

Community Health Centers On the **FRONT LINES**



Next Stimulus Package Must Include Community Health Center Fund Reauthorization

An immediate long-term reauthorization of the Community Health Center Fund is needed to stabilize a critical system of care for vulnerable communities – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Health Centers are requesting a 5-year reauthorization of the Community Health Center Fund with related workforce programs to serve increasing numbers of unemployed, uninsured, and underinsured people.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER FUND?

The Community Health Center Fund is a mandatory funding stream of \$4 billion per year that accounts for 70% of the federal grant funding for health centers and is now **set to expire on November 30, 2020.**

WHY IS ACTION TO REAUTHORIZE THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER FUND SO IMPORTANT NOW?

Health centers are **vital partners who can conduct massive community testing during the COVID-19 recovery.** When a vaccine is ready and available, Community Health Centers will be **key in reaching vulnerable populations hard hit by the virus in both urban and rural areas and helping to get the American economy back to work** and back on track.

Long-term, stable federal investment supporting the health center system of care is **essential to ensuring health centers' meet operational needs, recruit and retain staff and expand** needed services for patients.

*Currently health centers are experiencing **massive revenue losses – 70-80%** for many centers as a result of the pandemic. To date, **2,073 sites** have temporarily closed. Six-month impact estimate: **34 million fewer visits, \$7.6 billion lost revenue, 100,500 lost jobs.***

Health centers depend on Congress to act NOW to provide stable, long-term reauthorization as part of the next stimulus package. **With much uncertainty on the horizon, no one knows if Congress or the Administration will have the will or the funds and “pay-fors,” for a reauthorization deal by November 30. The time to act is NOW!**

While health centers have received limited aid from Congress toward COVID-19, it is a fraction of what is needed to address the pandemic and is not a substitute for another delayed reauthorization.

Community Health Centers are Requesting \$77.3 Billion in Stimulus #4

COVID-19 Emergency

Reauthorize the **Community Health Center Fund** to stabilize services and care for the newly uninsured

Workforce expansion to address the shortfall-- add 50,000 clinicians

Infrastructure investment, including telehealth development, IT systems and future emergency preparedness

\$7.6 Billion over 6 months

\$41.9 Billion over 5 years

\$7.8 Billion over 5 years

\$20 Billion over 5 years

WORKFORCE PROGRAMS ARE CRITICAL TO THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER FUND REAUTHORIZATION

Prior to COVID-19, **workforce shortages** were **estimated** by HRSA of **up to 160,000 physicians** and **one million nurses by 2025**. Nationwide, there are **more than 7,000 designated Health Professions Shortage Areas** lacking adequate primary care. Sixty percent are in rural areas.

Apart from renewing these programs at current levels, COVID-19 has demonstrated how important it is for health centers to attract and retain clinicians to:

- handle the current emergency and testing needs roll-out vaccination campaigns as soon as available;
- attend to the backlog of primary care needed for current patients;
- care for the flood of newly unemployed and newly uninsured; and
- build capacity and readiness for the next emergency or disaster.

Failure to reauthorize this program invariably will result in millions losing access to care, tens of thousands of jobs lost, and thousands of sites closed at a time when they are more needed than ever.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, A RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL INVESTMENT

Community Health Centers are efficient and **save the health care system over \$24 billion every year**, reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room use. In addition, they **generate \$54.6 billion in total economic activity** and bring **236,000 direct jobs** to poor and challenged communities.



Health centers guarantee access to high-quality care, improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Learn more about Community Health Centers and their efforts to keep communities healthy at www.nachc.org.



April 30, 2020