

2024 has seemed to fly! Put best by the Chicks (formerly known as the Dixie Chicks): “...[the weeks went by, and Spring turned to Summer, and Summer faded into Fall](#)...” However, this is no time to get complacent - with another government shutdown looming, November elections around the corner, and lame-duck year-end package deals, plenty of work remains to be done.

***Member Request for Information*:** How do you use 340B program savings dollars at your health center? As we continue to look for ways to illustrate how vital the savings from the 340B program are for health centers, patients, and communities, we are calling on ACH members to provide your stories. As you know, health centers account for only **5%** of savings from the 340B program. **As advocates, it’s our job to highlight to Congress how vital this 5% is to the financial stability of health centers.** Therefore, we are asking you to provide us with information, stories, and/or data on what services you can provide thanks to funding provided by 340B program savings. This information can be submitted in any format you find easiest: bullet points, excel sheets, or a quick paragraph. **Please submit feedback or questions to [Sandy Applebee](#), AVP of Communications & Marketing by **October 4, 2024**.** We plan to use these qualitative stories and data points in future collateral on and off the Hill.

Please **save the date for ACH’s 4th Annual Member Meeting (AMM)** which will be held in Washington, D.C., at the Royal Sonesta Hotel Dupont Circle from March 25 - 27, 2025! Additional details will be shared here as they become available. In the meantime, feel free to check out the [2024 AMM recap](#).

Additionally, please join us on Tuesday, October 8th at 12:00 pm ET for a members-only webinar on [“Behavioral Health Opportunities and Challenges for FQHCs and CCBHCs.”](#) This session will feature speakers from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Swope Health (an ACH Member and dually

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic and FQHC) who will discuss the pros and cons of FQHCs becoming CCBHCs. [Register here](#) to join this important conversation!

Finally, next Friday is the last day to apply to participate in ACH's 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 Program to identify opportunities for optimizing patient care, reducing health disparities, and enhancing the sustainability of healthcare systems. Sessions will occur between November 2024 and March/May 2025, featuring in-person and virtual convenings led by industry experts. **To apply, please complete the [online application of interest](#) by next Wednesday, September 18th, 2024.**

The Latest News from D.C.

After a lengthy August recess, Congress returned to Washington this week with less than three weeks to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR), without which the government will shut down on October 1st. Earlier this week, House Republicans [released the text](#) of a stopgap spending bill to fund the government through March 2025 and avert an October shutdown; [many hope to vote on the bill as soon as next week](#). The bill is tied to the controversial [SAVE Act](#), a bill wildly unpopular with House Democrats, that would mandate proof of citizenship requirements to vote in federal elections.

The Community Health Center Fund is currently only funded through the end of the year, and ACH has continued conversations urging key offices on the Hill to include increased, robust, and long-term funding for health centers in any end-of-year health care package.

In election news, we are only 54 days out from the November general election, and last night, ABC hosted the first presidential debate between former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris. The candidates debated health issues including abortion, the

Affordable Care Act, and responses to the COVID - 19 pandemic. [ABC breaks down the debate and fact-checking here.](#) The [vice-presidential debate](#) between Senator J.D. Vance (R-OH) and Governor Tim Walz (D-MN) is scheduled for October 1, 2024, and we hope that will be the biggest news story of the day as it will mean Congress has found a way to keep the government open!

As a reminder, ACH has created resources comparing the health care legislative priorities and insights of the nominated Democratic and Republican presidential tickets. [This resource](#) is available exclusively for ACH members and can be accessed via our [Members-Only portal](#). This side-by-side comparison includes policy issues like maternal health, reproductive rights, drug pricing, Medicare, Medicaid, workforce, and more.

Updates on ACH Priorities and Legislation

CHC Invest

- ***Action Alert* Stakeholder Letter:** ACH is circulating a stakeholder letter for organizational sign on, 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 nearly all 50 states, and we hope to exceed that this year! ***We have extended the deadline to accept signatures until Tuesday, September 17th, 2024 – to add your name, please [sign here](#).***
- This letter will serve as an invaluable tool for advocating for sustained, long-term funding for the CHC Fund, showing the breadth of support for CHC funding. Once we have finalized signatures, we will use the letter to garner support in the press and reach out to offices in every House and Senate Committee of jurisdiction specifying signatories in each member's state and district.

340B/C

- **340B PATIENTS Act:** U.S. Sen. Peter Welch (D-VT) on Wednesday [announced](#) his version of the *340B Pharmaceutical Access To Invest in Essential, Needed Treatments & Support (PATIENTS) Act* of 2024. The Senate legislation is largely similar to the *340B PATIENTS Act* bill (H.R. 7635), which U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) [introduced](#) in March. ACH provided a [statement in the news release](#) in support of the *PATIENTS Act* which codifies 340B providers' ability to use contract pharmacies to dispense 340B discounted drugs.
- **SUSTAIN 340B Act:** The Gang of Six's *SUSTAIN 340B Act* remains delayed, due to alleged disagreements between the Democrat and Republican offices. We heard that the group is meeting with HRSA last week to discuss a new draft, but as far as we have heard, the six offices have yet to come to an agreement regarding introduction of the bill.
- **Inflation Reduction Act:** We've heard rumors that the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing in the coming weeks around the *IRA Act* and its current standing two years into implementation, and the 340B program may be discussed. Relatedly, as the IRA's Medicare drug pricing negotiation will impact 340B program savings, [earlier this week we sent joint comments with 340B Health](#), the National Rural Health Association, Ryan White Clinics for 340B Access, the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, the HIV Medicine Association, and the National Coalition of STD Directors providing input on the proposed rule for Medicare part D inflation rebate provisions and its impact on the 340B program. Read ACH's comments [here](#).
- **Rebate Model:** Last month, [Johnson and Johnson notified](#) DSH-covered entities that it will only offer 340B discounts on two top-selling drugs through a rebate model as of October 15, 2024. While HRSA has not yet approved the rebate model, Johnson and Johnson argue the limited scope of the rebate model is consistent with the current 340B statute. While this rebate seemingly carves out health centers, we are hearing that Eli Lilly is also moving toward introducing a rebate model that could impact all

covered entities, including health centers. We will continue to monitor the situation and share all relevant information with our members.

Value-Based Care

- This week, [ACH compiled an extensive list of VBC materials and resources exclusively for our members](#). Please enter the password: *ACHMember* to access this resource in your Members-Only Portal. We hope you find this helpful; we look forward to continuing to expand our role and influence in creating value-based care arrangements that benefit health centers and patients they serve.
- On September 9, [ACH submitted comments](#) on the proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. We are grateful for feedback from members of the VBC working group and collaboration with [NAACOS](#) and [NARHC](#) on several issues discussed in the document.

Health Equity

- The [Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 2024 Annual Legislative Conference](#) takes place this week in Washington, D.C. According to the CBCF, “The Annual Legislative Conference is the leading public policy convening focused on issues impacting African Americans and the global Black community. The ALC is a unique platform where thought leaders, legislators, influencers, and concerned citizens converge to discuss and address critical issues, forge partnerships, and promote the political, economic, and social advancement of Black communities.”

In an effort to support the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s efforts on ensuring greater health equity in the United States, ACH, in collaboration with the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU) and others, sponsored a session at the event entitled, “Empowering Black Fathers to be Allies for Black Maternal Health.” We are proud to be a part of this collaboration.

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 ensuring this is a bipartisan bill and are actively seeking a Republican co-sponsor once the text is finalized. We will keep ACH members posted as this process progresses.
- Last month, ACH met with Rep. Troy Carter's office (D-LA) to discuss some policy changes to his [Mental Health Workforce Act](#) for reintroduction at the next Congress. We look forward to continuing to work with the Congressman's office to develop the strongest possible bill to address the current mental and behavioral health workforce barriers and shortages.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Working Group:** The group is reviewing new draft priorities for 2025.

Other News from Across the Federal Government

The White House

- **Mental Health Parity:** [On September 9th, the Biden Administration finalized a rule](#) to ensure mental health and substance use services are covered at the same level as other healthcare for Americans - increasing access to nearly 175 million Americans with private health insurance.
- **Navigator Grantees:** Last month, [the Biden Administration awarded a new round of \\$100 million](#) to navigators helping underserved communities find and enroll in health coverage through HealthCare.gov. Navigators offer free assistance to people exploring health coverage options offered through the Affordable Care Act and helping people enroll in or renew Medicaid and CHIP coverage.

Congress

- **House Energy & Congress Committee:** On September 10, the Health Subcommittee held a hearing titled "[Evaluating FDA Human Foods and Tobacco Programs](#)" which featured two FDA witnesses.
- On September 11, the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee held a hearing titled "[A Year Removed: Oversight of Securing the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Act Implementation.](#)"
- **House Judiciary Committee:** On September 11, the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust Subcommittee held a hearing titled "[The Role of Pharmacy Benefit Managers.](#)"
- **House Oversight Committee:** On September 10, the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic [held a hearing with former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo](#) over his administration's directive to send more than 9,000 people infected with coronavirus back into nursing homes.
- **Senate HELP Committee:** On Thursday, September 12, there will be a full committee hearing titled "[Examining the Bankruptcy of Steward Health Care: How Management Decisions Have Impacted Patient Care.](#)"
- **Leader Schumer Dear Colleague:** On Monday, September 8, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) sent a [Dear Colleague letter laying out his goals for the rest of the year](#), noting his desire to address the cost of insulin and prescription drugs.

Health Resources and Services Administration

- **JYNNEOS Mpox Vaccine:** [On September 6, HRSA announced renewed availability of JYNNEOS vaccine](#) from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) within the HHS Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) to vaccinate at-risk patients against mpox. This limited supply of JYNNEOS doses expires on October

31, 2024, and the first of two doses must be administered no later than October 3, 2024.

- **New Access Points (NAP) Applications:** For those who applied in Grants.gov for NAP funding, [resources are now available to complete Phase 2](#) of your application (due September 30th). For additional application resources, please see [HRSA's NAP technical assistance webpage](#).
- **2023 UDS Data:** Last week, the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) released 2023 UDS data. [See here for highlights](#), including the “Top 10 Achievements” in the last four years of health center outcomes.

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 disenrolled. Of those, 69% (54.9 million) have since renewed their coverage.

Treasury Department

- **ACA Enrollment:** This week, the U.S. Department of Treasury [released new data](#) showing that nearly 50 million Americans (1 in 7 U.S. residents) have been covered through the Affordable Care Act since it was first implemented in January 2014.

Drug Enforcement Agency

- **Telemedicine Prescribing:** Pandemic-era rules allowing virtual prescribing of controlled substances are scheduled to expire at the end of the year. [The DEA is in the final steps of proposed rulemaking on the issue, and advocates are urging Congress to extend these flexibilities an additional two years](#) beyond what is included in the proposed rule.

ICYMI

- [What the Outcome of the Election Could Mean for Medicaid](#), KFF
- [AMGA Survey Finds Primary Care Specialty Compensation Slowing Compared to Others](#), Fierce Health Care
- [The Failing Experiment of Primary Care As A For-Profit Enterprise](#), Health Affairs
- [Why Primary Care Providers are Failing with Value-Based Contracts](#), HealthLeadersMedia

Upcoming Events of Interest

- **September 11-14:** [Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference](#), Washington, D.C.
- **September 25:** [ACH Members-Only Policy Office Hours](#) 12:00 - 1:00 PM (EST), Virtual
- **October 8:** ACH Emerging Issues Webinar Series: [“Behavioral Health Opportunities and Challenges for FQHCs and CCBHCs,”](#) Virtual
- **December 2-4:** [Third Annual Social Determinants of Health Policy Forum](#), Washington, D.C.
- **March 25-27, 2025:** [ACH 4th Annual Member Meeting](#), Washington, D.C.

Please let us know if you have any questions and have a great rest of your week!

Sincerely,

Your ACH Policy & Government Affairs Team

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