

March 27, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of health centers as a longstanding bipartisan solution to the primary care access problems facing this country. As you proceed with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide robust funding for Community Health Centers within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation for FY2021 to ensure that they can remain providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care, and continue to provide innovative, high-value health care in medically-underserved communities across the nation.

Since the first health centers opened their doors more than fifty years ago, health centers have proven to be a worthwhile investment, providing quality and affordable primary and preventive care, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision and a variety of complementary services to America's most vulnerable patients and medically-underserved communities. Today, thanks to longstanding bipartisan support in Congress, well over 1,400 health center organizations serve more than 12,000 urban and rural communities in every state and U.S. Territory. Health centers are the health care home for over 29 million patients – or one in every twelve people, including 8.7 million children and over 385,000 veterans. Health centers employ over 236,000 people, generate \$54 billion dollars in economic impact for local communities and provide overall cost-savings for the health care system.

Community Health Centers have a proven record of using cost-effective, clinical strategies to deliver high-quality, affordable health care. On a bipartisan basis and for nearly ten years, Congress has supported health centers through the annual appropriation for the Health Center program combined with investments in the Community Health Center Fund. With the Health Center Fund set to expire at the end of May, we urge you to work with your colleagues on the other committees of jurisdiction to keep funding for health centers whole in FY21. This combined funding is critical to the success of health centers nationwide as they meet growing demand for affordable health care and respond to the changing needs of their communities – whether helping fight outbreaks of the flu, providing HIV/AIDS prevention care, addressing rising maternal mortality rates or offering opioid addiction treatment. Community Health

Centers are a cornerstone of the nation's health care system and need reliable, sustained federal support to continue their work.

As Congress works to improve access to comprehensive medical, mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, reduce health care spending, and promote patient-centered solutions to our health care challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue supporting health centers, which have a proven track record of success. We ask that as you consider the Subcommittee's budget priorities in FY21, that you keep funding whole for this proven and cost-effective integrated health care system. Thank you for your continued support of the health center system of care nationwide.

Sincerely,

ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator

DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator

THOM TILLIS
United States Senator

RON WYDEN
United States Senator

TODD YOUNG
United States Senator

EDWARD J. MARKEY
United States Senator

MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator

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