

To Chris/Lorrie/Jen ✓	From
Co. These were done by HHS	Co. for Carol's WVA speech
Dept. last week. They contain	Phone # some good up-to-
Fax # date info! Chris	Fax # _____

RURAL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- In the Health Security Act, the President proposed that all Americans, including all of those who live in rural areas, be given health insurance that could never be taken away. He proposed, in Title III of that Act, a number of initiatives designed to build medical care capability in rural areas, including tax incentives for physicians to move to rural underserved areas. While the Act did not prevail in 1993 the President remains committed to significant health reform that will work in rural areas.
- The President also has proposed to reform graduate medical education to produce more of the primary care physicians who are most needed in rural areas and most likely to serve them. Under the President's proposal 55% of all residency positions would be held by those training for careers in family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, and obstetrics/gynecology.
- During the past two years Medicare reimbursement to rural hospitals has been increased to eliminate the urban/rural differential that was once as high as 25%. Now the Medicare "standardized amount" payments to rural hospitals are equal to those of urban hospitals.
- Funding for the Federal programs that most help rural areas, community health centers, migrant health centers and the National Health Service Corps have been greatly increased during the past two years. These programs provide primary medical care to nearly 3 million rural Americans in some of the poorest communities in this country.
- With Federal encouragement and funding assistance, the number of state rural health offices has increased from 26 in 1992 to all 50 states. These state offices are very active in working with rural communities to help them develop strategies to help solve their health problems. A particular emphasis is placed on the recruitment and retention of physicians.
- Over 100 Rural Health Outreach Grants were made this year by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy in 46 states to encourage innovation and collaboration in delivering health services to populations in need. Grants will help deliver primary health care and mental health care and will help train health professionals, such as emergency medical technicians. Prevention programs, for example to prevent cancer from the use of agricultural chemicals, and programs for the development of rural health provider networks also are supported as well as a wide variety of other programs.

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- A new telemedicine initiative has been developed, not as a way to substitute for physicians who still are needed in rural areas, but as a way to support rural physicians and enable them to provide state of the art medicine to their patients. As a part of this initiative, eleven major demonstration grants were made this year by the Office of Rural Health Policy to help determine the best directions for rural telemedicine programs in the near future.
- Medicare supported rural health clinics have proliferated during the past two years, increasing from less than 800 to over 1700. These clinics utilize nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives in support of physicians. As a result, medicare provides cost based reimbursement to help support the utilization of these mid-level providers. The increase in clinics is the result of promotion by the Department of Health and Human Services.