



# 2026 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

## Advocating for Rural Health, Strengthening Hoosier Communities

As the voice of rural healthcare in Indiana, the Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) is committed to ensuring that every Hoosier, regardless of location, has access to high-quality healthcare.

### Ensuring Access to Comprehensive Healthcare Services for Rural Hoosiers

- Ensure timely, fair, and transparent payment from Medicare Advantage and other payers so rural providers are not disadvantaged compared to traditional Medicare.
- Work with stakeholders to maintain and expand access to maternal and infant healthcare services in rural communities, particularly in maternity care deserts.
- Safeguard the financial stability of rural providers by protecting access to the 340B program and continuing to reform prior authorization to reduce delays and administrative costs.

#### Rural Health Transformation Fund IRHA Priorities

- Maximize available RHT funds for Rural Hospitals and Providers to update infrastructure and renovate facilities
- Expand technology solutions to increase capability and access to specialty care and chronic disease management in rural areas.
- Create innovative solutions for rural providers to participate in value-based care arrangements.

### Sustaining and Expanding the Rural Health Workforce

- Support workforce innovation and pipeline development through rural-focused education tracks, residency and GME opportunities, EMS training pathways, and incentives that allow providers to practice at the top of their license and adapt to community needs.
- Promote recruitment and retention across disciplines, including physicians, nurses, EMS personnel, behavioral health professionals, community health workers, and allied health providers.

#### Rural Health Transformation Fund IRHA Priorities

- Create additional residency slots in rural areas to ensure greater exposure to rural health for the next generation of providers.
- Utilize funding for rural providers to invest in the latest technology to help providers be more efficient and decrease burnout.

### Investing in Healthier and Sustainable Rural Communities

- Work with governmental, educational, and community partners to expand access to health education and programs that support nutrition, physical activity, and healthy living in rural Indiana.
- Advance community infrastructure that supports rural health by improving access to reliable transportation and high-speed internet, ensuring Hoosiers can reach care in person or through telehealth.

#### Rural Health Transformation Fund IRHA Priorities

- Invest in local solutions with established providers to launch remote patient monitoring and access to telehealth for rural communities.
- Allow rural communities to partner together to design and implement their own programmatic solutions that are tailored to their needs.