



September 6, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

On behalf of 1,400 Community Health Centers nationwide, I write to emphasize the need for a funding extension for Community Health Centers, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) before the end of the fiscal year on September 30. We appreciate your longstanding support for health centers and would emphasize the urgent need for a multi-year solution to allow these three programs – and the communities, providers, and patients who rely on them – to succeed. Even if there is still no agreement on a long-term solution, I urge you to include a short-term extension in any continuing resolution to prevent unnecessary disruption to these essential programs.

For nearly sixty years, health centers have received strong bipartisan support for their mission of providing primary care in underserved communities across the country. Today, over 1,400 health center organizations serve thousands of communities at 15,000 service delivery sites in every state and U.S. territory. Community Health Centers cared for more than 31 million patients in 2022 – one in eleven residents – including almost nine million children, nearly 400,000 veterans, and one in seven rural Americans. Furthermore, health centers employ over 285,000 people, generating almost \$85 billion in economic output and more than \$37 billion in labor income for local communities.

The Community Health Center Fund provides approximately 70 percent of health centers' federal funding, and it is scheduled to expire on September 30. Such a sudden drop in funding will cause nearly seven million patients to lose access to care and jeopardize the jobs of almost 60,000 hardworking health center employees. In addition, funding for the NHSC and THCGME programs is scheduled to expire simultaneously – a gap or drop in funding for these programs could disrupt the workforce development pipeline that health centers, healthcare providers, and their patients rely on.

Health centers are already reporting the uncertainty around the September 30 deadline is affecting their mission of providing care to underserved communities. As small businesses, health centers need predictability to secure financing for capital projects, sign contracts, retain and recruit

providers and staff, and sustain operations. Without certainty about funding levels, the National Health Service Corps cannot project its field strength in underserved communities for the next fiscal year and Teaching Health Centers will struggle to attract medical students for residency interviews this fall ahead of the residency match scheduled for March 2024.

Again, we call on Congress to unite and continue the nearly sixty-year tradition of bipartisan support for Community Health Centers and essential primary care workforce programs by providing long-term stability in the upcoming continuing resolution. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that the Community Health Center program continues to improve the health and well-being of many of our nation's most vulnerable individuals and communities. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kyu Rhee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kyu" and last name "Rhee" clearly distinguishable.

Kyu Rhee, MD, MPP
President and Chief Executive Officer