



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL HEALTH  
2021-2022 EXECUTIVE BUDGET TESTIMONY  
JOINT HEALTH COMMITTEE HEARINGS  
FEBRUARY 2021

**TO:**

**Senator Gustavo Rivera, Chair, Health Committee**  
**Senator Liz Krueger, Chair, Finance Committee**  
**Senator Samra Brouk, Chair, Mental Health Committee**  
**Senator Pete Harcham, Chair, Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse**  
**Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, Chair, Social Services Committee**  
**Senator Rachel May, Chair, Committee on Aging & Commission on Rural Resources**  
**Senator Diane Savino, Chair, Committee on Internet and Technology**

**Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, Chair, Health Committee**  
**Assembly Member Helene Weinstein, Chair, Ways and Means Committee**  
**Assembly Member Aileen M. Gunther, Chair, Mental Health Committee**  
**Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, Chair, Committee on Social Services**  
**Assembly Member Harry Bronson, Chair, Committee on Economic Development**  
**Assembly Member Ron Kim, Chair, Committee on Aging**  
**Assembly Member Carrie Woerner, Chair, Committee on Career Education**  
**Assembly Member Angelo Santabarbara, Chair, Commission on Rural Resources**

The New York State Association for Rural Health (NYSARH) appreciates the opportunity to present testimony to the Joint Committees on the Governor's proposed 2021-2022 NYS Budget. Our testimony recognizes the areas where the Governor has made significant positive investments in the infrastructure and programs that promote and support rural health. We also will identify those program cuts that place the health and economies of rural communities at risk. Programs we will reference are primarily administered by the NYS Department of Health.

***NYSARH urges the NYS Legislature to **REJECT** the Governor's proposal to further reduce funding for the Rural Health Network and Rural Health Care Access Development programs. The proposed extremely large funding reduction, a second year in a row, creates an existential crisis for many of our member organizations.***

**We urge the New York State Senate and Assembly to protect these critical programs that provide major positive impacts in New York State's rural communities.**

**The New York State Association for Rural Health strongly supports the following Rural Health Programs and funding levels:**

- **Rural Health Network Development &**
- **Rural Health Care Access Development** **\$6,240,000 to \$12,680,000**

There are Rural Health Networks throughout the State, each with a mission and partner organizations carefully crafted to meet the unique needs of their communities. Rural Health Networks are essential to improving public health and linking rural communities to regional and statewide initiatives such as the NYS Prevention Agenda and NYS Health Innovation Plan. Rural Health Care Access Hospitals are small rural hospitals. Funds may be used flexibly for capital, equipment, software, recruitment and/or community outreach. This funding is especially relevant given proposed cuts to the Medicaid program and the increased need caused by the pandemic. Funding for Rural Health Networks and Rural Health Care Access Hospitals was also cut 20% in SFY 2020-21.
- **Area Health Education Centers** **\$0 to \$2,200,000**

Area Health Education Centers are committed to expanding the health care workforce, while maximizing diversity and facilitating distribution, especially in rural and underserved communities. Area Health Education Centers also offer creative, hands-on and innovative health career curricula for high school and college students as well as continuing education for professionals. Elimination of State funding will result in a corresponding reduction in Federal funding, severely impairing the ability of these organizations to meet critical needs for Workforce Development.
- **Rural Health Council**

NYS approved the Rural Health Council in December 2017, but it has never been empaneled. We urge the Legislature to nominate members to serve on this Council.
- **Rural Emergency Services**

NYSARH supports the creation of a Task Force to study the unique challenges of rural EMS.
- **Rural Broadband**

If the Public Health Emergency has taught us anything, it is the importance of access to broadband for ALL residents of New York State.

The NYS Association for Rural Health was founded in 2001 as a not-for-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization working to preserve and improve the health of the citizens in rural New York State. NYSARH members include rural hospitals, federally qualified health centers, rural health networks, the Area Health Education Centers, county public health departments, behavioral health providers, emergency medical service providers, long-term care organizations, businesses, universities, students, as well as individual rural health professionals.

**For further information or follow-up please contact  
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