



# 2025 IRHA 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.*

## IRHA advocates for:

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

- ***IRHA works to safeguard the rural health safety net by increasing financial viability for rural providers.***
  - Support legislative efforts to redesign the Hospital Assessment Fee Program that leads to increases in Medicaid reimbursement for hospitals.
  - Advocate for legislation that limits Prior Authorizations to ensure consistent revenue for providers.
  - Advocate for legislation that increases access to women's health and obstetric care, improving services for rural women and their families.
  - Advocate for adoption of proposals from Indiana's Behavioral Health Commission's 2024 report.
  - Work with federal lawmakers, agencies, and stakeholders, on the need for substantial changes to programs including Medicare Advantage (MA) and 340B.

### ► **Sustaining and Expanding the Rural Health Workforce**

- ***A strong and resilient healthcare workforce is key to sustaining rural health services.***
  - Advocate for initiatives to recruit, train, and retain healthcare professionals in rural areas, including loan repayment programs, rural-specific training tracks and GME opportunities, incentives for practicing in underserved communities, and added benefits for medical preceptors.
  - Bolster the capacity of rural providers by supporting increased use of e-consultations. Doing so would aid professional development, reduce burnout, and ultimately contribute to a more resilient healthcare workforce in rural communities.
  - Work with stakeholders to understand and address the challenges facing emergency medical services (EMS) in rural areas, particularly concerning workforce shortages and sustainability.

### ► **Investing in Healthier and Sustainable Rural Communities**

- ***Healthy communities are the foundation of a thriving rural Indiana.***
  - Ensure continued investment in the Health First Indiana program for rural Hoosiers by raising awareness with policy makers and legislators on the importance of public health in Indiana.
  - Advocate for actions, such as increasing the Cigarette Tax, to help Indiana communities and Hoosiers quit smoking.
  - Support efforts to address social drivers of health including housing and transportation.