



# **Statement from Illinois Primary Health Care Association on Gov. Pritzker's State Budget Address**

February 20 2020 10:37 AM

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Primary Health Care Association, representing the state's community health centers, today released the following statement in response to the Governor's state budget address:

"Today, Governor Pritzker delivered his second annual state budget address, laying out his vision for returning Illinois to fiscal stability. We applaud the Governor for his leadership in paying down the state's unpaid bills and developing a historic capital plan, as well as his commitment to sustainably growing revenue that can be used to strengthen public investment in vital health care services.

We also commend the Governor's Administration for making important progress on bringing down the backlog of Medicaid applications and reducing the time it takes for low-income children, families, and seniors to get the care they need. Lastly, we are pleased that the Governor has replaced federal Title X funds to ensure that all Illinoisans have access to comprehensive care that includes family planning services.

The Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) represents 51 community health centers serving 1.4 million Illinoisans at 390 locations across the state. While our centers provide top-quality care for so many, tremendous unmet need remains. For example, enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in Illinois has declined at twice the rate of the U.S. overall, leaving many lower income children and adults uninsured. The demand for mental health and substance use treatment grows as communities continue to battle rising suicide rates and the opioid epidemic. And, high maternal mortality rates persist, disproportionately impacting African American mothers.

Community health centers are positioned to meet the rising demand for health care for the underserved and uninsured, immigrant communities, and those with behavioral health needs. However, not enough investment has been made to keep pace with that rising demand. In order to ensure that all Illinoisans are able to get the health care they need, we urge the Governor and lawmakers to include increased funding for community health centers in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. This is an investment that will expand access to high-quality health care while bending the cost curve, as community health centers currently generate over \$2 billion in annual health care savings by keeping people healthy and out of emergency rooms.

Given Illinois' challenging fiscal realities, additional investment will require adequate revenue. The adoption of a graduated income tax is a key step on Illinois' path forward. The solution for Illinois is clear – it's time to pass the Fair Tax, which will ensure 97 percent of Illinoisans see no tax increase and generate additional revenue to make fiscally responsible investments in our health care delivery system.

As the budget continues to take shape, IPHCA remains committed to advocating for stronger investments in community health centers and advancing policies that expand access to high-quality, affordable health care.”