

May 21, 2019

Central Valley Rural Health and Wellness Coalition
1800 Panorama Drive
Bakersfield, California 93305

RE: Letter in Support for a National Rural Learning and Coordinating Center for California's Central Valley

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the Central Valley Rural Health and Wellness Coalition and its efforts to pursue a Rural Healthy Communities Grant to establish the first national Rural Learning and Coordinating Center in California's Central Valley.

As you know, the Central Valley suffers from a series of unique, yet persistent challenges ranging from high percentages of asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity especially among children, including societal and economic challenges such as, high unemployment, poverty, and low educational attainment. In fact, Fresno, Modesto, and Bakersfield-Delano areas are consistently ranked among the top five U. S. regions with the highest percentage of residents living below the poverty line according to Census data.

Despite these challenges, the Central Valley has enormous potential with robust agriculture, oil, gas, and renewable energy, and most importantly with the strength of determination and will of its residents who hope and strive for a brighter future. For these reasons notable institutions from Bakersfield College, the Central Valley Health Policy Institute at Fresno State, UC Merced, and UCSF – Fresno have embarked on this bold and visionary effort to increase opportunity for valley residents and revitalize the Central Valley region through the creation of a national Rural Learning and Coordinating Center.

This Center, strategically placed in the core of the Central Valley will serve as a nucleus for collaboration, research and study for evidence-based solutions to address the region's persistent problems affecting rural communities. The work the Center proposes is commendable and allows us to, "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another," towards a better and brighter Central Valley.

It is for these reasons that I am proud to offer my support of the coalition and its efforts. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss my support further, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at (661) 323-0443.

Sincerely,

SHANNON GROVE
Senate Republican Leader
California State Senate, 16th District