



Building Upon a Successful Model

Sustaining and Growing Health Centers to Meet Rising Demand

Background

Thanks to targeted investments made by Congress, Community Health Centers (CHCs) now serve more than **27 million patients in over 10,000 communities in every state and U.S. Territory**. CHCs are unique: they are required to serve the medically underserved, provide services to everyone who seeks their care, and charge patients based on a sliding fee scale related to their income.

Federal CHC funding currently comes from two sources: **\$1.5 billion in annual discretionary appropriations** and the **Health Centers Fund, which was recently extended through September 2019 (\$3.8 billion in FY18 and \$4.0 billion in FY19)**.

The Facts

- Health centers deliver an excellent return on federal investment. They are efficient and **save the health care system \$24 billion every year**, reducing unnecessary inpatient hospitalizations and ER use. **This is more than a 400% return on grant funding invested.**
- **As local, non-profit businesses**, health centers promote economic growth in distressed communities, **generating \$45.6 billion in total economic activity each year and employing nearly 208,000 people across the country**, often serving as the largest local employer.
- Health centers are ready to respond to the changing needs of their communities. Whether helping **fight outbreaks of flu and Zika, dispensing care in disaster stricken areas, providing opioid addiction treatment, or serving our veterans** – health centers proudly answer the call. And stand ready to do even more.

The Impact

Federal investments supporting the health center system of care must be sustained to ensure access to critical services. Congress has consistently provided bipartisan support for the Health Centers Program through annual appropriations. The recent two year extension of the Health Centers Fund helped stabilize health centers' ability to plan for the future, recruit staff, and expand services for patients. Congress now has an opportunity to **build upon health centers' success** and expand access to comprehensive medical, mental health, substance use treatment, dental, and pharmacy services at health centers nationwide.

Our Request:

To ensure that these essential front-line providers can sustain and expand access to care in their communities, we request that Members:

- **Support FY19 appropriations for health centers** by signing the **Bilirakis-Green letter** in the House and the **Wicker-Stabenow letter** in the Senate; and
- Build upon the investments of the February 2018 Bipartisan Budget Act to **provide long term funding stability and reduce the uncertainty caused by year-to-year renewals** of this critical investment in access to care.