

CA urges Senate Finance Committee to achieve meaningful health care reform

Communicating for America, (CA), is a rural, non-profit, non-partisan organization with members across America and has been working to ensure rural Americans have access to affordable health insurance for more than three decades.

We applaud the efforts of the Senate Finance Committee to achieve meaningful health care and health insurance reform in America.

We urge you to keep in mind the unique issues that affect rural physicians, hospitals and patients and ask that you solve the disparity in Medicare payments to states like Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas and Wisconsin.

We urge you to give special consideration to hospitals like Lake Region Healthcare and similar hospitals throughout rural America, hospitals that have come to be termed "tweener" hospitals.

They are larger and provide significantly greater medical services than the Critical Access Hospitals (CAH), yet smaller than the large tertiary care centers found in larger urban areas. These rural secondary hospitals provide health care services to rural areas that are both high quality and cost effective. They play a most important part of the continuum of care in rural America.

We propose that a small safety net be created for these rural secondary hospitals. We propose that Sole Community Hospitals be paid at least their operational "costs," but not the complete costs as are covered for CAHs. We propose that this safety net be provided for both inpatient and outpatient Medicare services. At the very least, we support the provisions in [HR 3200, Sec. 1192](#) that provide for an extension of outpatient hold harmless provision.

Thank you for your consideration. We welcome the opportunity to provide additional information about how rural secondary hospitals may be helped and CA's position on health care reform.

Sincerely,

Milt Smedsrud

Founder, Communicating for America

Larry Schulz

CEO, Lake Region Healthcare Corporation