



May 25, 2023

The Honorable Adrian Smith
United States House of Representatives
502 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

On behalf of the over 5,300 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) across the country, the National Association of Rural Health Clinics (NARHC) thanks you for your leadership in introducing the *Rural Health Clinic Burden Reduction Act*.

RHCs are part of an essential safety net of care in rural communities across the country, and for more than 45 years have been increasing access to outpatient services in medically underserved areas. The unique structure of the RHC program comes with significant regulatory requirements and oversight, intended to protect the integrity of the RHC benefits. However, many provisions of the RHC statute written in 1977 have never been updated. As healthcare evolves, it is critical that program policies are modernized to reflect the changing world.

Therefore, we strongly support your bill which would modernize various provisions relating to RHCs under Medicare, from aligning federal RHC scope of practice rules with state law to amending location definitions to retain status quo policy, to allowing RHCs to offer expanded behavioral health care in areas experiencing a shortage of such services. These policies support the continued access to care for rural communities across the country.

We remain grateful for the ways in which you continue to serve as a champion for rural and underserved communities, and we deeply appreciate the work that your entire staff has contributed to this legislation. We look forward to working with you to pass the *Rural Health Clinic Burden Reduction Act* to allow RHCs to continue to do what they do best, providing quality, accessible care to rural America.

Sincerely,

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