

Dear ACH Member,

We're quickly wrapping up another year filled with [highs](#) and lows. Yet, in the lingering spirit of Thanksgiving, we at ACH feel compelled to share how continuously grateful we are for your work on behalf of your staff and patients across the country. We remain steadfast in advocating for the best policies and investments in health centers and the communities you serve, and we are grateful for the opportunity to do so.

**Action Alert:** As Congress finalizes its end-of-year spending package and considers the reauthorization of the Community Health Center Fund, we urge you and your colleagues to contact your Senators and Representatives and drive home how important your community health center is and that it is critical that Congress increase funding for health centers. Now more than ever, it's important to communicate to your legislators the breadth of services provided and how these services help their constituents live healthier lives. Please [watch this new video](#) from ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly and NACHC President and CEO Kyu Rhee, MD, MPP, urging grassroots action from the health center community.

Visit our [Post-Election Resources](#), where we have prepared [CHC talking points](#), [phone scripts](#), [email templates](#), and guidance on [inviting members of Congress to tour your facility](#) in the district.

Please continue reading for important member information and legislative updates below.

**\*Register Now!\***

This is a friendly reminder about our upcoming [2025 Annual Member Meeting](#) taking place in Washington, D.C., from March 25 - March 27, 2025. Book your hotel accommodations by **Monday, March 3, 2025** to take advantage of our special discounted rate. You can easily make your reservation by visiting the [hotel's website](#) or by calling 202-661-2400 and mentioning "**ACH Annual Member Meeting**."

In the coming months, we will send and request information to help book your visits with your members of Congress. In the meantime, please save the date for a [virtual Hill Lobby Day prep session](#), brought to you by ACH's SVP of Policy and Government Affairs, Stephanie Krenrich (and guests!), on March 18th at 12 PM ET.

We appreciate those who were able to join us for our webinar this week, "Postmortem on the Presidential Election and Its Impact on Community Health Centers." For those unable to attend, the recording can be found [here](#), and the slides are available [here](#). **We will continue to provide email updates on what the election results mean for ACH's administrative and legislative strategies in our weekly Friday Post-Election Policy emails, which will run through December 20.**

Please read on for additional policy updates.

**The Latest News from D.C.**

The House and Senate are in session this week, wrapping up the final month of the 118th Congress. While many members will not be back in January, having resigned, retired, or lost their re-election bid, others have

their eyes focused on the 119th Congress, when Republicans will hold the majority in both the [House \(220-215\)](#) and [Senate \(53-47\)](#). However, there's still much to be done before 2024 ends. Most government funding runs out on December 20th, and the next three weeks may be among the busiest of the year on the Hill.

[Congress is all but certain to pass another short-term continuing resolution \(CR\) to extend government funding, but negotiating a new end date is proving to be a significant roadblock.](#) Speaker Johnson still needs to rely on Democratic support in the House, a slim Democratic majority in the Senate, and a signature from Democratic President Joe Biden to keep the lights on in D.C. in December, while also appeasing the different factions of his own party.

President-elect Trump has announced his picks for several key health positions in his administration, most notably Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Dr. Mehmet Oz as Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Other nominees include Dr. Jay Bhattacharya as National Institute of Health (NIH) director and Marty Makary to lead the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). [Bhattacharya is a Stanford physician and economist](#) who criticized the government's response to COVID-19, particularly lockdowns and school closures. [Makary is a Johns Hopkins surgeon](#) who emerged during the COVID pandemic as a critic of the FDA's vaccine approval process, recommendations, and the Biden administration's COVID-19 response. In Friday's post-election email, we will provide a more thorough breakdown of notable Trump Administration nominees.

While another Trump administration, as well as Republican majorities in both the House and Senate, may [signal changes to existing health policy](#), including the Affordable Care Act, restrictions/reductions in Medicaid coverage, and overall efforts to decrease federal spending, ACH remains optimistic that we will be able to find ample opportunity to work with the incoming administration due to the care community health centers provide, and the economic benefits and savings they provide to their communities, states, and the Federal Government.

## Updates on ACH Priorities and Legislation

### CHC Invest

- ACH is meeting with leadership and key members in the House and Senate on both sides of the aisle to discuss the importance of reauthorizing the CHC Trust Fund at increased, sustainable levels. As a reminder, the CHC Fund authorization expires on **December 31, 2024**. While the feedback has been generally positive, and we do not expect Congress to let the authorization expire, the lame-duck session and incoming transition of the Trump Administration, as well as incoming Republican majorities in the House and Senate, create uncertainties about the potential for significant increases in any end-of-year package. ACH will continue to meet with leadership and committee staff to advocate for the highest possible funding levels.
- **Funding Letters:**
  - This Fall, ACH delivered [a letter](#) to congressional leaders and key staff urging Congress to reauthorize the Community Health Center Fund in an end-of-year funding package with sustained, long-term funding. [The letter](#), signed by more than 550 healthcare organizations representing all 50

U.S. States and territories, specifically requested a minimum of \$5.8 billion per year for at least three years.

- This month, the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved and the American Association of Teaching Health Centers led a letter to leaders on the Hill requesting funding levels for the NHSC and THCGME programs to be funded at the levels passed by the Senate HELP Committee in the Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act. Advocates for Community Health signed the letter. [More information can be found here.](#)
- **Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC):** In [a letter to leaders in the House and Senate](#), the HLC urged Congress to enact key legislative items as part of an end-of-year package to fund the government, including extending telehealth flexibilities, community health center funding, and reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA).
- **Paragon Health:** Last month, Paragon Health Institute, a right-leaning think tank with ties to the Trump Administration, [published a brief urging Congress to prioritize reducing the deficit and limiting new spending](#) during the lame-duck period. Included in their recommendations were not permanently extending Medicare telehealth provisions, minimizing additional funding to health centers (and ensuring any additional funding is discretionary rather than mandatory), and not providing additional funding for the THCGME and NHSC programs. ACH [issued a statement vehemently rebutting the recommendations](#) in the Paragon Brief, and [ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly was quoted](#) in Inside Health Policy's follow-up article, "[Paragon's Call to Limit Mandatory Funding for Community Health Centers Sparks Backlash from Advocates.](#)"

### 340B/C

- **SUSTAIN:** While the status of the [SUSTAIN 340B Act](#)'s introduction remains nebulous, we believe it is highly unlikely that there will be significant (or any) Committee action in the House or Senate regarding 340B reform before the new Congress. However, with one of SUSTAIN's authors, Senator John Thune (R-SD), newly elected as Senate Majority Leader, we could see an introduction of a marker bill before the end of the year.
- **Incoming Senate HELP Committee Chair:** Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA), current Senate HELP Committee Ranking Member, will hold the Chairman's gavel beginning in January. While Sen. Cassidy has had 340B reform in his sights for a long time, his reform priorities differ from those proposed by soon-to-be Majority Leader Thune. Regardless, ACH will continue meeting with Congress to push policy changes to protect the 340B program for health centers and lay the groundwork for the 119th Congress to view 340B reform as a non-negotiable priority.
- **Rebate Model:** Recently, [Bristol-Myers Squibb \(BMS\) and Sanofi have](#) become the latest pharmaceutical companies to pursue lawsuits against HRSA in federal court to implement rebate modes that the agency has not approved. Worth noting, [Johnson & Johnson's recent rebate model](#) was much smaller in scope - applicable only to hospitals for two drugs in the programs; BMS and Sanofi's models go much further and include community health centers and other grantees. Earlier this summer, [nearly 200 Members of Congress](#) urged HHS to prevent the burdens on patients and providers caused by these rebate models. ACH's Stephanie Krenrich, SVP of Policy and Government Affairs, [responded to these rebate models last week in the 340B Report](#), noting, "Any model which requires health centers to pay out of pocket for costly drugs and wait for a pharmaceutical company to adjudicate claims under a shroud of secrecy undermines

the premise of the program. This ‘credit’ approach is especially harmful to community health centers because it has the potential to impact patient access, the revenue cycle, and in-house and contract pharmacy arrangements.”

- **340B Learning Collaborative:** ACH launched its [340B Learning Collaborative](#) last month, welcoming 16 members from seven states to Washington, DC for a convening to discuss process and policy related to the 340B program. We are grateful to Equiscript, LLC for their support in making this Learning Collaborative possible! Check out [ACH's blog](#) for more information on the two-day event.
- **Call To Action:** As the 118th Congress winds down and the 119th Congress is sworn in, it's more important now than ever to contact your [member of Congress](#) and, describe in detail, the importance the 340B Program has for your health centers' ability to provide services otherwise not available. As a reminder, [ACH recently released a special report titled "The Critical Role of 340B at FQHCs."](#) Resources for contacting your members of Congress can be found on our [grassroots advocacy page](#), which we encourage you to share with your representatives.

### **Value-Based Care**

- Last month, ACH held its quarterly meeting with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) leaders to discuss the future of Value-Based Care ACO Models and potential Medicaid models as we head into a new administration. In particular, ACH relayed feedback from our five participating members in the Making Care Primary (MCP) model and ways CMMI can make future models more accessible and worthwhile for FQHCs to participate.
- In early November, ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly participated on a virtual panel for a webinar hosted by the University of Pennsylvania on advancing value-based care in community health centers. [Watch the full panel recording and read the summary article.](#)
- As a reminder, [ACH compiled an extensive list of VBC materials and resources exclusively for our members.](#) We hope you find this helpful, and we look forward to continuing to expand our role and influence in creating value-based care arrangements that benefit health centers and the patients they serve.

### **Health Equity**

- Recently, ACH joined the [Primary Care Collaborative \(PCC\)](#) to amplify the role of community health centers and their fundamental role in providing high-quality primary care to tens of millions of Americans. We continue to provide updates on our work with PCC and ways we can collaborate to provide care for those who face financial, geographical, and socioeconomic barriers to leading healthy lives.
- **\*ACTION ITEM\*** ACH has launched a [new grassroots initiative](#) to re-engage with Members of Congress on [H.R. 1072, the Health Center Community Transformation Hub Act](#), introduced by Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY). The bill will require re-introduction next Congress, so ACH is working to build more robust support on the Hill now. Thank you in advance for your efforts, and please let us know if you have any questions!

### **FQHC Workforce**

- The ACH-led [Developing the Community Health Workforce Act](#), soon to be introduced by Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-CA), has been finalized by the House's Legislative Counsel, and we are actively working to

find a Republican co-sponsor. We have lots of leads, but please contact [Molly Grady](#) if you have a Republican office you are close with that you think might be interested in working with us on this bill.

- ACH, in partnership with the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, is in the early stages of creating a coalition of advocacy groups centered solely around policy solutions to address workforce shortages and other workforce issues in rural and underserved areas. We expect this coalition to be officially launched in early 2025.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- ACH has continued to work with Rep. Nanette Barragan's office (D-CA) to introduce the *Emergency Preparedness for Underserved Populations Act*. We hope to identify a Republican co-sponsor and introduce the bill before the end of the year.
- Last month, [ACH called on the Biden administration](#) to include dedicated funding for community health centers in any disaster supplemental request it sends to Congress. Since then, [President Biden requested nearly \\$100B](#) in supplemental disaster aid, [which includes \\$260 million to HRSA](#) to support health center infrastructure needs and ensure continuity of access to care in impacted areas. ACH will continue to urge members to include this supplemental funding in any end-of-year package.

### **Other News from Across the Federal Government**

#### **The White House**

- **Anti-Obesity Medication:** Last week, the [Biden Administration proposed a new rule to expand coverage of anti-obesity medications, including GLP-1s, for those with Medicare and Medicaid](#). Under current rules, anti-obesity medications are only covered for certain conditions, like diabetes; [this new proposal](#) expands access to these medications for obesity, which is widely recognized as a disease.

#### **Health Resources and Services Administration**

- **World AIDS Day:** In recognition of World AIDS Day, [HRSA announced a record-breaking 90.6 percent](#) of people with HIV receiving medical care through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program are virally suppressed, exceeding national suppression rates. New Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program data can be accessed [here](#). Also, read [the Biden Administration's proclamation on World AIDS Day](#).
- **Transitions in Care for Justice-Involved Individuals:** Last week, [HRSA released a Policy Information Notice \(PIN\)](#) providing updated policy guidance clarifying the circumstances under which health centers may provide certain health services to incarcerated or detained individuals expected or scheduled for release within 90 calendar days.
- **Primary Care for Reentering the Community after Incarceration:** Last month, [HRSA awarded nearly \\$52 million in awards](#) for more than 50 FQHCs ([including several ACH members!](#)) to increase access to primary care for people soon to be released from incarceration and reentering the community. These awards align with the White House's ["Second Chance Initiative"](#) to support justice-involved individuals before their release to address health risks during re-entry.
- **NHSC National Advisory Council:** HRSA is still looking for members to join the National Advisory on the National Health Service Corps to help address healthcare delivery needs in underserved areas. [Clinicians](#)

[and health officials with a background in primary care, oral health, or mental/behavioral health are encouraged to apply.](#) The deadline for submitting nominations, including self-nominations, is December 6.

## **Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services**

- **New ACA Enrollments:** As ACA open enrollment continues, [CMS announced that nearly 988,000](#) consumers who do not currently have health care coverage through the individual marketplace have signed up for a plan for 2025 coverage so far. The open enrollment period on HealthCare.gov began November 1st and ends January 15th, 2025. [This year, CMS announced a handful of policies to increase coverage access and affordability.](#)
- **Kidney Transplant Access:** CMS recently finalized a rule to establish a new, six-year mandatory model aimed at increasing access to kidney transplants, improving the quality of care for those seeking a transplant, and reducing disparities among individuals undergoing the transplant process. Read the [final rule](#) and CMS' Increasing Organ Transplant Access Model [fact sheet](#).
- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD):** On November 19th, [CMS issued a state Medicaid director letter](#) with guidance addressing the extension of Medicaid coverage of services to treat substance use disorders, the permanency of the mandatory benefit for medication-assisted treatment, and medical assistance for individuals who are patients in eligible institutions for mental diseases in which Medicaid benefits generally are not otherwise covered.
- **National Influenza Week:** CMS' Office of Minority Health marked [National Influenza Week \(Dec 2-6\)](#) by highlighting vaccine disparities and encouraging everyone to get their flu shot. Visit their [Immunization and Vaccine Resources](#) page for additional information to raise awareness this flu season.
- **Medicare Open Enrollment:** Medicare-eligible beneficiaries can [join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage \(Part C\) or Medicare drug plan \(Part D\)](#) through December 7th.

## **Congress**

- **PBM Reform:** According to an [exclusive from Politico's 'Inside Congress,'](#) Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) are teaming up on a bipartisan bill to abolish pharmacy benefit managers.
- **HELP Committee:** This week, the Senate HELP Committee [will review the FDA's efforts to combat diabetes and obesity](#) through the food and beverage industries.
- **Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic:** This week, the Select Subcommittee [concluded its two-year investigation](#) into the COVID-19 pandemic and released a final report titled ["After Action Review of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Lessons Learned and a Path Forward."](#)
- **Safety-Net Hospitals:** This week, Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY) [led a bipartisan group of lawmakers in a letter to House Leadership](#) urging them to include the "Save our Safety-Net Hospitals Act" in a year-end package. [The bill](#) addresses the modification to the formula that calculates an individual's hospital disproportionate share hospital (DSH) allocation in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 that excludes Medicare-Medicaid dually-eligible individuals in their DSH caps and will substantially reduce payments to safety-net hospitals.
- **119th Congressional Calendar:** Today, Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) released the [2025 House Calendar](#) for the first year of the 119th Congress.

- [9 States Poised to End Coverage for Millions if Trump Cuts Medicaid Funding](#), KFF Health News
- [In Hyde Park, Residents Push for a Long-Awaited Dream - A Community Health Center](#), The Boston Globe
- [Replacing McConnell? Someone Reserves Senate 2026 Web Domains for 6 Prominent Kentuckians](#), Lexington Herald-Leader
- [HIV Prevention Pills Should be Free, But Insurers are Still Charging](#), Washington Post
- [Black Americans Still Suffer Worse Health. Here's Why There's So Little Progress](#), KFF Health News
- [Private Medicare Insurers are Likely to Benefit in Trump's New Administration](#), STAT
- [Nearly 30% of US Drugstores Closed in One Decade](#), AP

## Upcoming Events of Interest

- **December 18:** [ACH Members-Only Office Hours](#), 12:00 - 1:00 PM (ET), *Virtual*.
- **March 18, 2025:** [ACH Virtual Hill Prep](#) in advance of Annual Member Meeting Hill Day, 12:00 - 1:00 (ET), *Virtual*.
- **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:

[Stephanie Krenrich](#), SVP, Policy & Government Affairs

[Molly Grady](#), Director, Policy & Government Affairs



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