

Preserve, Strengthen and Expand the Community Health Center System of Care

Building on Success and Ensuring Long-Term Stability

As the largest primary care network in the country, Community Health Centers play an integral role in our nation's health care system. The next step is to build on the successes of the past by Preserving, Strengthening and Expanding the model to more communities and populations.

Preserve the capacity of Community Health Centers to continue to serve our existing 30 million underserved, rural and urban patients by ensuring sufficient long-term, stable funding.

Strengthen the capacity of health centers to serve their current patients by improving quality, bolstering services, strengthening emergency preparedness, integrating community systems to address the social determinants of health, bolster information technology capacity, and launching new innovative clinical and administrative workforce initiatives.

Expand the Health Center Program to serve **8 to 11 million new patients** over a 4-year period; and expand access to include critically needed services such as oral health, mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services like Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and school-based health center services. Expansion is also needed to bring services to additional patient groups such as America's growing elderly population, public housing residents, our homeless, agricultural workers, rural residents, and our Veterans among others.

- **Widening the program by extending care into additional communities** most recently revealed by COVID-19 to have clear inequities in health status, as well as caring for the newly uninsured and unemployed due to COVID-19, would yield **at least 8 million new patients**.
- **Deepening services** at existing sites to include greater access to maternal/newborn health care, COVID long-term issues, mental and behavioral health care, oral health and aging and aging. They also include costs to expand the workforce to deliver these services. As a result of these services, we anticipate that health centers could reach as many as **3 million more people in need**.

Health centers deliver an excellent return on this federal investment:

- They **reach individuals with the greatest difficulty accessing or affording health care services**, including those with chronic diseases at risk for costly health complications, and guarantee them access to high-quality care, improve health outcomes, and narrow health disparities.
- Health centers are efficient and **save the health care system \$24 billion every year**, reducing unnecessary inpatient hospitalizations and Emergency Room use.

How you can help:

- **Support a four-year commitment to double mandatory federal investments in Community Health Centers to preserve and strengthen existing sites of care and expand access to millions more Americans.**
 - Resources are needed to deepen and widen health center services while also maintaining core services that are currently provided to the 30 million health center patients.
- Support **\$2.2 billion in discretionary funding** for Community Health Centers through the **FY2022** Labor-HHS Appropriations bill.
- Sign on to the House DeGette-Bilirakis letter to the Appropriations Committee requesting "strong funding" for health centers.