

Public Law 100-320
100th Congress

Joint Resolution

To designate the period commencing on May 15, 1988, and ending on May 21, 1988,
as "National Rural Health Awareness Week".

May 19, 1988
[S.J. Res. 254]

- Whereas the health of a nation depends on the health of its people;
Whereas one quarter of the population of the United States lives in rural communities;
Whereas one third of the Nation's elderly live in rural communities;
Whereas rural communities have disproportionately fewer health care providers compared to the urban population, with rural communities holding 12 percent of the Nation's doctors, 18 percent of the Nation's nurses, and 14 percent of the Nation's pharmacies;
Whereas rural areas face an acute and growing nursing shortage, with 50 percent of rural hospitals and long-term care facilities reporting difficulty in recruiting and retaining nurses;
Whereas rural areas are increasingly impacted by a lack of access to obstetric care;
Whereas the decline of the rural economy in recent years has reduced economic resources available to rural communities, leading to increased closures of hospitals and other health care facilities in rural areas, the loss or curtailing of services by local health departments, and disruption of social service programs;
Whereas the decline in availability of health care services in rural areas has, in turn, increased the shortage of physicians, nurses, psychologists, and other allied health professionals;
Whereas rural communities have few transportation services, preventing rural residents from obtaining needed health care;
Whereas the health status of rural Americans is lower than for residents of urban areas, with rural residents having higher infant and maternal mortality rates, higher rates of chronic illness, and higher rates of injury;
Whereas there are more poor and medically indigent in rural areas than in urban areas;
Whereas rural hospitals serve a higher than average number of elderly patients, resulting in a high proportion of Medicare payment as a percentage of their total revenue; and
Whereas current policies result in substantially lower Medicare payments to rural health care providers for equivalent services, further increasing the likelihood of financial failure and closure of these facilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the period commencing on May 15, 1988, and ending on May 21, 1988, is designated as "National Rural Health Awareness Week", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the above period with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

Approved May 19, 1988.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 254:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):
Feb. 26, considered and passed Senate.
May 11, considered and passed House.