

Instructions: Representatives Gus Bilirakis and Diana DeGette are leading a letter to the Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittee asking for robust funding for Community Health Centers within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation for FY2024. The deadline to sign on is COB March 20, 2023. Please use this [Quill link https://quill.senate.gov/letters/cosigner/129569/](https://quill.senate.gov/letters/cosigner/129569/) to sign on. If you have any questions, please email [colleen.malloy.white@mail.house.gov](mailto:colleen.malloy.white@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Bilirakis' office or [nimit.jindal@mail.house.gov](mailto:nimit.jindal@mail.house.gov) in Rep. DeGette's office.

March XX, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman, House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of America's Community Health Centers as a longstanding bipartisan solution to the primary care access problems facing this country. As you proceed with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide robust funding for Community Health Centers within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation for FY24. This will ensure that health centers can remain providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care, and continue to provide innovative, high-value health services to medically underserved communities across the nation.

Since the first health centers opened their doors more than fifty years ago, they have proven to be a worthwhile investment, providing quality and affordable primary and preventive care, dental, behavioral health, substance use disorder, pharmacy, vision, and a variety of complementary services to America's most vulnerable patients and medically underserved communities. Today, thanks to longstanding bipartisan support in Congress, well over 1,400 health center organizations serve more than 14,000 communities in every state and U.S. Territory, including 42 percent of health centers located in rural areas. Health Centers are the medical home for over 30 million patients – one in every eleven people – including 9 million children and nearly 400,000 veterans. Furthermore, health centers employ over 275,000 people - generating \$63.4 billion in economic impact for local communities and providing cost savings for the nation's overall health care system.

Community Health Centers have a proven record of using cost-effective, innovative strategies to deliver high-quality, affordable health care. For the past decade, Congress has supported health centers on a bipartisan basis through the annual appropriations process for the Health Center program, combined with investments in base funding for Community Health Centers. With the Community Health Center Fund also set to expire on September 30, 2024, we urge you to work with your colleagues on other committees of jurisdiction to keep funding for Community Health Centers whole in FY24. This combined discretionary and base funding of the health center program is critical to the success of these safety net providers nationwide as they meet the growing demand for affordable health care and respond to the changing needs of their communities.

Central to the health center mission is an emphasis on treating the entire person through integrated care. The objective is to serve as a comprehensive medical home by addressing physical health conditions and an individual's mental health, dental, and social determinants of health needs. Whether providing behavioral health services, offering HIV/AIDS prevention care, addressing rising maternal mortality rates or delivering opioid addiction treatment, health centers are a cornerstone of the nation's health care system and need reliable, sustained federal support to continue their work. Without access to primary

care, many people, including the chronically ill, delay seeking health care services until they are seriously ill, leading to higher costs and worse health outcomes. The Health Center model is designed to address this and other health challenges by fostering innovation and high-value care at the community level.

Health centers also demonstrated their value to the nation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflecting the needs of their patients, health centers educated, vaccinated, and treated millions of patients. Since January 2021, health centers have administered over 22 million COVID-19 vaccines and 20 million tests. These providers are trusted voices in the community, which are often hard-to-reach populations.

While health centers are willing and able to do even more to carry out their mission to care for the people in our communities and the nation, they must have the resources to keep delivering care. For many health centers, funding will be critical to provide post-COVID-19 follow-up care and to address provider shortages. Severe workforce shortages and growing salary gaps make it difficult for health centers to recruit and retain the workforce necessary to provide high-quality care. Burn-out, early retirement, sickness, and marketplace competition due to COVID-19 has only exacerbated this crisis.

As Congress works to improve access to care, reduce health care spending, and promote patient-centered solutions to our health care challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue robust support for Community Health Centers – and their demonstrated record of success. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

---

Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress

---

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress