

**ANNEX C**

**LETTER FROM THOMAS MORRIS, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR RURAL HEALTH POLICY, HRSA, HHS**

**Letter from Thomas Morris, Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy, HRSA,  
HHS**



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services Administration

Rockville, Maryland 20857

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John Pender  
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John,

We continue to look forward to the findings from your survey on rural community wealth and health care. Since we last talked when reviewing your draft survey instrument, I have let a number of key rural health stakeholder groups know about this and universally, the reaction has been strongly positive because we have a significant research gap in this topic area. To my knowledge, the only group that has looked at the link between health care and economic development has been the National Center for Rural Health Works; but this group has never fielded a national survey. Their primary work is to use health care economic data to aid local decision making. As you may also recall, our Office funds a modest rural health research program, but in my 15 years at the Office none of those centers has done any survey work on health care and economic activity, though at various time I have suggested it.

That is why we are excited about your work. The information that will emerge from your survey will fill an important need. The reality is we just don't know enough about the interplay between rural wealth and health care service delivery for the community perspective. I also think it will greatly inform the future work of the White House Rural Council. As you may know, I am the HHS representative to this group and this information would be really helpful in better understanding the cross-sectorial links between health care, economic viability and income security in rural communities.

I think your findings will also be important for future rural policy analysis and as such will help both HHS and USDA. The economic dynamics and health care delivery systems in rural communities are changing dramatically and as we know these issues are linked. Unfortunately, most of the current knowledge on this link is anecdotal. Your survey will fill an important gap. If we can be of any help let us know and please keep me posted on next steps. Best of luck!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Morris".

Thomas F. Morris  
Associate administrator for Rural Health Policy  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S Department of Health and Human Services