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January 20, 2015

The Honorable Governor Haslam  
First Floor, State Capitol  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Haslam:

On behalf of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee, we would like to convey our support of the ***Insure Tennessee Plan*** for expanding health insurance in the state. We believe ***Insure Tennessee*** will provide additional coverage for approximately 200,000 of our working Tennesseans who have no insurance and who cannot qualify for TennCare.

The Rural Health Association of Tennessee is a statewide association of members whose concern is for all issues that affect access to healthcare. Our members are approximately 850 strong and represent all 95 counties. We speak for our members when we say the ***Insure Tennessee Plan*** will be good for rural Tennesseans on several levels. But most importantly we expect that the ***Insure Tennessee Plan*** will remove a barrier that has prevented many Tennesseans from building economic self-sufficiency. Many of these individuals have been unable to obtain medical and behavioral health services due to the unavailability of health insurance.

Tennessee ranks 45<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in the nation in the overall health of its citizens. Because the ***Insure Tennessee Plan*** provides healthcare accessibility through health insurance, we support the incentives included in the ***Insure Tennessee Plan***, and we believe the results will show improvement in this ranking and make the state more attractive for economic development. And the plan should result in an estimated \$1.03 billion in new revenue to the healthcare systems across the state.

This plan makes perfect fiscal sense for Tennessee. It is estimated the state will receive \$6.4 billion in new federal funds in the first 5.5 years of the plan. During this time, the state will spend about \$199 million but the plan does not call for new taxes nor does it use any monies already earmarked.

We appreciate the time you have put into designing this program which will address the healthcare access issue for the citizens of Tennessee and the Rural Health Association of Tennessee looks forward to working together with you to help bring about the success of the program as approval moves forward in the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy Hayes".

Sandy Hayes, MPH  
Executive Director

Cc: Tennessee General Assembly