

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Health Center Colleague:

Since moving into the year, America's Health Centers have been busy building on the investment this nation has made in a community-based health system. Each day health centers are helping millions lead healthier lives while utilizing resources and new technologies to pioneer innovation and health system change.

In more than 9,000 communities, health centers are showing what is possible in healthcare delivery. Whether reducing health disparities — managing chronic disease or improving population health — community health centers deliver a positive return on public investment. Going beyond traditional healthcare, they also give focus not only to improving patient care, but the factors that influence overall health and costs such as poverty, nutrition, education and housing. Analyzing the changing demographics of their communities, they closely assess the needs of their diverse patient populations to design better and bolder approaches in the delivery of both care and services that will positively impact community health.

As never before, health centers are recognized as valuable assets to be leveraged and supported to meet challenging health issues. We see this vividly reflected as health centers respond to the public health crisis in Flint, Michigan. With funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, health centers like Hamilton Community Health Network in Flint are being called to enhance testing for lead exposure, as well as outreach and mental health services for residents affected by the contamination of the city's water supply. We also see action in Texas where health centers, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Association of Community Health Centers, are already responding to the imminent threat of the Zika virus, establishing clinical protocols for the screening of pregnant women.

At this year's Policy and Issues Forum in Washington, DC (March 16 – 19), health center leaders from across the country had the opportunity to meet with lawmakers and their staffs. We raised our collective voice to speak out on Capitol Hill — to tell our story — and to present the facts and evidence in support of our programs. Our goal: To keep health centers strong and vibrant — and to generate even greater awareness that health centers are national assets to be preserved, strengthened and expanded for the benefit and good health of our nation.

Sincerely,



J. Ricardo Guzman, LMSW, MPH
Chair of the Board
National Association of Community Health Centers



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