

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS CHART THE FUTURE ACCESS FOR ALL AMERICA

A VISION FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Imagine a health care system in which every person in America has access to comprehensive primary health care, regardless of their ability to pay, while at the same time the cost of care actually *goes down*. Now imagine that America has the opportunity to make this dream a reality.

Today, 56 million people – including many who *have* health insurance coverage – lack access to a health care home because they live in communities where there is an acute shortage of primary care providers. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Community Health Centers across the country serve as the health care home for 17 million people in over 6,000 communities, and are recognized as an invaluable part of the nation's health delivery system. Every day, Health Centers meet escalating health needs and bring doctors and primary and preventive health services into medically underserved communities. They serve all people without regard to family income, health insurance status, race, culture or health condition. In communities fortunate enough to have a Community Health Center, fewer babies die, emergency room lines are shorter and people live longer, healthier lives.

A CLEAR PLAN TO TAKE US THERE

And this revolutionary model of care doesn't have to stop at helping 17 million people. Community Health Centers are not just beneficial to underserved communities; their model of health care is one that could work for everyone.

ACCESS for All America – a bold new plan launched by America's Health Centers, shows exactly how increasing funding for the Community Health Centers Program by 15 percent annually over the next 8 years would allow Community Health Centers to serve 30 million patients by 2015, including nearly 12 million of the nation's uninsured and others who may have insurance but no health care home. Under this plan, millions more people would have access to the care they need, when they need it, regardless of ability to pay. Imagine the immense improvement in the quality of life for millions of individuals and their communities.

The **ACCESS for All America** plan includes four key elements: revenue growth to cover increased operating costs and patient loads at existing health centers, expansion of health centers into high need communities not served today, and comprehensive services such as mental health, oral health and pharmacy services; strengthened support for vital programs such as the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Health Professions training to ensure an adequate clinical workforce in underserved areas; the preservation and strengthening of Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP and other crucial health programs; and capital financing support for construction, renovation and the implementation of Health Information Technology to maximize quality and cost-effectiveness.

The ultimate goal of **ACCESS for All America** is to **preserve, strengthen and expand** the community health system leading to long term savings in health care and a healthier nation.

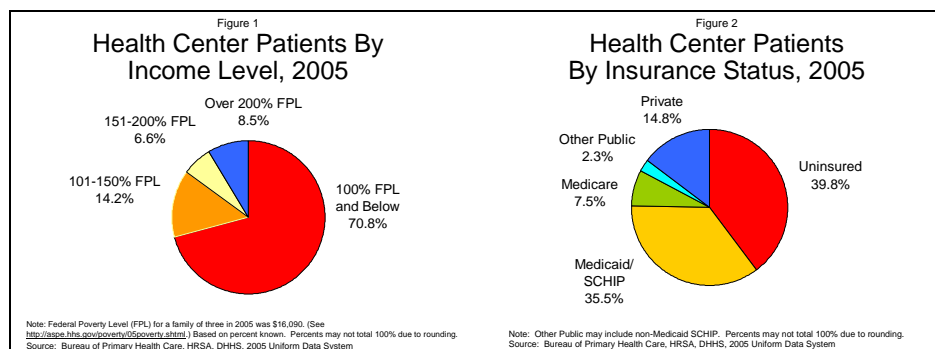


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BETTER CARE FOR LOWER COSTS: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

It is clear that expanding the role of Community Health Centers would benefit millions and millions of people. It is also a good deal for all of America. The numbers speak for themselves.

Community Health Centers have actually *improved health outcomes* and *lowered the costs* of treating patients with chronic illnesses, and have compiled a remarkable record of achievement in providing care of superior quality, with exceptional cost-effectiveness and efficiency. **Their costs of care rank among the lowest, and they reduce the need for more expensive emergency room, hospital in-patient and specialty care.** Both the Institute of Medicine and the General Accountability Office have recognized Community Health Centers as effective models for reducing health disparities and for managing the care of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and HIV; and the White House Office of Management and Budget has ranked them as one of the 10 most effective government programs. The American Academy of Family Physicians' Robert Graham Center recently found that **the total cost of care for health center patients is 41% lower annually than the total cost of care for individuals served by other providers.** Community Health Centers serve as living proof that providing high-quality, continuous care to people and communities without adequate sources of health care improves health outcomes, narrows health disparities, and **generates significant savings to the health care system – up to \$18 billion last year alone** – while bringing much-needed economic benefits to the low income communities they serve. Once health centers reach the ACCESS goal of serving 30 million patients by 2015, the cost savings they generate for the health care system will double to \$40 billion annually.



WHY IS INVESTING IN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IMPORTANT?

An expansion of Community Health Centers would quickly address the needs of the underserved and be a critical step in transforming the nation's health delivery system. Health centers improve the health of the patients and communities they serve by providing cost-effective, primary and preventive health services that translate into reduced hospitalizations, lower use of emergency rooms, and fewer referrals to specialists -- reducing overall health care spending and producing positive health care outcomes. As a result, pressure on local emergency rooms will be reduced, saving taxpayer dollars. **Health centers are an excellent public investment that generates substantial benefits for patients, communities, insurers, and governments – indeed, for all of America.**

The bottom line is this: The current health care system in America is not working. Too much money continues to be spent, while the number of uninsured and underserved people continues to rise, and the quality of care received remains inadequate. America now has the chance to make a public investment that will pay off in the future. Investment in the growth of Community Health Centers today is a smart choice for a healthier America tomorrow.