

Happy Friday! As August winds down, parents are sending kids back to school and Congress is wrapping up their final week of August recess. Before we celebrate a much-needed three-day weekend, we wanted to share the following ACH and policy updates with you.

We are excited to announce that ACH is currently accepting applications for our new 340B Learning Collaborative. This unique opportunity for staff at our member health centers will allow participants to gain a deeper understanding of the 340B Drug Discount Pricing Program to identify opportunities for optimizing patient care, reducing health disparities, and enhancing the sustainability of healthcare systems. Sessions will take place between November 2024 and March/May 2025, featuring both in-person and virtual convenings led by industry experts. **To apply, please complete the [online application of interest](#) by Friday, September 13th, 2024.**

ACH has compiled key health care legislative priorities and insights into the nominated Democratic and Republican presidential tickets. **[This resource](#) is exclusively for ACH members and can be accessed via our [Members-Only Portal](#).** This side-by-side comparison includes issue areas such as maternal health, reproductive rights, drug pricing, Medicare, Medicaid, workforce, and more.

Finally, we received impressive applications for the second round of funding for [ACH's 2024 Entrepreneur Challenge](#). Two ACH members will receive \$100,000 in grant funding and winners will be notified in early September.

The Latest News from D.C.

The House and Senate are in the final week of August recess and will reconvene the week of September 9th, leaving only twelve days of session before the November elections. As we've noted in prior updates, the election outcomes will significantly impact any potential

lame-duck funding package, as well as Committee and party leadership in the 119th Congress.

We are officially 66 days from what is sure to be a historic election, and the White House, Senate, and House majorities are all in play. Last week, the Democratic National Convention was held in Chicago, where Vice President Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Governor Tim Walz (D-MN) officially accepted the party's nomination for President and Vice President, respectively. [While rumors of a surprise Beyonce appearance turned out to be just that—rumors](#)—the convention was otherwise packed with notable speeches and performances - [NPR reports the highlights](#).

[The first debate between Trump and Harris](#) will take place on September 10th at 9 p.m. (ET) and will be hosted by ABC News. [The first VP debate between Vance and Walz is scheduled for October 1st](#) and will be hosted by CBS News. Both debates are sure to draw massive viewership, [though the impact that debate performances have on general election outcomes has significantly decreased](#) in recent years.

Since the convention, [RFK Jr. has ended his campaign for president and endorsed the Trump/Vance ticket](#). [However, he will remain on the ballot in a couple of battleground states](#), including states with the highest polling of Kennedy supporters, which the Trump campaign worries will hurt turnout for their ticket.

In D.C., some [House Democrats are taunting Republicans to force a vote to impeach President Biden](#), in hopes it would hurt the GOP's attempts to keep the majority. Any impeachment trial would likely force the House to gavel in during October, which is otherwise scheduled for an in-district work period to allow for last-minute campaigning.

At this point, the only election prediction we can be sure of is it will be anything but boring!

Updates on ACH Priorities and Legislation

[For more information on our ongoing policy initiatives, please read our 2024 Policy Priorities Progress Report!](#)

CHC Invest

- ***Action Alert* Sign-On Letter:** ACH is circulating a [stakeholder letter](#) asking Congressional leadership to reauthorize the Community Health Center Fund at \$5.8 billion/year for three years by December 31st, 2024, when the fund expires. This call to action is open to all national, state, and local organizations, including state primary care associations and health centers. Last year, we collected over 500 signatures from all 50 states, and we are hoping to exceed that this year! **We are accepting signatures until Tuesday, September 10th, 2024 – to add your name, please [sign on here](#).**
- In the meantime, we continue to meet with members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Senate HELP Committee, and Senate Finance Committee to push for sustainable, increased, and long-term funding for the Community Health Center Fund.
- **Senate LHHS Bill & Discretionary Health Center Funding:** On August 1st, the Senate Appropriations Committee [approved](#) its version of the Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Bill, which includes flat funding for the Health Center Program at \$1.858 billion. This is the same level that was included in the House version of the bill, and the same level that health centers were funded at in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2023. This is yet another reason we need Congress to enact a long-term Community Health Center Fund reauthorization this year with meaningfully increased funding.

340B/C

- **SUSTAIN Act:** The Gang of Six's *SUSTAIN Act* introduction remains delayed, with alleged disagreements between the Democrat and Republican offices. We have heard that the group is meeting with HRSA this week to discuss a new draft, and we hope to have more information about its introduction soon.
- **Bipartisan 340B Letter:** On August 1st, Reps. Scott Peters (D-CA) and Marianne Miller-Meeks (R-IA) and led a group of 14 bipartisan colleagues [in a letter to the House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair and Ranking Member](#) urging the Committee to serve as a forum to advance solutions aimed at strengthening and reforming the 340B program. From various meetings on and off the Hill, ACH is confident that this letter indicates support towards a potential House companion bill to the Senate's (hopefully-to-be-introduced) SUSTAIN Act.
 - Of note, the letter was signed by all three original sponsors of the *ACCESS Act*, Reps. Buddy Carter (R-GA), Larry Buschon (R-IN), and Diana Harshbarger (R-TN)

Value-Based Care

- Last week, ACH met with Duke Margolis to discuss their paper, "[Experiences and Interest in Value-Based Payment Arrangements for Medical Products Among Medicaid Agencies: An Exploratory Analysis.](#)" We have invited them to present their findings at our November VBC working group meeting and look forward to continuing to collaborate with them in their research and policy efforts.
- Additionally, ACH is working with groups (such as [NAACOS](#) and [NARHC](#)) on issues around the proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule rule, and will share the final comments with members in September. On September 13th, the VBC Working Group will discuss the group's priorities for 2025.

FQHC Workforce

- ACH's ***Developing the Community Health Workforce Act*** is in the final stages of legislative drafting and will be introduced by Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-25) before the end of the year. We are committed to introducing this as a bipartisan bill and will actively seek a Republican co-sponsor once the text is finalized. We will keep ACH members posted as this process progresses.
- On August 27th, ACH met with Rep. Tory Carter's office (D-LA) to discuss enhancing his [Mental Health Workforce Act](#) for reintroduction next Congress. Thank you to those from ACH's Workforce Working Group who provided invaluable feedback for additional policy considerations to address behavioral health workforce challenges.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Working Group:** The group is reviewing new draft priorities for 2025. Feedback from members is due **September 3rd**.

Other News from Across the Federal Government

Administration

- **Biden's National Heat Strategy:** On August 14th, the Administration revealed its [National Heat Strategy](#) for 2024-2030 ([PDF](#)). The strategy includes resources like CDC's [Clinical Guidance on Heat and Health](#) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental [Research Bulletin on Climate Change](#).

Health and Human Services

- **Respiratory Virus National Campaign:** HHS launched a new national campaign to inform the public about common respiratory viruses and available vaccines. The campaign, [Risk Less. Do More](#), aims to increase awareness of vaccines that reduce serious illnesses from influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in high-risk populations and to limit the spread of these viruses among all Americans.

Health Resources and Services Administration

- **HIV Medications:** [On August 20th, HRSA announced more than \\$1.4 billion in Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program funding for the HRSA AIDS Drug Assistance Program](#) and related awards. This funding will ensure that more than 290,000 people with HIV receive life-saving HIV medication.
- **New Access Points Applications:** HRSA plans to make NAP awards in FY 2025, if funding is available, to support new health center delivery sites that expand primary care for underserved communities. Phase 1 of NAP applications is due August 30th. Phase 2 is due on Monday, September 30th. For additional application resources, please see [HRSA's NAP technical assistance webpage](#).

Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services

- **Medicaid Unwinding:** According to the [KFF tracker](#), as of August 23rd, more than 25 million Medicaid enrollees have been dis-enrolled. Of those, 69% (54.9 million) have since had their coverage renewed.
- **Prescription Drug Prices:** [On August 15, CMS finalized negotiations for Medicare Part D prices on 10 prescription drugs](#), as mandated by the Inflation Reduction Act. These new prices, effective in 2026, will be 38 to 79 percent lower than the current list prices for medications that treat conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. CMS plans to continue this process, with

the next 15 drugs scheduled for price negotiations by February 1st, 2025. A [Brookings Institute](#) report shows that 51.4% of the estimated savings (\$3.28 billion) is accounted for by 3 drugs.

Federal Trade Commission

- Noncompetes: According to a federal judge, the Federal Trade Commission does not have the authority to enact its ban on non-compete agreements. [The ban can no longer take effect Sept. 4 as planned or be enforced wrote Brown](#), a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

ICYMI

- [MAT Access Up 68% in Community Health Centers](#), Behavioral Health Business
- [Can Community Health Centers Improve Research Diversity?](#), Deloitte
- [Abbott and NACHC Collaborate to Combat Food Insecurity Through Innovation Incubator Initiative](#), The Healthcare Technology Report

Upcoming Events of Interest

- **September 9-11:** [National Academy for State Health Policy: NASHP Annual Conference](#), Nashville, TN
- **September 25:** [ACH Members-Only Policy Office Hours](#) 12:00 - 1:00 PM (EST), Virtual
- **October 8:** ACH Emerging Issues Series: [“Behavioral Health Opportunities and Challenges for FQHCs and CCBHC,”](#) Virtual
- **December 2-4:** [Third Annual Social Determinants of Health Policy Forum](#), Washington, D.C

Please let us know if you have any questions and enjoy the long holiday weekend!

Sincerely,

Your ACH Policy & Government Affairs Team

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