



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Highlights Rural Dentistry Student Scholarship Program Inclusion in Legislature's Budget

Madison – Representative Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah), Chair of the Assembly Committee on Rural Development, released the following statement regarding the insertion of a provision creating a Rural Dental Student Scholarship Program in the legislature's budget that has now passed both houses of the legislature:

"The inclusion of the Rural Dental Student Scholarship Program is an important provision included in the legislature's budget that I encourage Governor Evers to keep as part of the new biennial spending plan.

"More than half of Wisconsin's counties have been federally designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage areas and the program will help alleviate the need for qualified dentists in at least 38 counties across the state and improve access to quality dental care for residents of rural communities throughout the state.

"I remain focused on creating access for residents across the state that live in rural areas and I think this scholarship program is an important step in the right direction. The program in the budget is based off of a separate proposal authored by Senator Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) and Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc), and was championed by Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Minocqua) on the Joint Committee on Finance. The proposal was recently introduced in the legislature as part of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative, and I was happy to co-sponsor it.

"In some ways, this program is modeled after our successful Rural Physician Residency Assistance Program, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, which provides incentives to encourage medical professionals to practice in rural areas of our state. Every time I speak with someone involved with the Physician Residency Assistance Program, they say, "if they go there, they stay there," meaning if individuals have the chance to live in and experience what the rural areas of our state have to offer, by in large, they like it. That's a good thing and anything we can do to encourage medical professionals to practice in and fill in gaps to serve underserved and rural areas of our state is a good thing."

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The 70th Assembly District includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties.