



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS & HEALTH REFORM

Steps Toward Assuring High-quality, Cost-effective Health Care for All

Virtually every current health care reform proposal seeks to provide affordable health insurance to all Americans, and the vast majority of proposals also call for greater investment in preventive and primary care as a means of (1) assuring access, (2) improving quality and overall health, and (3) achieving measurable cost savings for the system.

Federally Qualified (Community) Health Centers (FQHCs/CHCs) are the foundation of our nation's health care safety-net. Over the last forty years, the Community Health Centers program has received broad bipartisan support because they consistently deliver results in the critically important areas of access, quality, and cost. Today, FQHCs provide comprehensive preventive and primary care services and serve as the health care home to more than 18 million people nationwide. Now, more than ever, we are ready to do more. With some 60 million Americans currently lacking a "Medical Home," we intend to fill that void.

IN TANDEM WITH EXTENDING AFFORDABLE INSURANCE TO ALL AMERICANS, OUR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS WILL:

- ENSURE A HEALTH CARE HOME FOR 60 MILLION INDIVIDUALS IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES;
- PROVIDE 21,000 PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS (PHYSICIANS, DENTISTS, NURSES, ETC.) TO SHORTAGE AREAS; AND
- ACHIEVE OVERALL COST SAVINGS UP TO \$80 BILLION PER YEAR.

Specific Legislative Recommendations

Within broad health reform legislation, we urge the Congress to:

1. Ensure:
 - a. **Adequate Reimbursement for Preventive and Primary Health Care:** the model **Prospective Payment System** used by Medicaid, and recently adopted by CHIP, is extended to **all other reimbursement systems under national health insurance.**
 - b. **Update the Medicare Payment Methodology to Conform with Medicaid and CHIP**
 - c. **Patient Choice/Ensuring Access to Health Care Homes in Underserved Areas:** Community Health Centers and other key safety-net providers are **included in all insurance provider networks** in the new health care system.
2. **Expanding the Prevention-Oriented Community Health Center Delivery System:** consistent with H.R. 1296 and S. 486, ensure the expansion of the Community Health Centers (FQHCs/CHCs) and National Health Service Corps (NHSC) programs to **provide a health care home for 60 million people** in underserved communities **through directed spending.**
3. **Providing Low-Cost Private Capital to Accommodate Increased Patient Demand:** provide Community Health Centers (FQHCs/CHCs) with access to low-cost capital through financing programs now available to **other non-profit health care providers.**