

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Support Community Health Centers

Sign Appropriations Letter TODAY!

Deadline: Monday, April 9, 2018

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in signing the attached letter to Chairman Roy Blunt and Ranking Member Patty Murray encouraging the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies to continue support for the Health Centers Program in FY2019.

Community Health Centers are locally-controlled, non-profit entities that provide primary care, dental care, behavioral health, and pharmacy services in our most underserved rural and urban areas. There are over 1,400 health centers operating in more than 10,400 communities nationwide, serving roughly 27 million Americans who otherwise would not have access to care, including one in five of America's uninsured, one-third of those living in poverty, and one in six Medicaid beneficiaries. More than 8 million children and over 330,000 veterans get their health care at Community Health Centers. In total, health centers now provide more than 104 million coordinated and integrated patient visits every year in all 50 states and almost every congressional district.

Health centers specialize in providing cost-effective and high-quality primary and preventive health care that annually **saves the health-care system \$24 billion, largely due to their success in reducing the need for patients to seek care in costlier settings like emergency departments.** Federal investments play an integral role in supporting the comprehensive and integrated range of health and social services they provide.

We ask that you join us in supporting Health Centers as a proven and cost-effective solution to America's health care access challenges and continue investing in health centers to strengthen the primary care safety net. Please contact Samantha Helton with Senator Wicker at samantha_helton@wicker.senate.gov or Lorenzo Rubalcava with Senator Stabenow at lorenzo_rubalcava@stabenow.senate.gov to sign the letter.

Sincerely,

ROGER F. WICKER
Member of Congress

DEBBIE STABENOW
Member of Congress

NOTE: This funding letter is a general letter of support. Recognizing respective Members' approaches in this fiscal climate, it does not contain a specific appropriations level. However, Members who would like to submit a specific programmatic FY19 level for the Community Health Centers Program will be provided with detailed instructions on how to enter the programmatic level into the request database.

April XX, 2018

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. **During the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue to recognize Community Health Centers as providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care, and that you work to ensure the continuation of the innovative, high-value health center model of care within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation for FY2019.**

Since the first health centers opened their doors more than fifty years ago, health centers have proven to be a worthwhile investment, providing high-quality and affordable primary 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 10,400 urban and rural communities nationwide. Health centers are the health-care home for over 27 million patients, including 8 million children and over 330,000 veterans. Health centers employ nearly 208,000 people, generating billions of dollars in economic impact for communities and overall cost-savings for the health care system.

The demand for health center services, especially behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment, has grown in recent years. Combined with the investments made on a bipartisan basis through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, annual appropriations for the Health Centers Program are 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, helping fight outbreaks of flu and Zika, dispensing care in areas impacted by natural disasters, and by providing treatment for opioid addiction.

As Congress works to improve access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, reduce health-care expenditures, 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. Thank you for your continued support of the vital role health centers play in preserving and expanding access to care in the communities they serve. We ask that as you consider

the Subcommittee's budget priorities, you support this proven and cost-effective model of care at the levels outlined in the Bipartisan Budget Act.

Sincerely,

ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator

DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator