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Contact: Mason Zeagler
mzeagler@NRHArural.org
202-639-0550

NRHA honors rural health advocates

Washington, D.C.--The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) honored key rural health advocates at the Association's 31st Rural Health Policy Institute, the nation's largest rural advocacy event, held Feb. 11-13 in Washington, D.C.

Andy Fosmire, Oklahoma Hospital Association vice president for rural health, and Tim Wolters, director of reimbursement at Citizens Memorial Hospital in Bolivar, Mo., received NRHA's 2020 Outstanding Rural Health Advocate Awards.

Fosmire was honored for his "deep devotion and tireless fight to improve rural health for rural Oklahomans and Americans across the nation," says NRHA CEO Alan Morgan. Fosmire was also recognized for his relentless efforts to stop the rural hospital closure crisis in Oklahoma and rural communities nationwide.

Wolters was recognized for his dedication to the federal regulatory process. "Tim's review of regulations and input of the impact of those regulations to the rural health care delivery system have been absolutely instrumental in NRHA's advocacy and education efforts," Morgan says. Wolters' commitment to easing the "regulatory morass for rural health care providers is profound," Morgan adds.

NRHA also named the association's 2020 Rural Health Champions at the event. Senators Tina Smith, Dick Durbin, and Marsha Blackburn and Representatives Adam Kinzinger, Brad Wenstrup, and David Loebsack were honored as outstanding leaders for improving rural health.

NRHA's 2020 Policy Institute was the largest to date. Rural advocates from across the nation representing state offices of rural health, rural hospitals, rural health clinics, community health centers, research offices, and many other rural provider groups gathered to hear from prominent figures from Capitol Hill and within the Administration.

The list of speakers included CMS Administrator Seema Verma, HHS Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan, HRSA Administrator Thomas Engels, Acting CMMI Director Amy Bassano, CMS Office of Minority Health Director Cara James, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams, Sens. Marsha Blackburn, Tina Smith, Cory Gardner, and Dick Durbin, and Reps. Susan DelBene, Jodey Arrington, Brad Wenstrup, and more.

NRHA's next Rural Health Policy Institute will be held Feb. 9-11, 2021.