



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 10, 2018

**California's Community Health Center's Make Contingency Plans**

*Funding expired in September & Health Centers Planning for the Worst*

**San Diego, CA** – California's primary care delivery system has a \$230 million hole that still has not been filled. Today, more than 1,300 community health centers serve the state of California, and provide comprehensive, high quality and affordable medical, dental and behavioral health care to 6.5 million low-income residents. Nearly 900 of those health centers rely on federal grants funds, which expired on September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017.

**In San Diego, the lack of congressional action will result in the loss of \$44 million dollars for the region - translating into roughly 120,000 fewer visits to the doctor for children, pregnant moms and chronically ill Southern California patients.**

Congress assured health centers and advocates they would fund health centers before the end of the 2017, as they have every year since the program's inception over 50 years ago. It is now 2018 and all Congress has done is provide temporary patch funding through the end of March. **Without the full authorization, health centers will lose 70 percent of their federal funding, which will have consequences for hundreds of communities throughout California, including health center staff layoffs, loss of services, and reduction in hours of operation.**

In response, community health centers in California – and the other 10,000 across the nation – have been developing contingency plans if Congress fails to fully reauthorize health center funds.

Constance Kirk, Executive Director of [Imperial Beach Community Clinic](#) reported her organization has been planning a major expansion for one of its sites. When fully staffed this new health center was proposed to serve an additional 25,000 patients. "The new site would double our current capacity, expand all our current services and add a new dental program, social service program, and health and wellness center," Kirk reported. "However, with the uncertainty caused by the federal funding cliff and the desire of the current Administration to cut back on federal health care spending, we have decided to delay our building project."

Dr. Rakesh Patel, Chief Executive Officer of [Neighborhood Healthcare](#) indicated a similar response. “Considering the current funding uncertainty, we have implemented a hiring freeze for new positions, resulting in 12 less new jobs for the region.”

The health center program is vital to California’s health care system. **1 in 6 Californians call a community health center their medical home, as do 1 in 6 San Diegans.** They provide the full spectrum of care, including primary care, dental, behavioral health care, vision services, and support services like transportation and dietary counseling. **Moreover, health centers contribute over \$5 billion to California’s economy and employ 33,000 people.**

While congressional members have given reassurances the health center program remains a priority, many health centers are wary of Congress’ repeated promises. With assurances of funding only through March, and not knowing if they will receive the full funding, **health centers are unable to plan for the future, and needed care for patients is jeopardized.**

As community health centers continue to provide for California’s most vulnerable communities, Congress must fight to stabilize health center funding for the future. **It’s not too late for Congress to act.**

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### **About Health Center Partners of Southern California**

Health Center Partners and its subsidiaries serve as the nexus for its members and partners to transform primary care through the power of innovation and collaboration. Our health policy, public affairs and advocacy efforts enhance the development of and recognition for our members who enrich the patient experience and improve the human condition through access to quality health care and related services for their diverse communities, with an emphasis on low-income and uninsured populations.

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