**Rural Emergency Hospital Op-ed Template**

The following messaging is designed as an opinion editorial pitch template. You may use this to submit to your local media outlets. The content of this article is designed to help hospitals pursuing the Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) federal designation communicate the benefits and changes to their local community.

Please thoroughly review this message and adjust it according to your own circumstances. Also, fill in all highlighted portions as applicable to your organization, and then un-highlight those pieces of text. **The more you can personalize this to your hospital, the more impactful it will be to your community.**

**Protect access to care in [city/county/community name]**

Minnesota’s hospitals and health systems are facing the worst financial outlook we have seen in decades. Hospitals across Minnesota and the nation, especially those in rural communities, are in jeopardy due to rising costs and stagnate reimbursement. In the last year alone, the cost of providing health care in Minnesota increased drastically, with labor costs increasing by 7.4 % and non-labor costs increasing by 9.5%. Because of this, rural hospitals have to be nimble to protect patient care in our communities.

To best meet the needs of our patients and communities [hospital name] has decided to pursue the new designation of a Rural Emergency Hospital (REH). This designation was created to protect rural hospitals like ours during a period of ongoing rural hospital closures. This change means that we will stop inpatient admissions, but patients under 24-hour observation may remain within our facility. We currently average only [XX daily/weekly/monthly] inpatient admissions, and this new designation will not impact other patient services, billing, or access to medical records.

Becoming an REH means keeping doctors, outpatient surgeries, and lab and imaging services closer to your home. 24-hour emergency services will continue to be available. The changes that will come from the conversion will have no impact on the quality of patient care and allow us to maintain access to skilled clinicians.

The health care needs of any community are constantly changing, but those changes can be addressed in different ways than what was required in previous decades with improved care options such as telehealth. The REH designation will allow [hospital name] to adapt to these changing needs.

Every organization and the communities they serve are different. They have different workforce needs, different strengths and challenges, different complexities and capacity. Rural hospitals are essential to providing access to care in Greater Minnesota communities and they contribute significantly to their communities' economic vitality. The REH provider type was created to meet the needs of communities like ours, and this innovative new model is the best option for the health of our community moving forward.

[Learn more about about REHs from the Minnesota Hospital Association.](https://www.mnhospitals.org/policy-advocacy/priority-issues/rural-hospitals/rural-emergency-hospitals)