



Community Health Centers 2018 Federal Policy Agenda

Background:

For more than 50 years, Community Health Centers have provided access to high quality and affordable comprehensive primary and preventive health care to millions of uninsured and medically underserved people. Today, there are almost 1,400 health centers with more than 10,000 sites. Together, they serve over 27 million patients, including eight million children, nearly 1.3 million homeless patients, 330,000 veterans, and more than 1 in 6 Medicaid beneficiaries.

Health centers have a unique role in the health care system.

By mission and mandate they are required to:

- Be located in high need areas
- Serve all, regardless of insurance or ability to pay
- Provide a comprehensive set of services
- Be governed by a patient-majority board

Health Centers are an American success story.

But there is much more that federal policymakers can do to build off the successes of the past and sustain and strengthen health centers' ability to improve access to and delivery of high quality, cost effective health care.



CHC FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING: Health centers rely on Section 330 grants to offset the cost of providing care to uninsured and underinsured patients, to support service expansions, and to expand health center locations into medically underserved areas.



MEDICAID: Medicaid is a critical program for health centers and their patients. Nationally, 49% of health center patients are covered by Medicaid and Medicaid payments represent 43% of health centers' total revenue, making it their largest revenue source.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT:

Health centers are leaders in integrating medical care, behavioral health, substance use treatment, dental care, pharmacy, and other services all under one roof. As communities across America cope with a dramatic increase in the prevalence of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid addiction, health centers are meeting this challenge by providing much needed SUD services to their patients.



TELEHEALTH: While particularly important in rural areas where providers are scarce, telehealth also offers tremendous benefits to patients and providers in urban areas, especially where workforce shortages and geography present barriers to access.



340B DRUG DISCOUNT PROGRAM: Health centers successfully utilize the 340B program, which ensures health center patients are able to buy their medications at affordable prices. Health centers are able to reinvest the savings they would otherwise have spent on purchasing expensive drugs into improving quality of care, extending hours, hiring additional staff, and expanding services.