



# Reauthorization: Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program

OVER 25 YEARS OF SUPPORTING RURAL HOSPITALS

## What Congress should do:

In 2024, the Rural Hospital Flexibility Act was introduced in Congress (S. 5308/H.R.10187) to reauthorize and modify the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program. The strong bipartisan bills were authored by Sens. Barrasso/Hassan/Blackburn/Cortez Masto in the Senate and Reps. Miller and Sewell in the House. The intent of the bill is provide stability to the grant program which provides states with funding needed to support Critical Access Hospitals in all 50 states. We ask that members cosponsor and work to pass this critical legislation in the 119th Congress.

### Modernization helps rural communities, hospitals, clinics, and nearly 61 million rural Americans in all 50 states by:

- Providing funding and support for rural communities, certified Rural Health Clinics, rural hospitals, EMS and other providers for:
  - Quality improvement
  - Community-based initiatives for health equity and behavioral health
  - Telehealth
  - New models of care
  - Implementation and support
- Providing technical assistance to support communities to consider the Rural Emergency Hospital option
- Ensuring resources and responses for a rural public health crisis in all 50 states

### Track record in improving the health of rural people and places:



— Over 1,300 Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) working to improve the health of 57 million rural Americans.



— 72% of Critical Access Hospitals voluntarily working with the state Flex program saw improvement.



— \$150 million in CARES Act relief was rapidly distributed to 1,717 small rural hospitals by State Flex programs.

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## What does a modernized program and appropriation support?

PROGRAM	ACTIVITIES
<b>Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program</b>	Enhance activities and funding for grants from states to small rural hospitals or networks of eligible hospitals (with less than 49 beds) for operational improvements including improving data collection, quality, and payment bundling.
<b>Rural Emergency Hospital Technical Assistance</b>	Ensure the implementation of the new Rural Emergency Hospital model with technical assistance from existing State Flex Programs and other stakeholders.
<b>Rural Provider Modernization Technical Assistance</b>	Expand current Flex technical assistance program to support hospitals, clinics and communities in implementing new sustainable models of care. These models of care will address health equity, social determinants of health, and build collaborative approaches to improve health.
<b>Rural Provider Modernization Grants</b>	Provide grants to support hospitals, public health departments, clinics, and community-based organizations to plan and implement emerging, sustainable models of care.
<b>Rural Hospital Flexibility Grants</b>	Expand work and funding for technical assistance for hospital conversion, quality, operational, financial, population health, EMS, and innovation for CAH.