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NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Government Affairs Office
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Senator Kent Conrad
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3403

Senator Jerry Moran
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senators Conrad and Moran,

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit organization of 21,000 members representing the health interests of rural Americans, applauds the introduction of S. 1979, the Conrad State 30 Improvement Act. Your bill provides incentives for physicians to practice in rural settings and makes great strides in the delivery of vital health care services in rural America.

As you know, rural America faces significant barriers with access to healthcare. Rural populations are, per capita, older, sicker and poorer than their urban and suburban counterparts. Rural facilities encounter higher percentages of Medicare beneficiaries, under-insured, and self-payer patients than their urban counterparts. Lack of financial incentives for physicians and non-physician practitioners and many other unique factors have long contributed to a huge shortage of rural health care workforce and, therefore, meaningful access for all rural Americans. Your legislation will help hospitals, clinics and group practices overcome some of these barriers and, thereby, increase health care access in rural America.

Rural health care facilities are not only critical access points for rural Americans, but they serve as a vital cog in the rural economy. Studies have shown that one physician can bring up to 20 additional jobs and over \$1 million in economic activity to rural communities. Your legislation will go far in ensuring that rural Americans have access to care and will infuse local communities with needed jobs and an educated workforce.

The NRHA supports your efforts to help these vital professionals and ensure meaningful access to care for rural Americans. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to call David Lee on my government affairs staff at 202-639-0550 or by e-mail at dlee@nrharural.org. We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation. You are truly stalwart champions for rural America.

Sincerely,



Alan Morgan, CEO
National Rural Health Association

www.RuralHealthWeb.org