

# U.S. Rep. Kind: Joins bipartisan call urging HHS to provide swift relief to rural health care providers

Posted on Thursday, Jul 9, 2020

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**La Crosse, WI** —Last week, **Rep. Ron Kind** joined 48 of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle in urging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide immediate relief to rural health care providers affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Across the country, COVID-19 cases are growing 13 percent faster in rural areas than nationwide. Rural areas have accounted for the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in a seven-day period since this pandemic began. In Wisconsin, COVID-19 cases are continuing to spike, putting additional pressure on rural health care providers and underscoring their need for assistance. So far this year, twelve rural hospitals have closed nationwide, and a recent analysis showed that 1 in 5 rural hospitals are at risk of closure.

“Our rural health care providers are on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, working tirelessly to keep our communities safe and healthy,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “However, many are currently struggling to cope with the financial impacts of COVID-19. It’s never been more important to ensure our rural health care providers receive immediate funding and the support they need in order to continue their life-saving work.”

The lawmakers are calling on future allocations from the Provider Relief Fund to meet the following metrics:

- A 20 percent Rural Benchmark in the Provider Relief Fund
- Priority should be granted to facilities that have been significantly affected by

### COVID-19 preparation

- Priority should be granted for facilities that provide care for a disproportionately high percentage of Medicare and Medicaid patients
- Priority should be granted for facilities that provide care for populations with above average senior populations or co-morbidities that are particularly vulnerable to complications from COVID-19 and for populations in areas:
  - With limited access to health infrastructure;
  - With high uninsured patients.

Rep. Kind is the co-chair of the House Rural Health Care Coalition and serves on the Subcommittee on Health for the Ways and Means Committee, the most powerful – and the oldest – committee in the House of Representatives. It has jurisdiction over tax measures, the management of public debt, trade and tariff laws, Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and many other economic growth measures.

**Read the letter [here](#).**