



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 15, 2013

I send greetings to all those observing National Rural Health Day on November 21.

Rural towns and communities are central to the American way of life. They supply our food, fiber, and energy. They safeguard our natural resources and help drive developments in science and innovation. And the spirit of integrity, community, and self-discipline we associate with small towns reflects the values that built our country and the very best of our national character.

National Rural Health Day provides a special opportunity to celebrate the important role rural America plays in the life of our country. It also helps highlight the unique health challenges faced in rural communities across our country. Americans living in rural areas often suffer from increased rates of disease, disability, and mortality as well as inequities in access to health services, including preventive care.

My Administration remains committed to ensuring all Americans can get the care they need and deserve at a price they can afford, and we have taken important steps to make sure this extends to small towns and rural communities. Through the Improving Rural Health Care Initiative, we have partnered with local leaders to support the health care workforce and expand the use of health information technology. And by assisting Regional Extension Centers, we are addressing barriers facing rural providers and hospitals in implementing these technologies. In 2011, I established the White House Rural Council to strengthen rural communities and promote economic growth, and its efforts include expanding health services for veterans in these areas. Through the Affordable Care Act, we are helping uninsured rural Americans gain unprecedented access to coverage. And we are improving health care for millions across our country—helping ensure they have the security of high-quality, affordable health insurance.

On National Rural Health Day, let us extend our thanks to the health care providers tirelessly serving rural America, reaffirm our commitment to meeting the needs of these communities, and celebrate the lasting contributions they have made to our national life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.