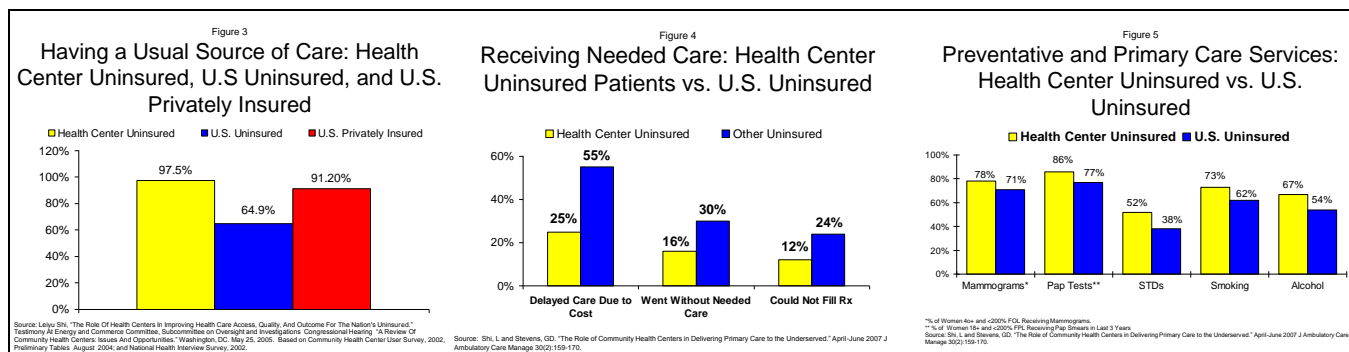


- **Improve Access to Needed Preventive Services.** Health center uninsured patients are more likely to receive important preventive screenings, such as mammograms, pap smears, and health promotion counseling than the uninsured nationally (Figure 5). Moreover, there are no disparities in receipt of preventive services among health center patients, regardless of insurance status.⁸
- **Improve Health Outcomes and Reduce Health Disparities.** Although health center patients are more likely to be in poorer health than the general population,⁹ research demonstrates health centers' ability to improve outcomes for chronic illness as well as narrow health disparities for their predominately racial and ethnic minority patients.⁷



INSURANCE AND A USUAL SOURCE OF CARE: THE NEED FOR BOTH

Having health insurance is an important facilitator to primary and preventive care. At the same time, having a place to go for regular care is crucial for patient health outcomes and controlling the cost of health care. Specifically, access to primary care may contribute to removing the severe adverse impact of income inequalities on health.¹⁰ Importantly, **having both insurance coverage and a regular source of care results in the most improved health** compared to having only one.¹¹ **Expanding both insurance coverage and the Health Centers Program are complementary**, as health centers may be the only source of care for many isolated patients, and they provide services others generally do not.¹²

REMAINING CHALLENGES

Rising numbers of un- and underinsured patients will continue to increase demand for health center services. **Expanding the Health Centers Program would reduce unmet need and improve care for the uninsured.**⁸ Even with broad health insurance expansion, the need for health centers will still be present for those who experience barriers to care beyond cost.

Unfortunately, federal grants for health centers are not keeping up with the costs of care, as displayed in Figure 6. State support for health centers is also critically important for expanding their reach.

