



National Advisory Committee On Rural Health and Human Services



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Dear Secretary Azar,

On behalf of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services, I am pleased to send you two policy briefs and accompanying recommendations from our most recent meeting in Sacramento, California in April. The Committee's policy briefs focus on two issues: rural cancer prevention and control and support services for older rural Americans.

The Committee chose to focus on cancer because it is the second leading cause of death national, and although there has been a decline in national cancer mortality, there remains disparity between rural and urban populations. According to recent findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while compared to urban areas, rural counties had lower incidence for cancer, they had a higher mortality rate, especially preventable cancers like lung, colorectal and cervical cancers.

During the meeting, the Committee discussed the need for a comprehensive approach to address the barriers to care that rural cancer patients face. They heard of the need for improved rural-cancer control programming, educating rural providers on new clinical information and billing for care coordination and generally elevating the awareness of rural cancer disparities in cancer control plans within states and tribal areas. The subcommittee tasked with examining this issue visited Norther Valley Indian Health, Inc. located in Willows, California. In addition to touring the facility, members of the Committee spoke at length with the facility medical and administrative leadership.

In addition to rural cancer prevention and control, the Committee took up of aging and the long-term services and supports available to older adults in rural areas. Up until very recently, life expectancy in the United States had been rising, creating challenges in providing both short and long-term care for an aging nation. The effects of these challenges are more pronounced in rural America, where the

challenges and offered ideas about what would improve access to, and their ability to provide, quality rural long-term support services.

On behalf of the Committee, we present these briefs with our recommendations to improve cancer prevention and control efforts and access to long-term support services for older rural Americans. We will continue to respond to our charge to advise you on rural issues as they relate to health and human services and the impact the Department's programs and resources have on rural communities across the country.

Our next meeting will be held in Washington, DC from September 9-11, 2019. We will meet with key HHS staff and senior leadership from national stakeholder organizations to identify emerging and pertinent topics the Committee might address in the coming years. We welcome your participation or the participation of your representatives at our meeting, should schedules allow.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Ronnie Musgrove
Chair

Enclosures:

*Examining Rural Cancer Prevention and Control Efforts
Supportive Services and Caregiving for Older Rural Adults*