



October 15, 2025

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
450 W. State St.
Boise, ID 83702

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of the Idaho Medical Association (IMA) and our 3,500+ physician members, I am writing to express our support for the State of Idaho's proposed Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) cooperative agreement application. The goals of the proposal align with our priorities to improve access to healthcare in rural areas and improve health outcomes, by developing the healthcare workforce, facilitating the growth of innovative care models to improve health outcomes, and fostering the use of new and emerging technology access.

The urgency of RHTP support is reinforced by troubling data on Idaho's healthcare landscape. Persistent shortages of qualified physicians continue to hinder access to vital care, threatening the state's ability to meet the needs of its growing population. According to recent data, 98.2% of Idaho's land area is designated as a Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), affecting 57.8% of the state's population. Idaho ranks 45th among states for ratios of Primary Care Physicians per 100,000 Population. Critically, 100% of Idaho's land area and population fall within a Mental Health HPSA, highlighting a statewide shortage of mental health professionals. These shortages create significant barriers to timely and adequate healthcare, particularly in rural and underserved communities, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to bolster Idaho's healthcare workforce and improve health outcomes for its residents. IMA believes that investing in physician-led care is the best way to address Idaho's physician shortage. The RHTP provides a unique opportunity to create pathways to attract and retain more physicians in rural Idaho rather than expanding the scope of practice for non-physicians.

Persistent gaps in healthcare access drive poor health outcomes across Idaho. Local clinics and healthcare facilities lack the resources, primary care physicians, specialists, and equipment necessary to meet patient needs. This disproportionately impacts rural residents forcing patients to travel significant distances or, in many cases, forfeit care entirely.

Building on our strong partnership with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, IMA is well-positioned to help ensure the success of this application and deliver meaningful improvements in health outcomes throughout Idaho.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Susie Keller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susie Keller
Chief Executive Officer