



Durbin Discusses COVID-19 Response With Illinois Community Health Centers

May 2 2020 1:46 PM

SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today, on a call with CEOs from Illinois Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Jordan Powell, President and CEO of the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA), discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Illinois and how CHCs are fighting the pandemic on the ground. Durbin thanked the CHC representatives for everything their centers and health workers have done so far to help Illinoisans and pledged he would continue to push for a direct and immediate infusion of funds for our CHCs, as well as increases in personal protective equipment, testing kit supplies, and other health needs.

“Every year, Illinois Community Health Centers serve nearly one and a half million Illinoisans, regardless of their ability to pay, including vulnerable populations who are disproportionately impacted by this virus—minority communities, the homeless, and the undocumented,” Durbin said. “We desperately need to increase funding for our nation’s health centers and improve our ability to test more people—I know that many CHCs are still having trouble accessing needed test kits. It is also unconscionable that, in the midst of this pandemic, our frontline health workers are being asked to work without gloves, gowns, and masks. I will do everything I can to increase health center funding and push the Trump Administration to get CHCs the resources and supplies they need from the federal government.”

Illinois community health centers employ 7,600 staff and provide primary health care services to approximately 1.4 million Illinois residents at 51 health centers with 390 treatment sites in medically underserved areas throughout the state.

Durbin also discussed his [*Health Heroes 2020 Act*](#), bicameral legislation to provide a historic investment in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Nurse Corps programs to cover the graduate education costs of approximately 300,000 clinicians in order to help address existing health workforce shortages throughout our health care system. The bill, introduced by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09) in the

House, would address these challenges and entice promising students from diverse backgrounds—physicians, dentists, mental health professionals, nurses, and physician assistants—into primary health careers in underserved communities by providing historic new funding levels for scholarship and loan forgiveness options in exchange for a service commitment in an urban or rural area with a shortage of providers. The legislation would also immediately surge \$30 billion into the NHSC and Nurse Corps, further increase the annual funding level for NHSC by 300 percent, and create a new Reserve Corps to boost our health care surge capacity in response to public health emergencies.