



November 30, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
156 Dirksen
Washington, DC 205150

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
131 Dirksen
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of rural patients and providers, write to express our appreciation for the committee's inclusion of \$5,000,000 for the Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Behavioral Health Initiative in the "comparative statement of new budget" [table](#) under rural health.

For more than 40 years, federally certified RHCs have been providing essential care to residents of rural medically underserved communities. RHCs, along with rural hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), provide an indispensable safety net of care to this population, striving to offer both medical and behavioral health services to best serve the needs of their communities.

This initiative, as described in President Biden's 2023 budget request, is intended to cover the salary and other recruitment and retention costs of hiring behavioral health providers, specifically in RHCs where there are no existing behavioral health providers. If included in FY 2023 Appropriations, this program can greatly expand access to these critical services in rural communities across the country. In addition to meeting this critical need, this program would serve as the first Congressionally appropriated federal grant program specifically for federally certified RHCs, an essential program of over 5,200 facilities in 45 states who, unlike health centers, are not eligible for 330 grants that support community health centers.

As Congress turns its attention to passing the FY 2023 appropriations package, we request your continued support for rural providers and the communities they serve by **appropriating the money necessary to fund the President's budget request for a Rural Health Clinic Behavioral Health Initiative.**

We believe this initiative is a key step in meeting the behavioral health needs of our rural communities. Please contact Nathan.Baugh@narhc.org for additional information.

Sincerely

Nathan Baugh

Nathan Baugh
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National Association of
Rural Health Clinics

Alan Morgan

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Chief Executive Officer
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