

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3149

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish within the Office of the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the Office of Rural Health, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Ms. SMITH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish within the Office of the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the 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 Equity
5 Act”.

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

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
8 within the Office of the Director of the Centers for Disease

1 Control and Prevention an office to be known as the “Of-
2 fice of Rural Health”, to be headed by a director ap-
3 pointed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control
4 and Prevention.

5 (b) DUTIES.—The Director of the Office shall—

6 (1) serve as the primary point of contact in the
7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on mat-
8 ters pertaining to rural health;

9 (2) assist the Secretary in conducting, coordi-
10 nating, and promoting research regarding public
11 health issues affecting rural populations, and in dis-
12 seminating the results of such research;

13 (3) work with all personnel and offices of the
14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to de-
15 velop, refine, coordinate, and promulgate policies,
16 best practices, lessons learned, and innovative, suc-
17 cessful programs to improve care, services, and so-
18 cial determinants of health for populations who re-
19 side in rural areas of the United States;

20 (4) coordinate and support rural health re-
21 search, conduct and support educational outreach,
22 and disseminate evidence-based interventions related
23 to health outcomes, access to health care, and life-
24 style challenges, to prevent death, disease, injury,
25 and disability, and promote healthy behaviors, in

1 rural populations, including rural minority and
2 LGBTQ populations;

3 (5) improve the understanding of the challenges
4 faced by rural populations;

5 (6) identify disparities in the availability of
6 health care and public health interventions for popu-
7 lations living in rural areas;

8 (7) administer grants, cooperative agreements,
9 and contracts to provide technical assistance and
10 other activities as necessary to support activities re-
11 lated to improving health and health care in rural
12 areas; and

13 (8) perform such other functions and duties as
14 the Secretary determines appropriate.

15 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) The term “Office”, except as otherwise
17 specified, means the Office of Rural Health estab-
18 lished pursuant to subsection (a).

19 (2) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
20 of Health and Human Services, acting through the
21 Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
22 vention.

23 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
24 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section

- 1 \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2022 and each subsequent fis-
- 2 cal year.

