

The Community Health Investment, Modernization and Excellence (CHIME) Act of 2017

Background:

Community Health Centers are the primary care medical home for more than 25 million Americans living in every state and territory. With bipartisan support from Congress, the more than 1,400 health center organizations nationwide provide access to high-quality primary and preventive care, while integrating behavioral health, dental, substance abuse and other critical services for their patients. Health Centers are a cost-effective provider of care, having been proven to save 24% in total Medicaid spending when compared to other providers.

Total funding for the Health Centers program currently stands at \$5.1 billion annually. Of this total, \$3.6 billion comes from the Community Health Centers Fund (CHCF), a dedicated source of funding that was extended for two years in 2015. Without action by Congress by September 30, 2017, this funding is slated to expire.

According to estimates from the Department of Human Services, a funding cut of this magnitude to the Health Centers program would result in over 9 million patients losing access to care, cost 50,000 jobs in economically hard-hit communities across the nation, and force 2,800 health center locations to shut their doors.

The CHIME Act will extend funding for five years, with modest increases to ensure responsiveness to demand for care and national priority areas.

Section 1. Short Title.

This section names the bill the “Community Health Investment, Modernization and Excellence Act of 2017.”

Section 2. Extension of Funding for Community Health Centers.

This section would extend funding for the Community Health Center Fund’s investments in health centers for an additional five years. The dollar amounts provided would ensure modest amounts of would be available in future years to address national priorities, including access to behavioral health, dental and substance abuse services.