

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 12, 2021

Dear Colleague,

The Senate Rural Health Caucus leadership welcomes you to the 117th Congress. We write encouraging you to join the caucus as we improve health care in rural America.

Protecting health care in rural communities is an important and bipartisan priority. Approximately 46 million Americans live in rural areas, where patients face significant health challenges. These include higher rates of heart disease, cancer, unintentional injury, chronic lower respiratory disease, and stroke.

The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating these problems. Rural communities face dire financial challenges, which put access to quality care in jeopardy. Since 2010, 135 rural hospitals — including 19 in 2020 — have closed, causing communities across rural America to lose access to specialists and mental health providers. In addition, nearly half of the remaining rural hospitals operate on negative margins.

The Rural Health Caucus has a long history of working across the aisle. In the last Congress, we secured dedicated CARES Act funding for rural providers, access to Paycheck Protection Program loans for community hospitals, and supported the expansion of telehealth, to name a few.

We know rural communities are as diverse as our nation. This is why we need you to add your voice on how to best improve rural health. Only by working together can we achieve the lasting results our communities deserve.

Please join us and improve the health care of people living in rural America. To join or rejoin the caucus, please email RuralHealthCaucus@Barrasso.Senate.Gov.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator