

*Your letterhead*

Dear *Your Assembly member / NYS Senator*:

*Your Organization [or you if Individual member]* is a member of the New York State Association for Rural Health [NYSARH], a non-profit, non-partisan organization with a mission to enhance the health and well-being of rural New Yorkers and their communities. [www.NYSARH.org](http://www.NYSARH.org)

A delegation from NYSARH met with legislative leaders in Albany on February 4<sup>th</sup>. There were a few key points discussed at those meetings that I would like to emphasize with you, our representative.

### **NYS Budget**

The Executive Budget includes dramatic cuts for Area Health Education Centers, Rural Health Networks and Rural Health Access programs. Specifically, the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 proposes to reduce or eliminate, as follows:

	<b>Budgeted Funding Amount</b>	
	<b><u>2019-20</u></b>	<b><u>2020-21</u></b>
Area Health Education Centers	\$1,670,000	\$0
Rural Health Network Development	\$5,530,000	\$3,764,000
Rural Health Access Development	\$8,250,000	\$5,646,000

We request that you and the New York State Legislature fight to **restore** funding for these programs to the 2019-20 funding levels. These programs, which are targeted for either complete elimination or devastating 30% cuts, help reduce rural health disparities and support measurable positive impact on community health and rural economies. We have attached a copy of NYSARH Testimony to the Joint Health Committees.

Rural healthcare is also threatened by cuts to Medicaid funding. We encourage the legislature to carefully evaluate proposed cuts to mitigate unintended consequences for our rural communities.

We recognize that the Governor restored funding for the Diversity in Medicine program, which had been one of our priorities, in the 30-day Amendment.

*We encourage you to meet with your Assembly Member and describe the programs you offer to provide examples for the bullets below:*

### **NYS Policy**

- Preserve existing funding & infrastructure that support The Prevention Agenda, rural healthcare, disease prevention and health education programs.
- Implement strategies to increase the rural healthcare workforce. Shortages are experienced in all levels and disciplines.
- Build capacity to provide more comprehensive, timely, affordable and effective behavioral health care.
- Address challenges for non-emergency Rural Transportation.
- Address challenges for Rural EMS & support Paramedicine.
- Support Health in All Policies.

*For Senate letters only*

### **Rural Health Council**

NYSARH supports reconstituting the Rural Health Council. It is our understanding that the Governor and Assembly have identified their nominees and that the Senate has yet to do so. If you would like to support this effort, NYSARH is prepared to assist with this.

Thank you for your continued support of Rural Health Issues. Please feel free to contact me if we can provide any further detail regarding the NYSARH budget and policy priorities.

*Your Name*

*Your Organization & Contact Info*