

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 403

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish an
Office of Rural Health, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following
bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Edu-
cation, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to
establish an Office of Rural Health, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Health Focus
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. CDC OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
8 Human Services, acting through the Director of the Cen-
9 ters for Disease Control and Prevention, shall establish
10 within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention an

1 office to be known as the Office of Rural Health, to be
2 headed by a director selected by the Director of the Cen-
3 ters for Disease Control and Prevention.

4 (b) DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES.—The duties and au-
5 thorities of the Director of the Office of Rural Health shall
6 be limited to the following:

7 (1) Serving as the primary point of contact in
8 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on
9 matters pertaining to rural health.

10 (2) Assisting the Director of the Centers for
11 Disease Control and Prevention in conducting, co-
12 ordinating, and promoting research regarding public
13 health issues affecting rural populations, and in dis-
14 seminating the results of such research.

15 (3) Working with all personnel and offices of
16 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to
17 develop, refine, coordinate, and promulgate policies,
18 best practices, lessons learned, and innovative, suc-
19 cessful programs to improve care and services (in-
20 cluding through telehealth) for rural populations.

21 (4) Coordinating and supporting rural health
22 research, conducting and supporting educational out-
23 reach, and disseminating evidence-based interven-
24 tions related to health outcomes, access to health
25 care, and lifestyle challenges, to prevent death, dis-

1 ease, injury, and disability, and promote healthy be-
2 haviors in rural populations.

3 (5) Improving the understanding of the health
4 challenges faced by rural populations.

5 (6) Identifying disparities in the availability of
6 health care and public health interventions for rural
7 populations.

8 (7) Awarding and administering grants, cooper-
9 ative agreements, and contracts to provide technical
10 assistance and other activities as necessary to sup-
11 port activities related to improving health and health
12 care in rural areas.

13 (8) Coordinating with the Federal Office of
14 Rural Health Policy of the Health Resources and
15 Services Administration, as needed, to facilitate co-
16 operation on rural health initiatives and avoid dupli-
17 cation of efforts.

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