



# ADVOCATES FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH



## ACH MONTHLY UPDATE: OCTOBER 2023

[www.advocatesforcommunityhealth.org](http://www.advocatesforcommunityhealth.org)

Dear ACH Members:

We are circulating a [stakeholder letter to Congressional leadership](#) urging them to enact a CHC Reauthorization that includes the funding level in the Senate's *Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act* - \$5.8 billion per year for three years. The letter currently has 400+ signers and we would love for your organization to sign if you have not already. The letter is open to all national, state, and local organizations including PCAs and health centers, so feel free to share the link with others in your network. **Signatures are due by EOD today.** To sign on, please [click 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](#).

Next month, we have some great virtual events lined up that we hope you will join. On Wednesday, November 8, ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly will speak on [a panel hosted by 340B Report](#) about our efforts to protect health center access to this critical program. Additionally, 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](#).

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 communications & marketing, Sandy Applebee. She is a seasoned marketing and communications strategist with more than 20 years of experience in the government, biotechnology, and military sectors. We are thrilled to have her supporting our efforts in Washington, D.C.



WELCOME TO OUR TEAM



**Sandy Applebee**

Director of Communications & Marketing

## Programming Updates

### ACH Entrepreneur Challenge

We are happy to report that ACH has distributed year one funding to the five Challenge grantees. In addition, we hosted a kick-off meeting for the group where we learned more about the health centers' winning projects. The five Community Health Entrepreneurship Challenge awardees and their initiatives can be found [here](#).

### ACH Peer Learning Collaboratives

A small group of senior-level staff from ACH's member organizations who signed up to be part of our two learning collaboratives (LC) – Health Center Operations and Value-based Care – will meet in-person in

Washington, D.C. on November 6-7 and November 13-14, respectively. We are thrilled to be able to provide health center leaders with a space to connect with peers, share promising practices and resources, and develop their knowledge and understanding of emerging policy and practice trends.

The **Health Center Operations Learning Collaborative** kick off session will delve into the following topics: aligning operational and organizational goals; FQHC recruitment and retention strategies; the power of data: designing an operations dashboard; and the power of leadership.

The **Value-based Care (VBC) Learning Collaborative's first learning session will explore topics such as** implementing value-based primary care delivery in FQHCs; Understanding state and MCO approaches to VBC payment methodology; understanding state VBC opportunities with Medicaid; achieving economies of scale for the safety net with a focus on data sharing and quality; critical building blocks for VBC and contracts; and ensuring equity in value-based care arrangements.



## POLICY UPDATES

### The Latest News From DC

After four Speaker designees and three weeks, Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA) has become the 56th Speaker of the House. Prior to his tenure in Congress, which started in 2017, Speaker Johnson worked as a constitutional lawyer and was a conservative talk radio host and columnist. He served as the Chairman of the Republican Study Committee (RSC) from 2019 to 2021 and serves as Chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution and Limited Government, as Deputy Whip, and, since 2021, as Vice Chair of the Republican Conference. Speaker Johnson led the amicus brief from 100 House Republicans in support of the Texas lawsuit challenging the 2020 election results in four swing states. He supports a ban on all abortion and opposes same-sex marriage. He also supports cuts to entitlement programs, including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Speaker Johnson did, however, sign the March 2023 letter from members of the House in support of funding for the Community Health Center Program in FY24.

What will Speaker Johnson mean for appropriations, especially when the government runs out of money in 22 days? The new Speaker has a plan for government funding, which he shared with Republicans this week, in which he proposes passing the seven remaining FY24 appropriations bills and passing a continuing resolution that would expire in either January or April, all before November 13. It remains to be seen if this is possible.

Congress is also considering requests this week from President Biden for additional funds for [national security priorities](#) as well as for a number of [domestic priorities](#). The Senate is continuing considerations of nominations this week, including movement of NIH Nominee Monica Bertagnolli in the HELP Committee and Jacob Lew for Ambassador to Israel in the Foreign Relations Committee. Behind the scenes, bicameral Committee staff are working to line up must-pass items, including offsets and extenders, and we hope to see floor consideration of the [Lower Costs, More Transparency Act](#) in the

House (which contains a 10% increase for health centers) in the coming weeks now that a Speaker has been selected.

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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. As a reminder, ACH provided [feedback](#) to the [Health Care Preparedness and Response Capabilities](#) guidance.

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## Updates on ACH Priorities

### CHC Invest

#### *Community Health Center Reauthorization*

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. We expect the Reauthorization to be included in whatever package is negotiated by the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate before the end of the year. [See here for ACH's letter of support](#).

As you know, 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. ACH's statement in support of this bill can be [found here](#). Current funding for the CHC Trust Fund runs out on November 17.

Ongoing instability and uncertainty with regard to federal government funding is an unnecessary threat to the patients who rely on health centers for their care, and ACH will continue to convey this to Congress over the next three weeks. It is critical that Congress find consensus and complete the appropriations process for FY24 so as to avoid another shutdown threat and that leaders in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle come together to pass a bipartisan health center fund reauthorization that substantially increases funding both immediately and in the long term.

## 340B/C

**340B Impact on Diabetic Patients:** This month, PrimaryOne Health, in collaboration with Ohio State's College of Pharmacy, [published a study](#) on the 340B's impact on diabetic patients. The study provides insight to the personal impact of the program on underserved patients with chronic disease accessing high-cost medications. The study's findings highlight the strengths of 340B, and suggest it is achieving its intent of investing federal resources to help CHCs expand services and increase patient care.

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, including 10 primary care associations.

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

On October 17, ACH sent around the VBC survey to members, led by VBC Working Group Chair Brenda Rodriguez of Lowell Community Health Center. This short survey will provide insight for November's meeting. Meanwhile, we are starting to see bigger retailers in the VBC space. Even the CEO of [CVS](#) has remarked about moving away from "volume-based" care.

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

[Morris Heights Health Center Launches Pilot Program to Serve its Aging Population](#)

[What Makes Tampa Family Health Centers' Care Counseling Unique](#)

## Must-Read Articles

[As They Await Congressional Action, Community Health Centers are Facing a Perfect Storm](#)

[Can States Ease Homelessness by Tapping Medicaid Funding?](#)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 8:** 340 Report, [The Latest 340B Developments on Capitol Hill and What They Mean For You](#), 12 p.m. ET, Virtual. (Amanda Pears Kelly is a panelist)

**November 9:** CMS, [Improving Access to Health Care Coverage in Rural Communities with Medicaid and CHIP](#), 2 p.m. ET, Virtual.

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

**December 1:** Save the Date for 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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