

March 15, 2022

Senator Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Senator Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Senator Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor-HHS-Education

Senator Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor-HHS-Education

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Members Shelby and Blunt,

On behalf of the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) and the 50 States Offices of Rural Health (SORH), we write to ask for your support in funding the SORH grant program at \$15 million for Fiscal Year 2023.

Rural hospitals and rural clinics are among the largest employers in their community. Since the start of the Public Health Emergency in 2020, rural hospitals and rural health clinics have been at or beyond capacity; the additional funding for the SORH program would positively impact rural Americans who, per capita, are older, sicker and have less income than average Americans. We therefore respectfully ask that your committee fund this important rural safety net program at \$15,000,000 for FY 2023.

In 2018, Congress passed S. 2276, the State Offices of Rural Health Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-408). This bill reauthorized the SORH grant program through FY 2022 at \$12,500,000 annually. The increase in funding to \$15,000,000 for FY '23 will build on the progress SORH have made as a rural health safety net and send a message to rural Americans that Congress is committed to their health and economic vitality.

SORH build partnerships to grow innovation and improve health in our nation's rural communities, provide technical assistance that improves quality of care, and aid in healthcare provider recruitment and workforce development. SORH are a one-stop-shop for healthcare providers and help connect millions of people living and working in rural communities across the United States.

As your committee begins work on spending legislation for FY 2023, we encourage you to be mindful of the role SORH have and will continue to play in sustaining our nation's rural health. In doing so, we ask you to support a funding level of \$15 million in the FY 2023 for the SORH.

For any questions regarding our request, please feel free to contact Tammy Norville, NOSORH CEO, at tammyn@nosorh.org or (888) 391-7258 ext. 105.

Sincerely,