

AB 1494: Declared Emergency Talking Points

March 15, 2019



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BACKGROUND

- Today, more than 1,330 community health centers serve the state of California, and provide comprehensive, high quality care to 6.9 million people – or 1 in 6 Californians.
- Community health centers provide the full spectrum of care, from primary care to dental to behavioral health care and a variety of enabling and wraparound services.
- In many rural communities throughout California, community health centers serve as the only source of medical and wellness care for middle- and working-class families in the region.

2018 FIRE EXPERIENCE AND IMPACT

- The 2018 fire season was the worst in California history and took a devastating toll on impacted communities, including community health centers.
- Over a four-month period in late 2018, nearly a dozen health center corporations, serving a 6 county region, were impacted by fires.
- In addition to fire fighters, police officers, and government officials who have worked together to coordinate relief efforts for fire-affected areas, community health centers have been on the front line, treating non-emergency patients, providing resources to victims of the fires, and serving communities as they rebuild.
- In the immediate aftermath, they extended hours to treat their established patients as well as fire evacuees. Even those health centers directly impacted by the fires continued to go above and beyond to assist their community.
- Not only have health centers continued to provide primary care services, they are also addressing the complex behavioral health needs of both their resilient patients and staff champions.

AB 1494

- In 2018, the Governor signed AB 2576 which was a necessary first step to ensure that communities continue to receive timely access to care when disaster strikes. Despite advances made, barriers to community health centers' ability to provide health care during a declared emergency remain.
- During a disaster, communities may be unable to receive vital health services at their healthcare facility due to evacuations, sheltering-in-place or their primary care facility being closed, damaged or worse destroyed.
- Building on existing law, AB 1494 is the critical next step to ensure that communities continue to receive timely access to care when disaster strikes by allowing providers to have telephonic appointments, provide care for patients in-home and at shelters.
- We owe our communities better. We need clarity in the law to guarantee that community health centers may continue to provide services by utilizing alternative methods to connect with their patients that have been impacted by a declared emergency.