



February 27, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

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

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chair  
United States Senate  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chair McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, Chair Sanders, and Ranking Member Cassidy:

On behalf of the 1,487 Community Health Centers across the United States, I write to emphasize our strong support for the funding levels for Community Health Centers, the National Health Service Corps, and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education programs in the bipartisan *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* (H.R. 5378). We urge both chambers to come together to finish the job and pass a final bipartisan bill that extends and increases funding at or above the levels supported by the House in the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* before the March 8<sup>th</sup> deadline.

As you know, the House passed the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* on December 11, 2023, by a vote of 320-71 with broad bipartisan support. The funding in this bill would allow health centers to bring their cost-effective integrated primary care model to more communities and expand services to their current patients. Community Health Centers currently serve one in seven rural residents, one in six Medicaid beneficiaries, and one in three people experiencing poverty. With additional funding, health centers could expand access to desperately needed services such as behavioral health. Data shows that there are 7.6 million existing health center patients who need mental health services and 4.7 million patients who need substance use disorder services.

Additional funding would enable these patients to access care at their trusted medical home, their Community Health Center.

Moreover, not only do health centers impact their patients' lives through better health outcomes, but the Congressional Budget Office recently confirmed that funding for Community Health Centers saves taxpayer dollars by decreasing preventable emergency department visits, expensive hospital admissions, and unnecessary invasive procedures that can lead to complications.

Finally, the additional funding for workforce programs in the House bill would address the severe shortages in America's primary care workforce. National Health Service Corps scholarships and loan repayment programs have been crucial in ensuring that thousands of clinicians continue to practice in rural and underserved areas across the country. The Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program has been vital to training the next generation of physicians and dentists in community-based settings, which is proven to increase access to cost-efficient, high-quality primary care and behavioral health services in medically underserved areas.

I know that there are significant issues to address in this government funding package. I urge you to find common ground on funding levels that have already passed the House of Representatives for these critical programs before the March 8<sup>th</sup> deadline. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues on longer-term funding later this year. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kyu Rhee".

Kyu Rhee, MD, MPP  
President and Chief Executive Officer