



The American Rescue Act

(If Dem) Thank you so much for your support. However, more help is needed. Health Centers request HRSA to:

- Direct distribution of testing supplies, PPE, and vaccine doses to CHCs, proportional to the number of patients served at CHCs.
 - Prioritization of HRSA vaccine distribution to CHCs in California, and other states, where vaccine delays and inequities persist.
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Why CHCs are so Important to The Vaccination Program

- CHCs are the most qualified and trusted providers to overcome COVID-19's public health and race equity crises.
 - Many communities CHCs care for are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, systemic racism, and poverty.
 - California CHCs welcomes the Biden' administration's and Congress' commitment to turning the tide in our nation's COVID-19 response. Working together, we are confident we can quickly administer COVID-19 vaccines to the hardest to reach communities and seize opportunities to align federal resources with state vaccine plans.
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Telehealth

Support legislative and regulatory efforts to ensure permanent policy changes to Medicare and federal Medicaid matching funds to states, for audio-only telehealth services and that health centers are reimbursed at rates equal to an in-person visit.

- Telehealth has proven to result in better outcomes for patients, including homeless, veteran, and urban populations, making it a crucial tool to deliver comprehensive primary and preventive health care for all patients.
 - Telehealth has emerged as a vital force connecting health centers to their patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point, 98% of health centers nationwide have offered telehealth services, compared to just 43% in 2018.
 - Telehealth has been a safe harbor for health centers – and a lifeline for many especially for low income and seniors– during the pandemic. Ending distant site and audio-only protections will severely impact many of our patients who do not have easy access to broadband and smartphones. Preserving audio only with adequate payment for health centers will help provide health equity for our patients
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340B

Protect the 340B Program for Health Centers

- (If Dem, minus Peters) Thank you for signing on to the recent 340B support letter
- The 340B program is currently under assault on several fronts – and it is crucial that it is protected. Health centers' reliance on 340B is critical to their financial viability and their ability to provide quality comprehensive low-cost health services, including affordable medications, to their patients.



Workforce

Investments in additional providers, community health workers, behaviorists, and the medical assistant to nursing pipeline that place a priority on racial/ethnic diversity and cultural and linguistic sensitivity are needed.

- Thank you for the support of the American Rescue Plan's investment in the health care workforce and in particular the National Health Service Corp and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program.
- Severe workforce shortages and growing salary gaps make it difficult for health centers to recruit and retain an integrated, multi-disciplinary workforce to provide high-quality care. For example, the Association of American Medical Colleges estimates a national shortage of between 54,100 and 139,000 physicians by 2033.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a light on the inequities inherent in our public health system, and CHCs are central to a more equitable system in the future.
- For California's CHCs to meet the health care demands caused from the pandemic, they will require more physical capacity and staff to take on new patients or expand services.

Infrastructure

Support at least \$5.9 billion in dedicated infrastructure funding to address needed construction, renovation, equipment, IT, telehealth and broadband projects when the Congress considers an infrastructure package.

- With 30 million patients currently, America's 1,400 non-profit health centers organizations with 14,500 service delivery locations operated on razor thin margins long before the COVID-19 pandemic and its detrimental impact.
- The demand for health center services is greater than ever, especially by the growing number of newly unemployed and uninsured – human casualties of the pandemic economy
- Additional space and facilities will be critical for health centers to continue to serve the current 30 million patients and have the capacity to care for 8 to 11 million new patients over a 4-year period.
- There is substantial need for critically important services such as oral health, mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services like Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and school-based health center services.
- Health centers are a sound investment and have proven their value to local economies again and again. Even without infrastructure investment, in 2019 health centers generated 455,000 full time jobs (253,000 direct, 202,000 indirect) and created more than \$64.3 billion in economic activity