



## The Affordable Care Act and Health Centers

For more than 45 years, community health centers have delivered comprehensive, high-quality preventive and primary health care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. During that time, community health centers have become the essential primary care medical home for millions of Americans including some of the nation’s most vulnerable populations. With a proven track record of success, community health centers have played an essential role in national recovery and reinvestment efforts and will play a key role in implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

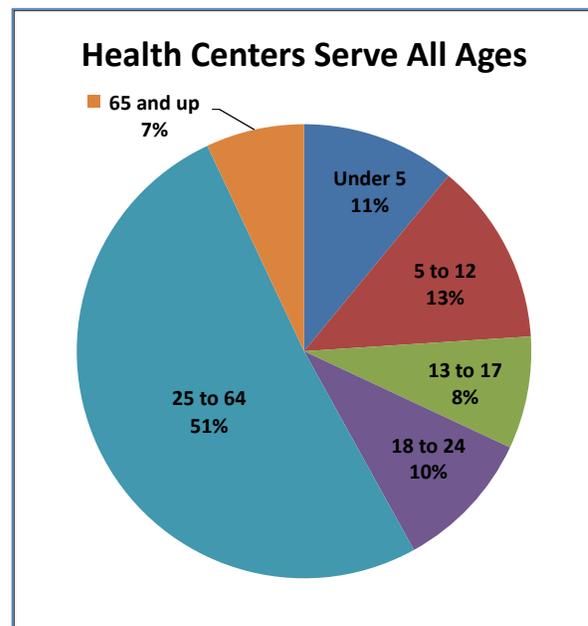
### **Delivery of Care: Increased Access to Health Services**

Today, more than 1,100 community health centers operate over 8,500 service delivery sites that provide care to approximately 20.2 million patients in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Basin.

Overall, since the beginning of 2009, health centers have increased the total number of patients served on annual basis by 3.1 million people, increasing the number of patients served from 17.1 million to 20.2 million annually. During this time, health centers have also added more 25,300 new full-time positions, increasing their employment from 113,000 to more than 138,000 staff nationwide.

This network of community health centers has created one of the largest safety net systems of primary and preventive care in the country with a true national impact.

- **Community health centers, supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), treated approximately 20.2 million people in 2011,** nearly two-thirds of whom are members of ethnic and minority groups. Nearly forty percent have no health insurance; approximately one third are children.
- **One out of every 15 people living in the U.S. now relies on a HRSA-funded clinic for primary care.**
- Community health centers are an **integral source of local employment and economic growth** in many underserved and low-income communities. Total health center employment is more than 138,000 individuals nationwide, and health centers added more than 25,300 jobs over the last three years.



**Source:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Uniform Data System, 2011.

- Community health centers employ more than 9,900 physicians and more than 6,900 nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified nurse midwives in a **multi-disciplinary clinical workforce** designed to treat the whole patient through culturally-competent, accessible, and integrated care.

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Community health center quality of care equals and often surpasses that provided by other primary care providers. A programmatic emphasis on quality improvement as well as community-responsive and culturally appropriate care has also translated into impressive reductions in health disparities for community health center patients. Calendar Year 2011 Health Center Program data demonstrate that centers continue to provide high quality care and improve patient outcomes, while reducing disparities, despite serving a population that is often sicker and more at risk than seen nationally:

- In 2011, the percent of low birthweight babies, at 7.4 percent, continues to be lower than national estimates (8.16 percent).
- The rate of entry into prenatal care in the first trimester increased from 65 percent in 2008 to 70 percent in 2011.
- 71 percent of community health center patients demonstrated control over their diabetes with a hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) level less than or equal to 9.
- 63 percent of hypertensive community health center patients have their blood pressure under control.

Community health centers also reduce costs to health systems; the community health center model of care has been shown to reduce the use of costlier providers of care, such as emergency departments (EDs) and hospitals.

### ***The Affordable Care Act: The Essential Role of Community Health Centers***

The Affordable Care Act established the Community Health Center Fund that provides \$11 billion over 5 a year period for the operation, expansion, and construction of health centers throughout the Nation.

- \$9.5 billion is targeted to:
  - Support ongoing health center operations.
  - Create new health center sites in medically underserved areas.
  - Expand preventive and primary health care services, including oral health, behavioral health, pharmacy, and/or enabling services, at existing health center sites.
- \$1.5 billion will support major construction and renovation projects at community health centers nationwide.

Community health centers are poised to play an essential role in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In particular, community health centers emphasize coordinated primary and preventive services or a “medical home” that promotes reductions in health disparities for low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, rural communities and other underserved populations. Community health centers place emphasis on the coordination and comprehensiveness of care, the ability to manage patients with multiple health care needs, and the use of key quality improvement practices, including health information technology. The community health center model also overcomes geographic, cultural, linguistic and other barriers through a team-based approach to care that includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, dental providers, midwives, behavioral health care providers, social workers, health educators, and many others.

Rooted in a commitment to community-based, patient-centered care, community health centers continue to focus on comprehensive services that meet the varying needs of their patient populations

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including: disease management and coordination, prevention and patient education activities, and outreach.

### ***Affordable Care Act Funding for Health Centers***

In FY 2011, the Health Center Program announced and awarded more than \$1.7 billion in Affordable Care Act grants, including:

- \$732 million for 144 Health Center Capital Development awards to support major health center construction and renovation projects;
- \$900 million to support ongoing health center operations, including support for 127 Health Center New Access Points and 1,122 Increased Demand for Services grants initially established through the Recovery Act;
- \$40 million to establish 67 new health center sites and 129 health center planning grants; and
- \$40 million to support quality improvement activities in more than 900 health centers nationwide.

With the Affordable Care Act Health Center Program in FY 2012, the Health Centers program has awarded funding for the following new grants:

- **Health Center New Access Points:** In FY 2012, approximately \$129 million was awarded to establish 219 health center new access points across the country. These grants will support new full-time service delivery sites for the provision of comprehensive primary and preventive health care services to approximately 1.25 million additional patients.
- **Health Center Capital Development - Building Capacity Program:** In FY 2012, approximately \$629 million was awarded to 171 organizations for new large renovation, expansion or construction projects to improve health center capacity to provide primary and preventive health services to underserved populations. These grants are expected to expand access to an additional 860,000 patients.
- **Health Center Capital Development - Immediate Facility Improvement Program:** In FY 2012, approximately \$99 million was awarded to 227 organizations for new construction and renovation projects to help support health center efforts to address immediate facility needs within existing sites that are providing primary and preventive health services.

The President's FY 2013 Budget Request includes \$3.061 billion for health centers to provide preventive and primary health care services to an estimated 21 million patients nationwide, adding 25 new health center access points.

### ***School-Based Health Center Capital Program***

The Affordable Care Act authorized a new program and appropriated \$50 million a year for 2010 through 2013 for a School-Based Health Center Capital (SBHCC) Program to address capital needs in school-based health centers. The SBHCC grants will address significant and pressing capital expenditures to support the improvement and expansion of services at school-based health centers

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(SBHC), including new construction, alteration/renovations and equipment-only projects. Applicants must demonstrate how their proposal will lead to improvements in access to health services for children at a SBHC.

- In FY 2011, through the first SBHCC funding opportunity, HRSA awarded \$95 million to 278 school-based health center programs across the country. The awardees are currently serving approximately 790,000 patients throughout the country. The awards will enable them to increase their capacity by over 50-percent, serving an additional 440,000 patients.
- In FY 2012, HRSA awarded \$14 million to 45 school-based health center programs across the country. The awardees are already providing health care services to 112,000 children, and the awards will enable them to expand their capacity and modernize their facilities, which will allow them to treat an estimated additional 53,000 children in 29 States.
- A new SBHCC funding opportunity announcement was announced in May, 2012 for approximately \$75 Million to support approximately 150 awards in December 2012.