

NEWS RELEASE



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CONGRESSMAN BUTTERFIELD SUPPORTS HOSPITALS IN RURAL AREAS

ROANOKE RAPIDS, N. C. (July 20, 2009)--Congressman G. K. Butterfield visited Halifax Regional today to emphasize the importance of maintaining quality healthcare in rural communities.

"Citizens in rural areas deserve access to quality healthcare just as all Americans do," said Butterfield after speaking with Will Mahone, president of Halifax Regional and visiting doctors and nurses at the Medical Center.

"A regional hospital not only serves patients but also helps to drive the local economy by providing jobs and economic opportunity," Butterfield continued. Halifax Regional has nearly 1,000 full and part time employees.

Butterfield and Mahone discussed the financial challenges facing hospitals in rural areas. Mahone urged Butterfield to support legislation that increases healthcare coverage for the uninsured without decreasing funds for Medicare and Medicaid. Approximately 75% of patients at Halifax Regional are on either Medicare or Medicaid.

"It is the function of the federal government to provide stability in the area of healthcare delivery," Butterfield told Mahone. "Our nation is facing economic challenges and hospitals are feeling the effect, along with small businesses and families."

Halifax Regional reduced expenses by \$4.8 million in April after revenue did not meet expectations. Mahone said bad debt expenses are up 21 percent this year.

Butterfield pledged to support America's rural hospitals and said he looks forward to working with hospitals and physicians to support their efforts to provide access to quality healthcare.

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