

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

We thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of Community Health Centers as a longstanding, bipartisan solution to keeping Americans healthy and saving taxpayer dollars. As you proceed with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 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 FY26. This will ensure health centers remain providers of high-quality, cost-effective primary care to millions of people living in rural areas and underserved communities across the country.

Health centers have had a record of success since they first opened their doors nearly sixty years ago, providing access to primary and preventive care, dental, behavioral health, substance use disorder, pharmacy, vision, and complementary services to every American at affordable prices. Today, thanks to persistent support from Congress, there are nearly 1,500 health center organizations delivering care at over 16,000 locations in every state and territory, including through almost 1,100 mobile vans. Thanks to their broad reach in our communities ten million rural residents, nine million children, nearly four million seniors, and 419,000 veterans, call a health center their medical home. All told, health centers cared for over 32.5 million patients – or one in every ten Americans – in 2023 and they stand ready to do more.

Each year, health centers save the overall health system billions by reducing the burden of chronic disease through prevention and early intervention. CHC patients of working age (18-64) are 35 percent more likely to have a chronic condition, and 31 percent more likely to have two or more chronic conditions compared to patients seeing private practice providers. Despite the complexities of their patient population, CHCs consistently achieve positive health outcomes for the people they serve, surpassing national quality benchmarks.

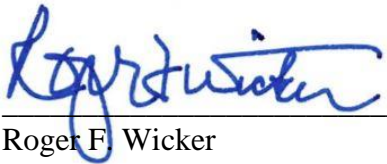
Furthermore, health centers employ over 310,000 Americans – generating over \$118 billion in economic activity in our communities. Last year, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed that investing in Community Health Centers would directly lower long-term spending by Medicare and Medicaid through decreasing preventable emergency department visits, hospital admission, and invasive procedures. A commitment to health center funding will allow more of our constituents to access health centers' cost-effective model of care and increase efficiency in government programs.

Congress funds health centers through both the annual appropriations process and through multi-year appropriations for the Community Health Center Fund. Health centers are proud to have sustained strong bipartisan support among Members of Congress for nearly six decades. With the multi-year funding set to expire on September 30, 2025, we urge you to minimize uncertainty on the discretionary side by providing robust appropriations in FY26. Your leadership will help health centers meet the growing demand for preventative and primary care that saves lives and taxpayer dollars.


Robust funding will also enable local solutions to primary care workforce shortages impacting our communities. Health centers are growing their mission-driven workforce through partnerships with high schools and community colleges to expand apprenticeship opportunities, preceptorship training, and career laddering programs. Your committee's support for health centers will help alleviate primary care workforce shortages and improve economic opportunities in rural and underserved areas nationwide.

As Congress works to improve access to preventative care, reduce long-term spending, and promote more patient-driven solutions to chronic disease challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue robust support for Community Health Centers – in recognition of their demonstrated record of success at improving health outcomes and reducing long-term health care costs. Thank you for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Roger F. Wicker in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Jack Reed in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Jack Reed
United States Senator