

Community Health Centers Receive Expanded Support under American Rescue Plan Act

March 26, 2021

On March 25, the White House announced the largest ever one-time investment of \$6 billion dollars in the nation's Community Health Centers to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatment in communities hard-hit by the virus and help health centers maintain and increase operational capacity.

The funding, derived from the American Rescue Plan Act approved by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on March 18, recognizes the critical role the nation's Community Health Centers continue to play in protecting at-risk communities through greater equity in accessing COVID-19 services, building vaccine confidence and ensuring that low-income and vulnerable people are not left behind in the fight to eradicate COVID-19.

- The federal funding opportunity will support a variety of current and anticipated future health center needs related to COVID-19 and, in some cases, cover unreimbursed costs health centers incurred since the pandemic first hit the U.S. dating back to January 31, 2020.
- Support is also available for basic primary and preventive services not only to maintain current health center services, but also to address "recovery and stabilization" activities in anticipation of serving pent-up demand for different services that people have been postponing due to the pandemic.
- According to the HHS/HRSA Bureau of Primary Health Care, a total of 1,376 Community Health Centers may submit funding plans for a 2-year spending period. Allocations for each individual health center are based on the following formula: A base amount of \$500,000 for every health center and \$125 for every patient and \$250 for every uninsured patient. Funding will start in April. For detailed information on allowable uses for the funding and its distribution nationwide, visit: <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/program-opportunities/american-rescue->

[plan/allowable-uses-funding](#) and <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/program-opportunities/american-rescue-plan/awards>.

Tom Van Coverden, NACHC President and CEO, stated: “This is a historic investment for which we are very appreciative to the Biden Administration. Not only is it aimed at ensuring equitable vaccine access to our patients in the fight against COVID, but it also marks a significant step forward to ensure greater equity in the nation’s health system overall.”

“NACHC and its members remain committed to working with the Administration and lawmakers to protect the health of the nation’s communities and to ensure that minority and communities of color and other vulnerable populations are not left behind today and in the future.”

More than 60 percent of health center patients are members of racial or ethnic minorities, and more than 91 percent of health center patients are individuals or families living at or below poverty levels.

To date, over 9 million health center patients have been tested for COVID-19. Thirteen percent have tested positive. Over 1 million vaccinations have been completed.

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