



Adirondack Health Institute

January 30, 2020

Testimony to Committee 2020 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing Health Committee

Dear Committee Members:

The **Adirondack Rural Health Network (ARHN)**, funded by a New York State Department of Health (DOH) grant, is a program of AHI - Adirondack Health Institute, Inc. AHI, based in Glens Falls, NY, is an independent, non-profit organization supporting hospitals, physician practices, behavioral health providers, community-based organizations, patients, and others in its nine county region to transform health care and improve population health. AHI is a joint venture of Adirondack Health (Adirondack Medical Center), University of Vermont Health Network – Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital, Glens Falls Hospital, Hudson Headwaters Health Network and St. Lawrence Health System. ARHN's service area includes Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Warren and Washington counties. These largely rural counties host populations ranging from approximately 4,600 to just over 64,000 across approximately 8,372 square miles.

The Adirondack Rural Health Network (ARHN) functions as a multi-stakeholder, regional coalition to inform planning assessment, provide education and training to further the NYS DOH Prevention Agenda, and offer other resources to support the development of the regional health care system. Since 1992, ARHN has provided a valuable forum for assessing regional population health needs and developing collaborative responses to regional priorities.

Approximately 12% of New York residents live in rural communities, making them vulnerable to numerous health disparities and poor health outcomes common in rural regions. The population of ARHN's rural service area is, on average, older and with higher rates of poverty and low income in comparison to many urban populations in the state, and to New York State as a whole. Rural Health Networks, located in 30 rural counties throughout New York State, enhance care and services available to rural residents through multi-stakeholder collaboratives intended to further the NYS Prevention Agenda through implementation of comprehensive strategies to improve the health of our most rural New York residents.

ARHN partners depend on the network for support of their efforts related to community health assessment and health planning, furthering the NYS Prevention Agenda, decreasing health disparities, expanding population health resources, advancing whole-person care, and coordinating cross-sector collaboration.

Without Rural Health Networks, such as ARHN, efforts to improve health in rural regions will lack coordinated, inclusive support and community engagement.

I urge you to reinstate Rural Health Care Access Development and the Rural Health Care Network Development funding to the previous year's level by restoring the 25 percent proposed budget reduction. A reduction in funding of this magnitude would adversely impact the reach and scope of the vital resources ARHN provides to key regional partners and the communities they serve.

On behalf of AHI, the Adirondack Rural Health Network, and the other rural health networks across the state, I thank you for your consideration.

Please feel free to contact me at 518-480-0111, ext. 201. with any questions.

Regards,



Eric Burton
Chief Executive Officer
AHI-Adirondack Health Institute