

SERVICES, INC.

December 13, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write today to share our strong support for community health centers and the workforce that supports them, including an ever-increasing number of psychologists. Community health centers are the backbone of the health care safety net, providing care to 29 million individuals in thousands of rural and underserved communities nationwide. As health centers continue to find ways to better integrate care, especially behavioral health care, a growing number of behavioral health providers, including psychologists, are key to that integration.

Together, we are writing to encourage you to prioritize the long-term reauthorization of the Community Health Centers Fund (CHCF), the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) programs, which will expire on December 20. These programs serve as critical resources to America's most underserved communities, granting access to high-quality, affordable primary and preventive care. America's health centers have long been at the forefront of addressing the nation's most pressing public health challenges and are becoming increasingly essential providers of affordable behavioral health resources in communities where treatment options are limited.

From 2010 to 2016, community health centers used the increased resources provided by Congress to double their behavioral health workforce. Over those six years, these resources allowed community health centers to manage a four-fold increase in patients seeking treatment for opioids and other substance use disorders. Key to managing this growth was the ability to work closely with critical behavioral health providers, including psychologists. In 2018, there were over 920 licensed clinical psychologists providing more than 1 million clinical visits. This partnership has allowed community health centers to be ready to respond to mental health and substance use needs in their communities.

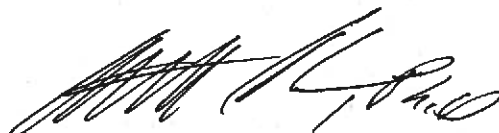
We are grateful for Congress' long-held bipartisan support of Community health centers and we are prepared to work with you and your congressional colleagues before the December 20th deadline to ensure that these programs get the long-term, sustainable funding necessary to continue their work.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tom Van Coverden
President and CEO
National Association of Community Health Centers



Dr. Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD
CEO and Executive Vice President
American Psychological Association