

Investing in Health Centers – Preparing for the Future

Sustaining and Growing Health Centers to Meet Rising Demand

The previous emergency COVID-19 funding was essential to support Community Health Centers that have been on the frontlines of the pandemic for more than a year. **Now, Congress needs to invest in infrastructure** to ensure America's 1,400 non-profit health centers organizations with 14,500 service delivery sites **can continue to effectively serve our communities after the pandemic.**

Health centers have grown from serving 18 million patients to 30 million patients today in the last decade, despite years since the last significant investment in health center facilities. The demand for health center services is greater than ever, especially with a surge of patients dealing with health issues left unaddressed during the pandemic. **New and modernized facilities will be critical to continue to provide high-quality care to current patients and millions of new patients by 2025.**

The ability of health centers to fund infrastructure remains limited, yet the need for investment continues to grow – whether for **construction** to expand centers that are already at capacity, build additional exam rooms or new sites; **renovation** of aging facilities; or other capital infrastructure projects.

This investment would allow health centers to expand critical services such as oral health, mental health, substance use disorder, and wrap-around services such as transportation, food security, employment programs. Expansion is also needed to provide services to treat the whole family and additional patient groups such as the growing elderly population, homeless, rural residents, and veterans, among others.

Health centers' **infrastructure needs total at least \$17.5 billion**, according to a recent assessment from Capital Link. **Nearly all (97%) Community Health Centers and Look-Alikes already have at least one capital project planned to build, expand, or renovate their facilities to take care of patients.** The top planned projects would **expand medical services, mental health, and oral services to patients.** Yet, the cost could be lowered by leveraging other existing programs, such as HRSA Loan Guarantees, New Market Tax Credits, and the USDA Community Facilities Program.

Health centers have proven their value to local economies again and again. Even without infrastructure investment, **in 2019 health centers generated 455,000 full-time jobs** (253,000 direct, 202,000 indirect) **and created more than \$63.4 billion in economic activity.** Further infrastructure investments in Community Health Centers will generate additional economic opportunities and jobs for residents of rural and underserved communities.

How you can help:

- **Support at least \$10 billion over five years in dedicated capital funding – the level included in the House Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow's (LIFT) America Act (HR 1848) – for the construction and modernization of Community Health Centers in any infrastructure package so that health centers can meet the needs of their patients.**