

WAFP Submits Priorities to State DHS for Federal Rural Health Transformation Fund

WAFP recently sent a letter to Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Kirsten Johnson requesting that the agency addresses specific primary care priorities when they apply for funding from the federal Rural Health Transformation Fund. This fund was included in the federal budget reconciliation bill that was signed into law earlier this year.

WAFP included the following primary care priorities in the letter to DHS:

- Incentivizing payers to spend more on rural primary care to improve health outcomes.
 - This could be a pilot project that would increase payments to rural family physicians – in the form of increased rates or bonuses – and then determine if such payments result in improved health outcomes for rural patients.
- Reward new physicians who stay in Wisconsin and work in underserved areas with medical school debt relief.
 - WAFP suggests providing funding for the Rural Physician Loan Assistance Program, which is operated by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine’s Office of Rural Health. This program is not receiving federal funding for the 2025-2026 period.
- Family Medicine Residency Programs in Rural Wisconsin
 - This request is to augment state funding for the Medical College of Wisconsin to replace residency programs that previously operated in the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls region.
- Investing in Physician Preceptor Tax Incentives
 - As the supply of preceptors has been decreasing, our intention is to ensure that there are enough primary care physicians who precept and ultimately show medical students the value of pursuing the family medicine pathway.
- Support a Primary Care Investment Workplan
 - This is part of a long-term effort to increase primary care investment. The intent of this effort is to demonstrate better health outcomes, improved equity, and more sustainable health systems.