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September 22, 2014

Ms. Wakina Scott
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services
Mail Stop S2-01-16
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Ms. Scott:

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit organization of 21,000 members representing the health interests of rural Americans, applauds efforts to expand access to health insurance through the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0. This plan makes great strides in the access that rural Hoosiers, specifically the rural poor, have to health insurance and health coverage. We join the Indiana Rural Health Association in advocating for a 1115 demonstration waiver.

As you may, 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. These challenges have become more severe over the last several years. Indeed, since the beginning of 2013, the closure rate of rural hospitals has doubled. Closures of rural hospitals have been most acute in states that are not expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. The efforts made in Indiana to ensure access to insurance will both sustain rural facilities and stabilize the health of thousands of citizens living in rural Indiana.

NRHA supports the innovative efforts to expand health insurance coverage to help ensure meaningful access to care for rural Hoosiers. If you have any questions regarding our support, 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 your efforts in these arena and fully support the 1115 waiver.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Morgan', is written over a light grey circular stamp.

Alan Morgan, CEO
National Rural Health Association