



Member Newsletter

advocatesforcommunityhealth.org

December 2024

Dear ACH Member,

As we near the close of 2024, I want to thank you personally for your dedication to serving patients in your communities, for continuing to drive innovation, and for demonstrating the invaluable role of health centers in caring for our nation. Your compassion keeps us here at ACH motivated, and we're constantly inspired by the work you do every day.

A year marked with uncertainty reminded us of what matters most: ensuring that Congress knows the value and role health centers play in caring for their states and communities, what's needed to continue providing primary care for those most in need, and a vision of what can be with further investment and commitment to transformation.

We're looking back on the year with a sense of gratitude and accomplishment and looking forward to 2025 with a renewed sense of inspiration and purpose. This year, we were loud and clear about the vital need for continued investment and that health centers are poised to do even more with greater resources and support. I'm more energized than ever to continue our unrelenting advocacy continues into the New Year.

Thank you for entrusting us with work that matters and helping us to cast light on the many opportunities to reach further despite challenges.

As always, please [let me know](#) if there are things I can do to help – I love hearing from you, and we are committed to supporting your needs and vision. I look forward to working with you soon.

With gratitude,

Amanda Pears Kelly
CEO, Advocates for Community Health

Urgent Call to Action: CHC Funding Increase in Year-End Congressional Package Stalled

As you have likely heard, the Congressional continuing resolution and year-end package are stalled pending further negotiation, and we are now at risk of a government shutdown if funding is not continued by Friday. The package contains several important provisions for health centers, including two years of mandatory funding through the Community Health Center Fund, and ACH is gravely concerned about the impact of Congress's inaction on health centers and their patients. We

remain in close contact with key Congressional staff, and we are tracking the situation closely and will be sure to keep you updated as conversations continue.

In the event of a government shutdown, in the short term we anticipate minimal disruption to health center operations, although the risk grows the longer the shutdown lasts. Health centers can continue to draw down funds that you have been awarded, EHB will remain up and running, and Medicare and Medicaid will continue to pay for services, although there might be a slight delay in claims processing. During a shutdown, HRSA and other HHS agencies will operate at roughly 54% of their normal staffing levels.

Call to Action: It is critically important that you and your staff email AND call your members of Congress, both Senators and Representatives, and tell them that it is imperative that Congress act now to ensure that any legislative package that is voted on contains the reauthorization of the Community Health Center Fund that was agreed upon by democratic and republican leaders, and that they do everything in their power to avoid a government shutdown. We have posted a [template email](#) for this purpose in our [Grassroots Advocacy Center](#).

Please [let us know](#) if we can provide any additional information, and thank you for all you do.

Visit Our Grassroots Advocacy Center

ACH Policy Priorities in Action

ACH Urges Congress to Address CHC Challenges

Recent research and studies demonstrate that health centers save money for patients and the government. In fact, [according to the Congressional Budget Office](#), a \$1.8B annual increase in the Health Center Program would produce a \$3.4B 10-year savings for the government.

HEALTH CENTERS SAVE MONEY

Health center patients have lower annual health care utilization and spending overall according to recent studies and CBO estimates.

Patient Population	Primary Care Utilization	Specialty Care Utilization	Total Medicaid Spending Per Patient
Adult	13% ↑	10% ↓	1,411 ↓
Pediatric	20% ↑	15% ↓	\$741 ↓

A \$1.8B annual increase in the Health Center Program would produce a **\$3.4B, 10-year savings** to the government, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Sources:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37962396>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38331758>
<https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-02/s2840.pdf>



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ACH sent a letter to Congress earlier this month urging Congressional leadership to include health center funding and legislation in any end-of-year package.

Specifically, ACH asked Congress for the following:

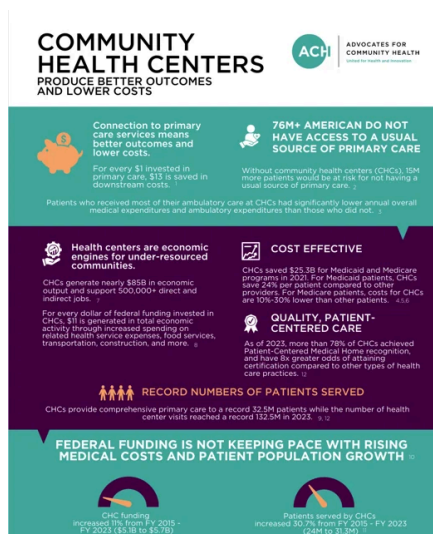
1. Reauthorization of the Community Health Center Fund for two years at \$5.8 billion per year. This funding expires on December 31, 2024.
2. Passage of a disaster supplemental funding bill that provides dedicated funding for community health centers to recover from recent natural disasters.

3. Reauthorization of the National Health Service Corps mandatory funding stream (NHSC) at \$950 million per year for two years and an increase in funding for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program to \$300 million per year for five years.

[Read the letter](#)

Infographic: Community Health Centers Produce Better Outcomes and Lower Costs

Federal funding for health centers is not keeping pace with rising medical costs and patient population growth.



[Download the Infographic](#)

340B Report: AbbVie Will Require Grantees to Submit Claims Data Starting Jan. 1; Grantee Representatives Criticize Move

ACH was recently interviewed for an article which states that AbbVie will expand its contract pharmacy restrictions with new claims data reporting requirements for 340B grantee covered entities beginning Jan. 1. ACH's SVP of Policy & Government Affairs Stephanie Krenrich said ACH recognizes the need for compliance with the 340B statute and is advocating for policy proposals that would increase accountability and transparency for covered entities.

[Read the Article](#)



ACH in the News

340B Report: ACH & NACHC Join Forces to Urge Congress for HC Funding, Leaving 340B Differences Aside

ACH's Amanda Pears Kelly and NACHC's Kyu Rhee, MD, MPP, [recorded a joint video](#) this month to urge lawmakers to prioritize health center patients.

[Read the Article](#)

Programming News and Events

Save the Date! CHC Best Practices Showcase in Denver

New in 2025 by membership request, ACH is bringing together member health center leaders in Denver on October 6-7, 2025 for in-depth discussions on innovation and sharing best practices in the Health Center Program. The theme of this event is "Innovations in Health Care Access." Speakers will include those leading health care innovation and driving the Health Center Program of the future. Please look for a call for abstracts coming soon!



[Learn more](#)

New Webinar Opportunity: ACH's Revamped Policy Priorities for 2025

Please join us on [January 22, 2025 at Noon \(ET\)](#), for a webinar open to all that will cover how ACH plans to advocate for community health centers and the patients they serve in the new year.

[Register Now](#)

Register Now: Secure Early Bird Rate for Our 4th Annual Member Meeting

Register **before February 28** to receive the early-bird rate and save! To ensure a comfortable stay, please book your hotel accommodations by **Monday, March 3, 2025**.

[Register Now](#)

Lone Star Circle of Care Receives \$100K Grant for Innovative AI Medical Coding Solution

In collaboration with UnitedHealthcare Community & State, ACH recently [announced](#) that Lone Star Circle of Care (LSCC) is one of two recipients of a \$100,000 grant to invest in emerging technologies for community health centers.

Dr. Tracy Angelocci, LSCC's Senior Advisor for Clinical Innovation and Integration, said, "Thanks to the award from Advocates for Community Health, Lone Star Circle of Care will implement a new AI medical coding solution to help clear our claims backlog, improve collections, and make coding more efficient. These improvements in coding efficiency enable us to focus more on delivering high-quality care to underserved populations while staying fully compliant with FQHC coding requirements."

[Read the Story](#)

New Funding Opportunities

We've just added new funding opportunities for FQHCs to our [Members-Only Portal](#), including details on NIH's Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity initiative.

Application Due Date: [February 28, 2025](#)

Agency: National Institutes of Health

Funding Amount: Up to \$500,000

Purpose: Soliciting applications to support unusually innovative intervention research addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) which, if successful, would have a major impact on preventing, reducing, or eliminating health disparities and advancing health equity.

[View All Grant and Funding Opportunities](#)

Membership News

NeighborHealth President & CEO Greg Wilmot Shares What to Expect in 2025

"We need to continue to look at our data in healthcare in order to really close the health equity gaps that exist. That is going to be—or needs to be—an ongoing focus of the industry: focusing on the data and letting the data bring us to effective solutions that can help close equity gaps in vulnerable communities," said Wilmot. [Read the article](#)

7 ACH Members Receive HRSA Grants to Help People Released from Prison

Seven ACH members have received HRSA funding to provide health services to individuals soon to be released from prison to support their healthy return to the community. Congratulations to Cherokee Health Systems, Cumberland Family Medical Center, Denver Health, Mariposa Community Health Center, Peninsula Community Health Services, Presbyterian Medical Services, and Unity Health Care! [Read more](#)

ACH Joins Primary Care Collaborative

ACH has joined the Primary Care Collaborative (PCC), which aims to unify and engage diverse stakeholders in promoting policies and sharing best practices that encourage the growth of comprehensive, whole-person primary care.

ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly has served as an advisor to the PCC Working Group this year, providing the health center perspective. PCC was founded in 2006 and represents a broad coalition that includes patient and consumer groups, primary care practices, clinician specialty societies, payers and insurers, employers and purchasers, tech and pharma.

"Many health center providers desire to treat patients more holistically," said Amanda. "Yet, the systems and structures that support most primary care in the U.S. do not provide them the tools and reimbursement to ask patients about and address the underlying social drivers of health."

"I look forward to making strides to break through these barriers."

[Learn more about the PCC](#)

ACH Committee Applications to Open in January



Questions? Please contact Director of Grassroots Advocacy & Membership [Sami Noble](#).

ACH invites all members and their leadership to provide expertise by joining its Policy Advisory Committees for the 2025 year. Applications will open in January.

Participation Eligibility Includes:

- Current employment with an ACH member health center.
- Ability to attend at least 2 meetings per year
- Willingness to communicate regularly with other members, ACH staff, and Board members.
- Commitment to serve in the position for an initial one-year term, with the possibility of appointment for a second term.
- Interest in collaborating with other ACH committee members.

Member Best Practices Spotlight

Legacy Community Health - Houston, TX

Legacy Community Health fills between 1,500 and 2,000 prescriptions daily to send out and distribute at its three retail pharmacies. Legacy's patients can also receive their prescriptions in the mail at no cost, a key benefit for those who might otherwise struggle to cover shipping costs.

To meet this high demand, Legacy receives automation support from several large robots, which weigh, count, and fill many common prescriptions, and label and coalesce prescriptions in preparation for distribution.

"It was impressive to see how quickly these machines count out and measure medications to ensure accuracy," ACH's Director of Grassroots Advocacy & Membership Sami Noble shared about her recent visit to Legacy. "Couriers then pick up and distribute these prescriptions to Legacy's other clinics three times a day."

These robots can almost do it all, but they still need a hand from Legacy employees - approximately 25 pharmacy techs and pharmacists work onsite to ensure quality control and review.



Must-Read Articles

Two new health centers are planned for Staten Island - one is the size of half a football field. The facilities will be operated by the Community Health Center of Richmond. [Read more](#)

Americares awards \$1M to restore access to care for Hurricane Helen survivors. Twenty-eight nonprofits providing free or low-cost care to survivors in need are receiving funding. [Read more](#)

What are FQHCs looking for in their CEOs? According to this report, it's healthcare innovation. The report also noted common themes among FQHC CEOs. [Read more](#)



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Advocates for Community Health, 1575 I St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005

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