

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We write to express our support for additional emergency funding for community health centers in the next COVID-19 relief package. Community health centers are vital to our response to the coronavirus pandemic and need appropriate funding to continue their front-line health care work.

Community health centers provide affordable care to more than 29 million patients, including 385,000 veterans and 8.7 million children nationwide. These centers play a critical role in responding to the pandemic, offering coronavirus testing, primary care, dental care, behavioral health care, and other services to our nation's most vulnerable patients. This care helps keep individuals out of emergency rooms, where beds are currently in particularly high need. It also helps manage chronic conditions that may exacerbate the symptoms of COVID-19.

Over the next six months, community health centers will see 34 million fewer appointments as Americans cancel primary and preventive care appointments or delay non-essential care. Health centers are anticipating \$7.6 billion in lost revenue and 105,000 lost jobs. Over 2,000 centers have already had to close their doors and many more remain concerned about how long they will be able to stay open.

We appreciate the additional \$2 billion in emergency funding provided to community health centers in recent COVID-19 response and relief packages, including \$600 million dedicated to testing. However, despite this funding, health centers are still worried about how to keep their doors open to serve their patients. These valuable providers will continue to lose more revenue as the pandemic continues. Additional funding is critical for these centers to continue providing quality, affordable health care and front-line response efforts.

We look forward to working with you to reach a bipartisan agreement to enact legislation and ensure community health centers can continue to provide high quality and affordable care to those in need.

Sincerely,

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator Roger Wicker