

Durbin and Duckworth join effort to extend critical funding for community health centers

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WASHINGTON— U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Roy Blunt (R-MO) and a bipartisan group of Senators to call for immediate action to extend critical funding for community health centers before funding runs out at the end of this month. In a letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairman and Ranking Member, Durbin, Duckworth, and 68 other Senators expressed their strong support for community health centers, which provide access to cost-effective primary and preventive care for



families across the country.

“Without extension of the CHCF, community health centers will lose seventy percent of their funding,” wrote the Senators. “This will result in an estimated 2,800 site closures, the loss of 50,000 jobs, and result in 9 million Americans losing their access to care...We are already hearing of the disruptive effects of the uncertainty created by the

impending funding cliff on health center operations—this disruption will increase significantly without an extension of funding by September 30.”

Community health centers operate in both rural and urban areas, in every state in the nation, and are an important health care provider. Last year, health centers were the medical home for one in twelve Americans, one in ten children, one in six Americans living in rural areas, and more than 330,000 of our nation’s veterans.

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 community 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. A recent study found that Illinois community health centers save 27 percent in total spending per Medicaid patient compared to non-health center providers.

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.