

# Planning for the Future of Health Center Workforce

Growing Today's Primary Care Workforce to Meet Tomorrow's Health Care Needs

Community Health Centers depend upon a network of over 236,000 clinicians, providers, and staff to deliver on the promise of affordable and accessible health care. Health centers must recruit, train, and retain an integrated, multidisciplinary workforce to provide high-quality care. Long-term investments in the nation's primary care workforce are needed to ensure health centers are able to keep pace with the growing and changing needs in their communities.

Yet severe workforce shortages persist throughout the health care system. For example, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) estimates a national shortage of 124,000 to 156,000 physicians by 2025. Further challenging this situation, funding for two critical workforce programs, **the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, will expire on May 22, 2020, without Congressional action.**

**The NHSC supports roughly 13,000 clinicians in urban, rural, and frontier communities. About 60% of all NHSC placements are at health centers.**

➤ Thousands of additional applications to join the NHSC go unfunded each year. Increased funding would boost the number of approved applications, extending this opportunity to additional underserved communities.

**The THCGME model directly trains providers in underserved communities, improving their understanding of the issues facing health center patients and increasing the likelihood they will choose to practice in these communities after they complete their training.**

➤ In the 2018-2019 academic year, THCGME supported the training of 728 residents in 56 health centers in 23 states. Since it began in 2011, the program has supported the training of more than 880 new primary care physicians and dentists who have graduated and entered the workforce.

## How you can help:

- **Support, at a minimum, the E&C/HELP Agreement via the updated S. 1895, the Lower Health Care Costs Act, which continues funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program for 5 years.**
  - This agreement represents a **bipartisan, bicameral solution** to offset a long-term extension of funding for these essential workforce programs – as well as mandatory funding for health centers.
- **Support a \$275 million increase for the National Health Service Corps in the FY21 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, which would enable an average of one NHSC primary care provider to be placed in every Community Health Center site.**