



**SAN BENITO COUNTY
AGENDA ITEM
TRANSMITTAL FORM**

Dom Zanger
District No. 1

Kollin Kosmicki
District No. 2

Mindy Sotelo
District No. 3
Chair

Angela Curro
District No. 4
Vice-Chair

Bea Gonzales
District No. 5

Item Number: 1.4

MEETING DATE: 10/24/2023

DEPARTMENT: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM PREPARER: Christina Ruiz

DEPT HEAD/DIRECTOR: Ray Espinosa

SUBJECT:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Approve letter of support for Legislative Bill HR 833, Save America's Rural Hospitals Act, which will reverse the dangerous trends by eliminating Medicare sequestration for rural hospitals, making Medicare telehealth service enhancements permanent for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), permanently extending increased Medicare payments for rural ground ambulance services currently set to expire December 31, 2024, expanding access to certified registered nurse anesthetists' services and delegate authority to the chairwomen to sign the letter on behalf of the Board. SBC FILE NUMBER:119

AGENDA SECTION:

CONSENT AGENDA

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

More than 60,000,000 individuals in rural areas of the United States rely on rural hospitals and other providers as critical access points to health care. Access to health care is essential to communities living in rural areas. Most Americans living in rural areas are elderly. Medicare beneficiaries face challenges when accessing health care services, forced to travel twice as far to the closest hospital. As a result, 60 percent of trauma deaths occur in rural areas, and eliminating hospital access will leave this population at risk of receiving the care they need, expect, and deserve.

Between January 2010 and January 1, 2021, 137 rural hospitals closed in the United States, according

to the University of North Carolina's Cecil G Sheps Centers for Health Services Research, and the rate of these closures is increasing. The crisis is not hypothetical; it's happening now. The closure of hospitals will be challenging to reopen once closed. Today, 453 rural hospitals operate at levels similar to those that have shut down over the last decade and are on the brink of closure.

The Save America's Rural Hospitals Act comes at a time when rural hospitals and health centers face unprecedented challenges. HR 833 would ensure and reverse this dangerous trend by eliminating Medicare sequestration for rural hospitals, making Medicare telehealth service enhancements for Federally Qualified Health centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), permanently extending increased Medicare payments for rural ground ambulance services currently set to expire December 31, 2024, and expanding access to certified registered nurse anesthetists services.

RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

N/A

CONTRACT NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

N/A

CONTRACT AND RFP HISTORY:

N/A

LAST CONTRACT AMOUNT OR N/A:

N/A

STATE IF THIS IS A NEW CONTRACT/ HOW MANY PAST AMENDED CONTRACTS/ OR N/A:

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 1. Operational Development & Excellence

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2. Planning And Sustainable Growth

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 3. Technology

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 4. Community Engagement

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 5. Health & Safe Community

Yes

BUDGETED:

N/A

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT NEEDED:

N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

UNFUNDED MANDATE:

N/A

SBC BUDGET LINE ITEM NUMBER:

119

CURRENT FY COST:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve letter of support for Legislative Bill HR 833, Save America's Rural Hospitals Act, which will reverse the dangerous trends by eliminating Medicare sequestration for rural hospitals, making Medicare telehealth service enhancements permanent for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), permanently extending increased Medicare payments for rural ground ambulance services currently set to expire December 31, 2024, expanding access to certified registered nurse anesthetists' services.
2. Delegate authority to the chairwomen to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Letter of Support - Legislative Bill HR 833](#)
2. [HR 833 Fact Sheet](#)