



November 8, 2023

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

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

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of the 1,487 health centers across the country, I write to ask that Congress include a short-term extension of the Community Health Center Fund, the National Health Service Corps, and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program in any upcoming Continuing Resolution. A short-term extension of these essential programs will provide health centers additional stability as they meet their communities' primary care needs. It will also give Congress more time to build consensus around a long-term extension at the highest possible funding level for all three programs.

For over fifty years, health centers have provided high-quality and affordable primary and preventive care, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision, and complementary services to America's most vulnerable patients in rural and medically underserved communities. Health centers have helped decrease the burden of illness on patients, provided good-paying jobs, and reduced long-term healthcare spending in every state and territory across the country.

Today, the 1,487 health center organizations serve thousands of communities at more than 15,000 locations. Health centers recently reached a historic milestone of serving over 31 million patients, including 8.8 million children and nearly 400,000 veterans. They provide care to one in seven rural residents, one in six Medicaid beneficiaries, and one in three people experiencing poverty.

The Community Health Center Fund provides seventy percent of health centers' federal funding and is scheduled to expire on November 17th. As small businesses, health centers need predictability to secure financing for capital projects, sign contracts, retain and recruit providers and staff, and sustain operations. Essential primary care workforce programs are also scheduled to expire on the same day. Without long-term certainty about funding levels, the National Health Service Corps cannot project its field strength in underserved communities next year, and Teaching Health Centers will struggle to attract medical students for residency interviews ahead of the residency match scheduled for March 2024.

Health centers appreciate that Congress included in September's Continuing Resolution seven weeks of funding for the Community Health Center Fund, the National Health Service Corps, and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program. That extension prevented a gap in funding for these essential programs and averted any disruption in care for patients. Another short-term extension is necessary to avoid a similar potential disruption on November 17th.

Again, I ask that Congress include in November's Continuing Resolution another short-term extension for the Community Health Center Fund and essential primary care workforce programs. Health centers are proud of the nearly sixty years of bipartisan support for their mission of providing care to underserved communities, and we look forward to working with you to secure long-term, stable, and increased funding for Community Health Centers and their workforce as soon as possible.

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, M.D., MPP
President and Chief Executive Officer