



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers

– FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS – BENDING THE COST CURVE BY INCREASING PRIMARY CARE ACCESS

Health Centers at a Glance

Community Health Centers are non-profit entities that provide primary care, oral, behavioral, and pharmacy services to 23 million patients. There are over 1,200 Health Centers operating in 8,000 rural and urban underserved communities nationwide, with nearly half of all Health Center organizations located in rural areas. Each Health Center is directed by a patient majority board that ensures the center is accountable and responsive to the needs of the community it serves. Moreover, Health Centers serve all community residents regardless of their insurance status – offering care on a sliding fee scale.

A Proven Cost-Saving Model

The value of Health Centers is well-documented. More than two dozen research studies over the last twenty-five years have consistently demonstrated that Health Centers save the health system money. One very recent study showed that Health Centers **save over \$1,200 per patient annually in total health care costs**; that is more than twice their total sources of revenue, including all Medicaid and direct grant funding combined. This savings is due in large part to their demonstrated success in reducing unnecessary utilization of costlier health care settings (like emergency departments and hospitals). Health Centers also coordinate care amongst providers of many health disciplines, meet or exceed national practice standards for the treatment of chronic conditions, and ensure that their patients receive recommended screening and health promotion services. This is all while delivering care at a total cost of just \$1.67 per patient per day and serving as drivers of economic activity in the communities where they are located.

A Common-Sense Solution to America's Access Challenge

Today there are 60 million people who lack access to primary care across the country, despite over 20 million patients currently being served at Health Centers. In fact, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) previously announced several FY2011 funding opportunities, including grants for new Health Centers, which resulted in submission of over 800 applications and demonstrates the great need across the country for new centers to serve patients who most need access to primary care. In communities without Health Centers, underserved populations encounter dramatically reduced or no access to primary care, instead seeking care in costlier settings when they are sicker. Presidents of both parties and Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have long-recognized Health Centers as a proven solution to this access challenge and invested in Health Center expansion over the past decade to strengthen primary care capacity – improving health outcomes and lowering costs.

The Health Center Request: Support Health Center Expansion to Improve Access to Primary Care
America's Health Centers request that Congress continue the bipartisan Health Center expansion. Health Centers urge Congress to provide \$1.79 billion in discretionary funding for the program in FY2012, recognizing and supporting the essential role Health Centers play in ensuring access to primary and preventive health care for all Americans. We urge Congress to:

- ◆ **Oppose Any Attempt to Undermine Existing Health Center Operations and Services.**
- ◆ **Support a Discretionary Funding Increase of \$200 million in FY2012.** This funding level will:
 - Extend cost-effective primary and preventive health care to over 3 million Americans;
 - Bring a Health Center to approximately 200 new communities, including those with pending application submissions; and
 - Build on existing Health Center capacity through extended hours of operation; the hire of additional providers; and the availability of new primary care, oral, behavioral, pharmacy, or vision health services.