

9/20/2006 Moran Sponsors Legislation to Help Rural Health Care Providers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - In an effort to further improve access to quality health care in rural America, Congressman Jerry Moran has sponsored H.R. 6030, the Health Care Access and Rural Equity (H-CARE) Act. Moran recently joined members of the Rural Health Care Coalition in a press conference in Washington, D.C., to talk about the introduction of H-CARE, which will help rural health care providers address the challenges associated with delivering quality care close to home.

"Quality health care is not a luxury for people in rural areas - it is a necessity," Moran said. "Unfortunately, unique factors create disparities in the health care systems of rural communities and make access a continuous challenge. This legislation will help Kansans and other rural residents by providing rural hospitals and other health care providers with the funding needed to keep their doors open."

The H-CARE Act would do the following:

- Authorize health information technology grants for rural practitioners
- Require prompt payment to rural pharmacies by Medicare prescription drug plans
- Ensure adequate rural representation on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission
- Establish a Rural Health Quality Advisory Commission
- Establish a Rural Community Hospital Program to help midsize hospitals recover costs more accurately
- Raise Rural Health Clinic reimbursements to more appropriately cover costs
- Extend several expiring Medicare adjustment payments for rural practitioners, including physicians practicing in physician scarcity areas, rural ambulance providers, rural home health agencies and specific classes of rural hospitals
- Provide greater flexibility for Critical Access Hospital lab services
- Boost payments to Rural Health Clinics

This legislation has been endorsed by the National Rural Health Association, American Hospital Association, Rural Referral Center/Sole Community Hospital Coalition, American Counseling Association, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists, American Ambulance Association, Federation of American Hospitals and the National Community Pharmacist Association.

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