

# **Durbin meets with Illinois Community Health Center representatives amid health care debate**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today met with representatives from community health centers across Illinois to discuss the impact these centers have around the state and what could happen should Republicans in Congress repeal health care. According to Illinois Community Health Centers, repealing health care would

result in Illinois community health centers seeing a 54 percent increase in uninsured patients and a loss of \$83 million – leading to a 10 percent reduction in health center staff and clinic closures.

“Community health centers provide high-quality, comprehensive medical care for millions of Americans every year. While invaluable everywhere, they are particularly critical for ensuring access to health care in rural communities across our country and Illinois,” said Durbin. “But repealing health care would throw our health care system, providers, and patients into chaos and would immediately disrupt the lives of more than one million Illinoisans who depend on community health centers for medical care. I will continue fighting in Washington to protect the gains we have made under the ACA, and continue to support patients in need and the providers – like community health centers – that serve them.”

Durbin met with Kim Mitroka, President and CEO, Christopher Greater Area Rural Health Planning Corporation; Larry McCulley, President and CEO, Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation, Inc.; Gordon Eggers, President and CEO, Crusader Community Health; Bruce Johnson, President and CEO, Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA); and Jordan Powell, Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Governmental Affairs, Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA).

Community health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that deliver comprehensive, culturally competent, high-quality primary health care services. Illinois community health centers currently provide primary health care services to approximately 1.3 million Illinois residents (including one out of every four Medicaid patients) at 51 health centers with 360 treatment sites in medically underserved areas throughout the state. Illinois health centers employ over 7,600 individuals, equaling a payroll of more than \$508 million. They also inject approximately \$800 million in operating expenditures into their communities, resulting in an overall economic impact of \$1.48 billion and overall employment of 11,700.

Over its 50 year history, the Health Center Program has grown from two community health centers to nearly 1,400 community health centers operating over 9,800 clinic sites in every U.S. state and territory. In 2015, community health centers employed nearly 190,000 people and served over 24 million patients. One in 13 people nationwide rely on a HRSA-funded community health center for their preventive and primary health care needs.