

September 7, 2006 **Press Release** | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio, along with 60 colleagues on the Rural Health Care Coalition, introduced a bill that will improve health care by making it easier for rural health care professionals and facilities to provide quality care.

The bipartisan bill, Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act of 2006 (H-CARE), includes loans to renovate hospital infrastructure; grants to underwrite the purchase of health information technology; increases in reimbursement payments to hospitals for ambulance, lab and other services and for Medicare and Medicaid patients; and a requirement of prompt reimbursement of rural pharmacies by Medicare.

“I represent a diverse district that includes urban, rural and coastal communities, and one of my top priorities is ensuring that all Americans have access to high quality health care,” DeFazio said. “H-CARE addresses the unique challenges that rural health care providers face and goes a long way toward correcting the disparity that exists between rural and urban health care coverage.”