



May 22, 2023

Chairman Lawrence Bagley and Members of the House Health And Welfare Committee  
PO BOX 94062 (900 NORTH 3RD STREET)  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Sent via email to: [h-hw@legis.la.gov](mailto:h-hw@legis.la.gov)

**RE: Support HCR 100 (Continues the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force)**

Dear Chair Bagley and Members of the Health And Welfare Committee,

On behalf of the Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA), I am writing today to express our support of HCR 100. LRHA is a non-profit membership association that is comprised of Louisiana rural health care providers. This includes rural health clinics (RHCs), federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), and rural hospitals across the state. LRHA works to provide a unified voice that promotes and enhances the quality of rural health in Louisiana.

About 15% of Louisiana residents live in rural areas, which are disproportionately impacted by poor health outcomes. Residents in these communities are more likely to experience limited access to healthcare, education and income, as well as food, housing and transportation insecurity that contributes to a higher prevalence of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and tobacco use.

This legislation would continue the work of the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force as a subcommittee of the Statewide Health Equity Consortium within the Louisiana Department of Health. The Task Force delivered a report to the Legislature in March of this year identifying that lack of **access** was the primary key driver of disparities for our families in rural Louisiana. This includes provider shortages, lack of available virtual medicine/telehealth, lack of clinics to provide specialized care, transportation barriers, and food deserts. The Task Force continues to investigate the drivers of disparities and report these findings while updating legislators on progress.

Therefore, we support HCR 100 and the continuation of the Health Disparities in Rural Areas Task Force to continue the focus on and work towards improving health care access in rural areas of Louisiana.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me at 337.366.5915 or [dhebert@lrha.org](mailto:dhebert@lrha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denaé M. Hebert".

Denaé M. Hebert  
Executive Director  
Louisiana Rural Health Association