



Virginia

**Rural Health Association**

Affiliate of the National Rural Health Association

## **Policy Priorities**

### **Recruitment and Retention**

The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) supports efforts to recruit and retain health care professionals in the rural areas of Virginia. Specifically to support:

- Efforts to increase the number of health professionals trained in Virginia and encouraged to practice in rural Virginia
- State and federal legislation that promotes increased availability of health professionals interested in rural practice
- Programs for K-12 students to promote interest in all categories of healthcare professions
- Encouragement of institutions of higher education to provide programs that graduate health care professionals who will serve rural areas
- Admissions processes of health profession programs that increase admission of students interested in primary care, as well as to increase admission of students from rural areas
- Professional education that places health care professionals in rural communities for significant portions of their education and training programs
- The creation and enhancement of rural education tracks in health professional training programs that recognize the special needs of rural populations
- Funding of scholarships, loan repayment programs and other forms of educational financing which promote health care practice in rural areas
- Active involvement of rural communities in the development and implementation of a local health provider recruitment and retention plan
- Development and dissemination of information to communities to help recruit and retain health care professionals



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## Policy Priorities

### Access to Health Care

VRHA supports activities that improve access to health care in rural areas of Virginia. Specifically to support:

- Efficient and effective use of health professionals and resources in rural areas
- Medicare and Medicaid payment methodologies that advance primary care services in rural areas
- Flexibility in Medicare and Medicaid policies to offer new coverage and reduce unnecessary barriers to enrollment
- Efforts that promote cooperative development of health care services in rural areas
- The use of telecommunication technologies in rural areas and the elimination of barriers to its use
- Availability of affordable broadband services in all rural communities.
- The development of affordable and comprehensive health care coverage for all residents of Virginia
- Public education that encourages health care cost awareness and proper utilization of health services and patient responsibilities in health promotion
- Programs that are sensitive to and address the needs of ethnic groups in rural populations
- Development of adequate health care transportation services in rural areas for both emergency and non-emergency situations
- The ongoing preparedness in rural areas to address pandemics, mass casualty events and acts of terrorism
- The funding and implementation of research that benefits the health and safety of the rural residents of Virginia



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## Policy Priorities

### Public Health/Prevention

VRHA supports strategies to decrease health risks in rural Virginia. Specifically:

- The development and continuation of childhood immunization and community wellness and prevention education programs
- K-12 health and physical education programs and the availability of school nurses at all K-12 facilities
- Public education and safety programs in rural Virginia including such programs as farm and mine safety
- The inclusion of disease prevention and health promotion education in health professions training and continuing education.
- The funding and implementation of research and comprehensive data collection, which benefit the health and safety of the residents of rural Virginia
- Sound environmental policies that protect the health and well-being of rural residents
- Provision of healthy food and beverages in K-12 schools