

**Bob Dole**



**NEWS**

**U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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## **RURAL HEALTH CARE**

### **DOLE INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PRESERVE RURAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS**

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today introduced legislation to help preserve access to health care in rural America. The bill would ensure that more than 50 rural hospitals in Kansas continue to be eligible to receive a special Medicare reimbursement rate, which is currently higher for rural hospitals than urban hospitals.

"This benefit has enabled hospitals to provide outreach services to rural populations and to continue to offer vital diagnostic, medical, and surgical facilities and services to the residents of these rural areas," Dole said. "It is my belief that the extension of the Medicare dependent hospital provision is vital to the continued supply of health care services in rural areas."

"If, because of budgetary restraints, these rural hospitals are forced to reconsider the degree and level of services offered to area residents -- or in some cases -- to close their doors altogether -- citizens in these areas would be forced to travel great distances to obtain critical health care services or be compelled to sacrifice services entirely in some instances. Traveling may be an option which represents a significant hardship for our elderly and disabled populations and their families. Furthermore, to create a situation where individuals must forego services is, frankly, poor health policy," Dole added.

In 1989, in response to the disproportionate financial hardship which many rural hospitals were facing, Congress enacted legislation that provided an opportunity for small rural hospitals to have a special adjustment in the way they are reimbursed by Medicare. Since its enactment in 1989, over 500 rural hospitals in forty states have been eligible for a higher payment rate under the Medicare Dependent Hospital Provision. Unless Senator Dole's legislation is enacted, the Medicare Dependent Hospital Provision will expire in March, 1993.

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