

# APTA Urges Congress to Expand the Physical Therapy Workforce in Rural America



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Feb. 25, 2026**

**Contact: Sara Shannon**  
[sarashannon@apta.org](mailto:sarashannon@apta.org)

**ALEXANDRIA, Va.** — The American Physical Therapy Association is amplifying national advocacy efforts to address critical shortages in the rural and medically underserved health care workforce, urging Congress to take action to expand patient access to essential rehabilitative services.

APTA submitted comments to the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health for their hearing on Feb. 24 titled “Advancing the Next Generation of America’s Healthcare Workforce,” outlining policy solutions to bolster the therapy workforce in regions facing the most severe access challenges.

Central to APTA’s advocacy is the passage of [H.R. 5621, the Physical Therapist Workforce and Patient Access Act](#). This bipartisan legislation would add physical therapists to the National Health Service Corps, or NHSC, Loan Repayment Program. This program provides up to \$50,000 in student loan repayment to licensed providers accepted into the program in exchange for two years of service at an approved clinic or facility located in a rural or medically underserved region. Additionally, H.R. 5621 would give federal community health centers greater flexibility in how they provide and bill for physical therapist services, expanding access to rehabilitative care for patients who often have few or no local options.

“By including physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps, this bipartisan legislation affirms the essential role of physical therapist services in preventing disability, managing chronic conditions, and restoring quality of life for millions of Americans,” says APTA President Kyle Covington, PT, DPT, PhD. “It expands access to care where it is needed most, helping ensure that patients in rural and underserved areas can receive the rehabilitative care they need to support independence, health, and well-being.”

APTA is also calling on Congress to address broader Medicare payment reforms, including repeal of the [Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction, or MPPR, policy](#), which provides greater stability and improved payment for therapy providers and prevents closures of clinics in rural areas.

Demonstrating broad support for H.R. 5621, APTA led a sign-on to Congress in support of the bill, which was endorsed by more than 40 organizations, including national associations, health clinics, and hospitals. [The coalition’s sign-on letter](#), representing groups such as the National Association of Community Health Centers, the National Association of Rural Health Clinics, the National Rural Health Association, and the American Farm Bureau Federation, was submitted as part of APTA’s official comments to the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health.

APTA encourages its members and supporters to join this advocacy effort to support the physical therapy workforce in rural and medically underserved communities by contacting their elected officials through the [APTA Patient Action Center](#).

###



**About APTA**

The American Physical Therapy Association represents 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students nationwide. Visit [the APTA website](#) to learn more.