

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Receives Rural Health Transformation Funding Following Workforce Reform Commitments

Columbus, Ohio. (January 5, 2026) – The Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (OAPA) welcomed the recent announcement that Ohio has been awarded funding through the federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), a multi-year initiative directing up to \$50 billion nationally to help states strengthen rural healthcare delivery. Ohio is expected to receive \$202,030,262 in 2026 to support targeted reforms designed to expand access, improve outcomes, and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

In its application to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the state confirmed a commitment to building on ongoing efforts to ensure healthcare professionals practice at the top of their training and scope.

“This award reflects the federal government’s clear encouragement for states to modernize how care teams operate, and we encourage Ohio to step forward with specific actions to ensure PAs are able to provide enhanced access to care for rural Ohioans,” said Clayton Rotuno, PA-C, OAPA President.

CMS has emphasized that reforms enabling providers to practice at the top of their license and improving licensure portability are among the most effective tools states can use to expand rural access and strengthen workforce capacity. By previously joining the PA physician associate (PA) licensure compact, Ohio positioned itself as a competitive applicant and demonstrated readiness to translate federal investment into meaningful change.

“PAs are one of the fastest-growing healthcare professions in the country, with nearly 7,000 PAs practicing in Ohio and thousands more serving rural and underserved communities nationwide,” Rotuno added. “Ensuring PAs can fully utilize their education and training is essential to meeting rising patient demand, especially as rural communities continue to face persistent workforce shortages.”

OAPA encourages state leaders to modernize PA practice laws to align with federal priorities and ensure rural Ohioans increased access to timely, high-quality care close to home.

As the Rural Health Transformation Program moves into implementation, OAPA looks forward to working with policymakers, agencies, and health systems to support these commitments and ensure the full healthcare workforce is positioned to meet the needs of communities across Ohio.

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About the Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (OAPA)

Formed in 1975, the Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (OAPA) provides a foundation for the PA profession in the state of Ohio. We promote quality, accessible, and cost-effective patient

care through a collaborative team-based approach with physicians and other healthcare providers. OAPA advances the PA profession through legislation, community-building, educational opportunities, and career promotion to the general public.