural Health Clinics strongly supports the Rural Health Innovation Act of 2021 and looks forward to working with you to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Nathan Baugh

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