

# Rural Health Policy: National Directions

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## Policy Directions

- From Deliberations of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee
- From the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- From the RUPRI Health Panel



## U.S. Senate Finance Committee

- Gathered information in a series of staff briefings
- Culminated in Spring 2018 Committee Hearing
- Featured lowans!
- More to come
- RUPRI input to staff in following slides

## Advancing Rural Health Through Value Based Payment

- Threats associated with burden and tyranny of small numbers
- Opportunities associated with opportunities to redirect total spending to address patient and community needs

## Refine Approaches

- Developing rural relevant measures
- Reducing burden
- Bringing advantages of scale to rural providers

## Evidence Base is Being Developed

- Promises from Maryland, also indication of need for addressing continuum
- Evaluation of the AIM Demonstration in ACOs
- More to come from State Innovation Models and PA demonstration

## Summary Considerations

- System reform to include strengthening primary care base
- Building capacity for integrated care
- Bringing rural providers into value-based payment
- Aligning with other payers

## Closing: Opportunities

- Transitional support to rural providers
- Compensation to sustain essential services in low volume situations
- Infrastructure investments
- Testing alternatives configurations and payment

## Closing Opportunities

- Emphasizing total cost of care rather than prices and cost of single encounters
- Coordination across payers when creating new alternatives
- Being mindful of interacting policies and range of rural circumstances

## CMS: Rural Health Strategy

- Process was to engage focus groups in regions of the country
- Developed a strategy within the Rural Health Council of CMS
- Document in public domain now:  
<http://go.cms.gov/ruralhealth>

## Three Strategic Areas

1. Ensuring access to high-quality health care to all Americans in rural settings
2. Addressing the unique economics of providing health care in rural America
3. Bringing the rural health care focus to CMS' health care delivery and payment reform initiatives

## CMS Rural Health Strategy Objectives

- Apply a Rural Lens to CMS Programs and Policies
- Improve Access to Care Through Provider Engagement and Support
- Advance Telehealth and Telemedicine
- Empower Patients in Rural Communities to Make Decisions About Their Health Care
- Leverage Partnerships to Achieve the Goals of the CMS Rural Health Strategy

## RUPRI Health Panel Recommendations

- From “Taking Stock: Policy Opportunities for Advancing Rural Health”
- Available in entirety: <http://www.rupri.org/wp-content/uploads/TAKING-STOCK-2018.pdf>
- Also possible to upload separate sections

## Medicare Policy Opportunities

- Offer transitional support to rural providers during payment policy changes
- Include capital in infrastructure investments to redesign rural health care delivery facilities and support expansion of broadband capacity
- Develop and test alternative delivery models in rural communities

## Medicaid and CHIP

- Maintain and expand incentives for states to lower eligibility criteria for Medicaid and CHIP
- Monitor impact of waiver programs on rural beneficiaries, providers, health plans, and communities
- Include rural beneficiaries, providers, and communities in Medicaid payment and delivery system innovations, and monitor innovation impact over time

## Insurance coverage and affordability

- Maintain insurance reforms
- Consolidate rate areas
- Offer incentives to carriers to establish Multi-state plans
- Strengthen risk mitigation
- Encourage demand for marketplace plans



## Quality

- Support development of rural-relevant quality measures
- Offer quality initiatives specifically design to meet rural needs and opportunities

## Health Care Finance and System Transformation

- Offer alternative pathways to rural provider inclusion in value-based payments
- Expand collaborative opportunities among rural providers

## Health Care Finance and System Transformation

- Improve timeliness and transparency of demonstration evaluations
- Support care transitions and care coordination
- Monitor emerging research on the impact of social determinants on healthcare performance, and consider rural social risk factors in payment design

## Workforce

- Decentralize training programs into rural environments
- Target GME funding toward rural health care needs, including primary care
- Target federal funding of non-GME training programs to national health priorities

## Workforce

- Update payment policies to non-physician and patient support providers
- Create a comprehensive workforce strategy and plan that aligns with the health goals of the nation

## Population Health

- Ensure affordability of clinical and community-based preventive services
- Provide stable long-term funding to support locally-appropriate public health prevention programs

## Population Health

- Incent integrated preventive and clinical services
- Integrate population health goals into financing strategies and payment policy formulation

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- Exciting times of transforming finance, delivery organizations
- All the while benefitting from advances in science of medicine
- And benefitting from understanding of social determinants of health and actions to take
- We can move to a system focused on health that draws the best talent from multiple disciplines and perspectives
- But we will not take the final steps without great leadership, including physician-leadership!

## For further information

### The RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis

<http://cph.uiowa.edu/rupri>

### The RUPRI Health Panel

<http://www.rupri.org>

### Rural Telehealth Research Center

<http://ruraltelehealth.org/>

### The Rural Health Value Program

<http://www.ruralhealthvalue.org>

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## Collaborations to Share and Spread Innovation

- ✓ The National Rural Health Resource Center

<https://www.ruralcenter.org/>



- ✓ The Rural Health Information Hub

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>



- ✓ The National Rural Health Association

<https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/>



- ✓ The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health

<https://nosorh.org/>



- ✓ The American Hospital Association

<http://www.aha.org/>

