

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE INTRODUCES RURAL HOSPITAL BILL AS SENATE OPENS FOR
LEGISLATIVE SEASON -- CALLS FOR "SAFETY NET" FOR SMALL HOSPITALS

Washington, D.C. -- RURAL HOSPITALS "NEED A HELPING HAND IF THEY ARE TO STAY OFF THE ENDANGERED LIST" KANSAS SENATOR BOB DOLE SAID TODAY AS HE INTRODUCED A BILL THAT WILL PLACE A FEDERAL SAFETY NET UNDER SMALL HOSPITALS.

DOLE INTRODUCED THE BILL AS THE U.S. SENATE OPENED ITS 1989 LEGISLATIVE SEASON. KANSAS SENATOR NANCY KASSEBAUM HAS SIGNED ON AS A CO-SPONSOR TO THE DOLE PACKAGE.

"NOTHING IS MORE BASIC THAN HEALTH CARE, YET RURAL AMERICA IS LAGGING BEHIND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY WHEN IT COMES TO ACCESS TO QUALITY MEDICAL SERVICES," DOLE SAID. "SINCE 1983, 188 RURAL HOSPITALS HAVE CLOSED AND MORE WILL BE ON THE WAY OUT UNLESS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDING ABOVE CURRENT MEDICARE SUPPORT LEVELS."

THE DOLE BILL WILL ENTITLE HOSPITALS WITH 100 OR FEWER BEDS, AND WHOSE MEDICARE PATIENTS COMPRISE AT LEAST 70% OF THEIR DISCHARGES, TO THREE YEARS OF EXTRA MEDICARE FUNDING. ACCORDING TO DOLE, THE THREE YEAR FUNDING PERIOD WILL HELP KEEP RURAL HOSPITALS OPERATIONAL WHILE FURTHER STUDY IS GIVEN TO REFORMING THE MEDICARE SYSTEM.

"REVITALIZING RURAL AMERICA IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE 101ST CONGRESS, THAT'S WHY THIS HOSPITAL SAFETY NET BILL IS A GOOD FIRST STEP TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR RURAL NEIGHBORS," DOLE SAID.

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