

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 22, 2025

**Center for Rural Pennsylvania Hosts Hearing on Rural  
Healthcare Provider Policies**

**HARRISBURG** — On July 16, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania Board of Directors hosted the public hearing, “Rural Healthcare Provider Policies: Examples from Other Jurisdictions,” at the State Capitol in Harrisburg. The hearing focused on identifying innovative healthcare workforce policies from other states and countries that could be applied to improve access to care in Pennsylvania’s rural communities.

The hearing featured three expert panels that addressed the following topics: leveraging international medical graduates, expanding prescriptive authority for psychologists, and increasing the role of nurse practitioners in healthcare delivery.

“Rural healthcare challenges are complex, and we need to consider a wide range of ideas to find effective solutions,” said Senator Gene Yaw, Chairman of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania Board of Directors. “This hearing helped bring forward several thoughtful approaches that are worth exploring.”

“The insights we heard today can help shape policies that make a real difference,” said Representative Eddie Day Pashinski, Vice Chairman of the Center’s Board. “We appreciate the willingness of experts from various states and countries to share their experiences.”

“These issues are not unique to Pennsylvania, and it is valuable to learn how others are addressing similar challenges,” said Senator Judy Schwank, member of the Center’s Board. “We are committed to finding practical ways to strengthen healthcare in our rural areas.”

“Improving access to care means looking at new models and learning from others,” said Representative Dan Moul, member of the Center’s Board. “This hearing gave us several options to consider as we move forward.”

“Our mission is to provide reliable information to support rural policy development,” said Dr. Kyle C. Kopko, Executive Director of the Center. “This hearing provided concrete examples, based upon approaches in other jurisdictions, that can inform strategies for the Commonwealth’s rural communities.”

Testifiers included:

- Dr. Eric S. Holmboe, Chief Executive Officer, Intealth
- Stephen J. Boese, Executive Secretary, New York State Boards for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and the Committees for Athletic Trainers, Medical Physics, Pathologists' Assistants, and Perfusion

- Dr. Viren N. Naik, Chief Executive Officer, Medical Council of Canada
- Deborah C. Baker, Head, Office of Professional Legal and Regulatory Affairs, American Psychological Association
- Dr. Jo Velasquez, New Mexico Licensed Clinical and Prescribing Psychologist and Chief Operating Officer, iNetMed Rx<sup>2</sup>
- Dr. Ryan Ernst, Prescribing Psychologist in Iowa and Idaho; Director of Training, MSCP Program at Drake University
- Zoe O'Brien, Nurse Practitioner, Kids Care Pediatrics (Maryland)
- Justin Rohrback, Family Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Surgical Technologist
- Lorraine Bock, Nurse Practitioner, Peaceful Balance Health and Wellness Services (Pennsylvania)

Additional written testimony submissions:

- Rachael Baturin, Deputy Executive Director, Pennsylvania Psychological Association
- Dr. Debbie Dillon, Clinical Associate Professor, Director of AGACNP Program, Duquesne University
- Malinda D. Duke, CRNP-PC, CDCES, Executive Director, Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland Inc.
- Millicent Edgar, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, President, Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland Inc.
- Dr. Jon Glass, PhD, MSCP, Psychologist
- Dr. Anthony S. Ragusea, Licensed Psychologist
- Timothy Terranova, Executive Director, Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine
- Kath Baxter, District Nurse Locality Lead, North Angus, National Health Service (Scotland, United Kingdom)
- Dr. Sarah-Anne Munoz, Head of Programme, Remote and Rural Research and Evaluation, National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care, NHS Education for Scotland, and Visiting Professor, University of the Highlands and Isles

To access the hearing recording and testimony, visit the Center's website at [www.rural.pa.gov](http://www.rural.pa.gov).

# # #

KMP