

RESOLUTION NO. 30 - 2021

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED “PROTECTING RURAL ACCESS TO CARE ACT” LEGISLATION INTRODUCED AND CO-SPONSORED BY CONGRESSWOMAN STEFANIK AND CONGRESSMAN DELGADO.

Introduced by Legislator Philip Hathway, District 1 Representative.

WHEREAS, the Lewis County General Hospital/ Lewis County Health System (LCHS) plays a vital role in providing local access to critical health care services for Lewis County residents and their neighbors in other North Country communities; and

WHEREAS, without the Critical Access Hospital designation and certification, LCHS is subject to the loss of enhanced reimbursement rates, which are critically important and essential to LCHS being able to operate and provide healthcare services in our rural community. Without this designation and financial support, Lewis County patients would have to travel long distances to receive vital care; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), made a policy change that narrows the eligibility criteria for hospitals to certify or recertify as Critical Access Hospital (CAH) under the 15-mile, secondary road standard. The distance change in the regulations cause the North Country rural hospitals who provide these essential healthcare services to be in danger of losing their certification/recertification and funding as a Critical Access Hospital, including LCHS; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation introduced by Congresspersons Stefanik and Delgado, known as the “Protecting Rural Access to Care Act” (PRACA) will permanently restore the pre-2015 distance standard and requirement for Critical Access Hospitals designations for certification or recertification; will require notice and comment to be held before any future regulation changes to designation criteria; and will ensure that unless any formal update to distance criteria is finalized, hospitals seeking Critical Access Hospital certification/recertification will proceed under the pre-2015 standard; and

WHEREAS, the LCHS Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Managers are in favor of this legislation and urge the Lewis County Board of Legislators to voice their support of same as well;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. That the Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby supports the “Protecting Rural Access to Care Act”, and applauds Congresswoman Stefanik and Congressman Delgado in co-sponsoring this legislation, which will allow the LCHS to be recertified as a Critical Access Hospital based upon distance standards set prior to 2015, and thereby allow LCHS to receive vital enhanced reimbursement rates necessary for the hospital to continue operations and healthcare services in rural Lewis County.

Section 2. That the within resolution shall take effect immediately.

Section 3. That the Clerk of the Board is directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to US Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, US Congressman Antonio Delgado, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the US Senate and US House of Representatives, and all others deemed appropriate by the Board of Legislators.

Moved by Legislator _____, seconded by Legislator _____,
and adopted.