

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2007

Expand Rural Access to Anesthesiology Care

Co-Sponsor the
Cuellar–Akin Rural Anesthesiology Bill
(H.R. 1866)

Dear Colleague:


Throughout the nation, rural hospitals are experiencing a shortage of access to anesthesiology medical care. To help address this problem, we have introduced H.R. 1866 (the Medicare Access to Rural Anesthesiology Act of 2007). The Cuellar-Akin Rural Anesthesiology bill will allow certain rural hospitals to use Medicare Part A funds on a “pass-through” basis to pay for the services of anesthesiologists.

Typically, Medicare pays for anesthesia providers’ services under the Medicare Part B fee schedule. However, in order to attract anesthesia providers to rural areas, a statutory exception was enacted in the 1980s that allows rural hospitals to use Part A funds to employ or contract with non-physician anesthesiologist assistants (AA) or certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA). Unfortunately, this policy does not permit hospitals to use the pass-through funds to pay for anesthesiologists.

The Cuellar-Akin Rural Anesthesiology bill will resolve this oversight and enable rural hospitals to recruit and retain more anesthesiology professionals as well as expand the availability of anesthesiology care in medically underserved areas.

Please join us in co-sponsoring this important legislation that encourages anesthesiologists to practice in rural areas. If you would like more information or would like to become a co-sponsor of H.R. 1866, please contact Jon Pawlow in Rep. Cuellar’s office at 5-1640 or jonathan.pawlow@mail.house.gov or Lauren Ellis in Rep. Akin’s office at 5-2561 or lauren.ellis@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Henry Cuellar, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress