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## **Iowa House Bill 2468 – Rural Health Transformation Program**

Madam Chair and members of the committee:

The Rural Health Transformation Program represents the most significant investment in rural health in our nation’s history, with the Hawkeye State receiving over \$209 million in just the first year.<sup>1</sup>

But funding alone is not enough to address the complex challenges facing rural health systems. The program empowers states to pursue bold solutions that remove longstanding barriers burdening these communities. Iowa is seizing this opportunity by repealing harmful certificate-of-need restrictions for outpatient behavioral health services, expanding access to psychological care by joining the PSYPACT compact, and promoting education on healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.

While this flexibility is critical to achieving meaningful reform, the success of the program depends on strong accountability. Legislators should understand how Iowa’s plan is performing and whether it is meeting its stated goals. They should also remain alert to the risk that one-time federal funds could gradually become ongoing obligations borne by Iowa taxpayers once the grant expires.

Through the reporting requirements proposed in this bill, the Legislature is taking an important first step toward ensuring the program is transparent – and therefore accountable – to the people of Iowa.

As part of these reports, the Legislature should also insist that the department provide clear information on which entities receive funds, how the state is progressing toward its performance objectives, and what information is being submitted to the federal government. Much of this information will already be available to the executive branch.

Ultimately, this oversight and cooperation will help ensure the program’s success and meaningfully improve the health of Iowa’s rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> “CMS Announces \$50 Billion in Awards to Strengthen Rural Health in All 50 States,” Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, December 29, 2025, <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-announces-50-billion-awards-strengthen-rural-health-all-50-states>.