



# ADVOCATES FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH



## ACH MONTHLY UPDATE: NOVEMBER 2023

[advocatesforcommunityhealth.org](https://advocatesforcommunityhealth.org)

Dear ACH Members:

During this season of gratitude, we thank you for positively contributing to communities nationwide every single day. We are honored to advocate on your behalf and elevate your collective voices to achieve health equity for the over 31 million patients that rely on community health centers every year.

Just a few days after Thanksgiving, ACH is hosting a member-only webinar on **Wednesday, November 29, at 12:00 p.m. ET** focused on the impact of Medicaid unwinding and eligibility redeterminations. We will be discussing how community health centers can help their patients address potential loss of coverage. [Register here](#).

In addition, we are excited about seeing you at our 2024 Annual Member Meeting, which will take place **March 5-7, 2024**. Next year's event will be hosted at the brand new Capitol Hill Royal Sonesta. Please take advantage of our early bird registration fees and [register today](#). You can also book your hotel room at a discounted rate [here](#). All the details, including a draft agenda can be found [here](#).

Continue reading for additional updates on our activities in Washington and relevant policy news.



# MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

## Staff Update

Please help us welcome our new director of grassroots advocacy and membership, Samatha Noble. We are thrilled to have her supporting our efforts in Washington, D.C.



ADVOCATES FOR  
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WELCOME TO OUR TEAM



**Samantha Noble**

Director of Grassroots Advocacy & Membership

## Programming Updates

We are happy to report that ACH held kick-off meetings for two separate Learning Collaboratives in recent weeks, with some members flying to Washington, D.C. to meet in-person and others participating virtually. From November 6-7, the **ACH Value Based Care Learning Collaborative** met to discuss challenges and best practices when implementing value-based care payment models. Then, November 13-14, the **ACH Health Center Operations Learning Collaborative** met to discuss operations issues including the alignment of operational and organizational goals; FQHC recruitment and retention strategies; effectively harnessing data; and the power of leadership.



# POLICY UPDATES

## The Latest News From DC

Last week, [the House and the Senate passed stopgap legislation with bipartisan support \(336-95\)](#) to extend government funding at current spending levels and avoid a shutdown. The [two-tiered funding plan](#) funds four of the 12 annual spending bills plus **the Community Health Center Fund, the National Health Service Corps, and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program** through January 19 and the remaining bills until February 2.

In addition, the House advanced the [Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations](#) bill to the floor, which includes discretionary funding for community health centers (as opposed to the CHC Fund, which is mandatory funding and is considered/passed separately). This legislation reduces overall discretionary funding for included programs in FY24 by 29% (although health center funding is NOT reduced in the bill - it is kept at the same level, at \$1.86 billion).

However, there was insufficient support to pass the full chamber, and it was pulled off the floor for consideration at another time. The House is now in recess until next week.

Meanwhile, tensions in Congress have been running high (examples [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), and with every new week of chaos, more members decide to throw in the towel. [Just this week, Reps. Michael Burgess \(R-TX\), Brad Wenstrup \(R-OH\), Derek Kilmer \(D-WA\), Brian Higgins \(D-NY\), and Sen. Joe Manchin \(D-WV\) have announced they will not be seeking re-election in 2024.](#)

Internationally, the conflict in Ukraine and the war between Israel and Hamas rage on, and Congress remains gridlocked on providing supplemental funding for military aid. [The stopgap funding bill passed by the Senate and the House](#) notably **excludes** funding for Ukraine, Israel, and the southern border wall.

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## ACH-Specific Legislation Updates

### Health Equity

ACH continues to promote Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY)'s [Health Center Community Transformation Hub Act](#), HR 1072, on the Hill, including continuing conversations with Rep. John Curtis (R-UT) as a potential lead Republican sponsor. In the coming weeks, we will be reaching out to Republican members on the House Energy and Commerce Committee to encourage bipartisan co-sponsorships and build support behind the bill.

### FQHC Workforce

We continue to work toward the bipartisan introduction of the Developing the Community Health Workforce Act, to be sponsored by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA). We are currently approaching potential Republican lead sponsors and hope to have the legislation introduced soon. We are also working to ensure that workforce needs are incorporated into discussions on the Community Health Center Trust Fund reauthorization, and are very encouraged to see one of our proposals mirrored in the Senate HELP Committee's Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act ([Section 212 - Allied Health Professionals](#)).

ACH has also recommended \$950 million in FY24 for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and this funding level was also included in the Senate HELP bill ([Section 103 National Health Service Corps](#)). We also support the Restoring America's Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act, S. 862, a three-year reauthorization introduced by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) for the NHSC that would double the mandatory funding from \$310 million to \$625 million in FY24 and increase to \$825 million in FY26. For the Teaching Health Centers Program, ACH recommends an investment of \$5 billion over 10 years.

## Emergency Preparedness

ACH continues to work with Rep. Nanette Barragan (D-CA) on the Emergency Preparedness for Underserved Populations Act legislation to create a fund that will help health centers prepare for the next pandemic, natural disaster, or other emergency, and is working to identify a Republican lead sponsor.

ACH sent a survey to the Emergency Preparedness working group which will update ACH emergency preparedness and pandemic priorities. During December's meeting, members will review the survey findings and discuss a path forward.

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## Updates on ACH Priorities

### CHC Invest

#### *Community Health Center Reauthorization*

As discussed above, the Community Health Center Fund will be extended through January 19 as part of the CR that was signed into law.

Meanwhile, work continues on advocacy for a long-term solution. Following bipartisan Senate HELP Committee passage of the [Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act](#), which funds health centers at **\$5.8 billion per year for three years**, ACH is focused on growing support for this funding level in Congress, particularly among Senate Republicans. [See here for ACH's letter of support](#).

The House's [Lower Costs, More Transparency Act](#) funds the CHC Trust Fund at **\$4.4 billion per year through calendar year 2025**, a 10% increase over current levels. This is a major step in the right direction and will set up health centers for a meaningful increase as the House and Senate head toward final negotiations later this year. While this remains a key priority for Energy and Commerce Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), the path forward for this legislation remains unclear. ACH's statement in support of this bill can be [found here](#).

### 340B/C

On November 3, Judge Harwell issued his decision in the long-awaited [Genesis vs. Becerra](#) case, ruling in favor of Genesis Health Care. Genesis, a health center in South Carolina, had sued HRSA over its 'patient definition guidance' after HRSA removed Genesis from the 340B program over failure to maintain auditable records. This decision marks the most significant development in the 340B program in recent memory. While Judge Harwell agreed that [HRSA does have the authority to issue guidance to define the patient, its restrictive interpretation is contrary to the plain wording of the 340B statute](#), ACH will

continue to review the decision and its implications and remain in close touch with ACH members as we learn more.

In July, ACH submitted a letter responding to the bipartisan [Senate 340B Working Group's RFI](#), with significant input from our 340B Working Group. The RFI sought feedback on ways to improve the 340B program, and ACH recommended our [340C proposal](#) as a policy option, among other recommendations.

Also in July, ACH sent a [stakeholder letter](#) to the leadership of the Senate HELP and House Energy and Commerce Committees outlining the challenges health centers face in the 340B program and recommending [340C as a solution](#). The letter includes signatures from 104 national, state, and local organizations representing 25 states as well as DC and Puerto Rico.

ACH continues to advocate urgently for policies to address the actions that are chipping away at the 340B program. [More information can be found here](#).

## Value-Based Care

The VBC working group went over the results from our internal survey and to discuss next steps. The group is looking into both soliciting technical assistance and helping members with VBC policies moving forward. ACH leadership is reviewing ways to integrate the needs of all its members.

In addition, the ACH VBC Learning Collaborative recently met in Washington, D.C, to facilitate a discussion among members about the challenges of implementing value-based care payment models as well as share successful implementation tools. Participants shared best practices, data collection and assessment tools, research, and successful state-specific programs and models.

**Reminder:** CMMI's Making Care Primary (MCP) model [Request for Applications](#) is available, and applications will be open until November 30. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kristen Constantine at [kconstantine@cha-dc.com](mailto:kconstantine@cha-dc.com).

## Monthly Member Highlights

[Legacy Community Health](#)

### Must-Read Articles

[Congress Can Take Steps to Help Avert a Shortage of Family Doctors](#)

[Why Preventative Care is Such a Tough Sell in the U.S., According to Chronic Disease Experts](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 28:** [Today with Macrae: Health Center Program Updates](#), HRSA, 2 p.m. ET, Virtual.

**November 29:** [ACH Emerging Issues Webinar on Medicaid Redetermination](#), 12 p.m. ET, Virtual.

**December 1:** [ACH Policy Webinar on the Congressional Earmarks Process](#), 12 p.m. ET, Virtual.

**December 6:** [ACH Office Hours](#), 12 p.m. ET, Virtual.

**March 5-7, 2024:** [ACH Annual Member Meeting](#) (Washington, D.C.)

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