



New York State Policy Priorities Winter 2024

The Mission of the NYS Association for Rural Health is to improve the health and well-being of rural New Yorkers and their communities. The rural parts of New York face many of the same healthcare-related issues as their urban and suburban counterparts, but with greater consequences for health disparities. Challenges to healthcare access caused by dispersed population and long distances are magnified by poor broadband coverage, insufficient reimbursement, fewer transportation options, and a shortage of healthcare providers practicing in rural communities.

NYSARH supports legislation that will enhance healthcare for rural residents by facilitating access, increasing funding, and expanding the pool of healthcare providers.

Facilitate Access

NYSARH recommends restoring funding in the 2024-25 Executive Budget for:

- Rural Health Care Access Development Program [Hospitals]
 - Restore \$4,141,900 to bring total to previous level \$9,882,000
- Rural Health Network Development Program [Networks]
 - Restore \$2,648,100 to bring total to previous level \$6,318,000

Increase Funding

NYSARH supports the following legislative initiatives:

- Advocate for permanent telehealth payment parity, regardless of modality and patient/provider location. Payment parity for Telehealth (A.7316/S.6733)
- Create a sustainable state financing mechanism for emergency medical services (A1091a/S1852)
- Enhance funding to home care and long-term care organizations so that they may pay higher wages to their employees (A4583a/S2931)
- Support state protections for 340B contract pharmacy arrangements (A.7789)
- Allow Medicaid reimbursement for ambulance services without prior authorization (S3223)
- Increase medical assistance payment rates for ambulance services (A5133/S5122)
- Continue to support and enhance mental health services in schools (A7743/S7558)
- Increase Medicaid payment rates for Community Health Centers (A7560/S6959)

Expand the Healthcare Workforce

NYSARH supports these legislative proposals:

- Prioritize dental workforce agenda
 - Recognize Dental Therapists (A.5373/ S.4428)
 - Expand DANY to include Dentists (A.1454/S.4334)
- Provide bonuses for healthcare and mental hygiene workers (A6837/S4864)
- Support loan forgiveness for mental health nurses (A4562/S7486)