



# Virginia Rural Health Association

## *The leading voice for rural health in Virginia*

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News Release  
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Contact: Beth O'Connor, M.Ed.  
Executive Director  
540-553-1012  
[boconnor@vrha.org](mailto:boconnor@vrha.org)

### **Federal Funding Pause Jeopardizes Rural Health Programs**

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, the White House Administration enacted a pause on all federal grants and other programs. For the Virginia Rural Health Association, this means an uncertain future for:

- Programs for prevention, treatment, and recovery for Substance Use Disorders
- Programs to increase the healthcare workforce capacity
- Programs to support the financial health of rural hospitals and Rural Health Clinics
- Programs to support access to physical activity, nutrition, and maternal and infant health
- Programs to address the syndemic of opioids/HIV/HCV

Virginia Rural Health Association Executive Director Beth O'Connor commented: "while the Office of Management and Budget has stated that the pause is temporary, it will likely take an extended length of time to review nearly \$3 trillion in federal programs affected by the pause."

In addition to VRHA programs, this pause put a freeze on nearly \$200M in federal funding which is intended to support rural Virginia, including assistance for rural hospitals and community health centers, community programs, research, workforce development, and loan repayments and scholarships for young health professionals who should be the future of rural health in Virginia.

These programs are vitally important, as rural communities not only ensure access to care, but also improve the economic status of rural communities and enhance the quality of care in these small towns across America. It is in these small towns and rural communities where these limited federal dollars make the greatest impact.

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“These core rural programs have long demonstrated their value and tremendous success in ensuring access to care in rural communities across the country. As such, we request that the funding continue while these reviews are completed,” O’Connor said. “We encourage anyone who cares about rural communities to reach out to their members of Congress and demand the freeze be lifted.

A statement released by the National Rural Health Association noted; “This freeze is intended to allow an internal review by political appointees to ensure that the grant funds are consistent with the agenda of the administration. Since the administration transition is not complete, it is unclear when these reviews will occur in the future. Until such time, it appears all funds will be frozen.”

**About the Virginia Rural Health Association:**

The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) is a nonprofit organization working for the 2.5 million people who call rural Virginia their home. Our mission is to improve the health of rural Virginians through education, advocacy, and fostering cooperative partnerships. Additional information can be found at [www.VRHA.org](http://www.VRHA.org)

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