ASHLEY HINSON
2ND DISTRICT, IOWA

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL
GOVERNMENT

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

HOMELAND SECURITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–1501

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, &
Food & Drug Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, &
Food & Drug Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harris and Ranking Member Bishop:

As you craft the fiscal year 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include
$1,680,000 in community project funding for the WinnMed Surgical Department Upgrade. The
entity to receive the funding for this project is the Winneshiek Medical Center Foundation,
located at 901 Montgomery Street, Decorah, Iowa 52101.

This project would support the purchase of state-of-the-art medical technology and equipment
for the rural-based medical center, WinnMed, formerly known as the Winneshiek Medical
Center. The funding would expand the medical center's ability to offer efficient, safe, and
minimally invasive surgeries for the rural communities it serves. Specifically, the project would
fund critical medical equipment for the newly expanded surgery area, including surgical booms,
lights, visual integration equipment, central sterilization equipment, and robotic surgical
equipment. This project will not only expand access to local surgical options for residents in the
community – who currently must drive well over an hour for these surgeries – but also enable
WinnMed to recruit new surgeons, expanding the services offered and revitalizing the medical
workforce in the rural area.

One of the most impactful outcomes of this project is the new, high-tech medical systems that
these funds would help the center acquire. These systems allow surgeons to operate more
efficiently and reduce patient burdens. The acquisition of these technologies would dramatically
increase WinnMed's ability to offer efficient, safe, and minimally invasive procedures, like
robotic-assisted surgeries, which reduce errors and expand surgeons' capabilities through 3D,
high-definition, magnified views of surgical areas. This also includes instruments that allow for
precise surgical incisions and maneuvers, reducing post-surgery pain, scarring, and risk of
infection, which would support shorter hospital stays and faster recoveries. Additionally, these

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While Decorah is a town of only 7,680 residents, the medical center still manages to serve patients from neighboring communities and counties, acting as a critical access hospital in rural Iowa. The expanded surgical options provided through this project will enable more northeast Iowans to access high-quality care from local doctors they know and trust. It will save patients time, money, and emotional stress to know they can access cutting-edge surgeries within their community instead of having to drive hours for medical care.

Additionally, there is strong community support for this project, specifically for the rural economic growth this will foster, given that WinnMed provides a $52.9 million economic impact to the region and sustains more than 560 jobs. This funding will enable the medical center to provide critical services to the taxpayer in rural northeast Iowa.

I strongly urge the Committee to include this community project funding request in the FY25 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress
Committee on Appropriations