



Member Newsletter

advocatesforcommunityhealth.org

January 2025

Dear ACH Member,

What a long two weeks it has been. A presidential inauguration, a torrent of policymaking, continued confusion over implementing the freeze in federal funding, and a general recalibration of the political landscape. Additionally, Congress has so much on its plate: confirming President Trump's nominees, sorting out a government funding plan, avoiding a default on our debt, sending disaster aid to California, and developing reconciliation bills, and to say nothing of finding a way to work together, particularly given the tight margins in the House and Senate.

For health centers, we know the challenges that this new era brings, contending with new leadership at the federal level, new directives that impact your centers, patients, and communities, and determining how best to move forward with the interests of your patients in mind.

This is a time filled with peril but also promise, and it is up to those in power to reach across the aisle and work together for the good of the country. That is why our advocacy for what health centers need remains essential as we share why health centers continue to serve as a key bipartisan solution to many of the challenges our country faces.

I look forward to seeing many of you next week in Washington, DC. The importance of advocacy has never been clearer. Next week's Hill meetings will undoubtedly be a meaningful opportunity to establish a dialogue with new members of Congress and deepen relationships with those you've known for years. Now is the time to make the case that the long-term sustainability of the Health Center Program is critical to meeting the growing demand for care and to meeting this moment as a nation.

With gratitude,

[Amanda Pears Kelly](#)

CEO, Advocates for Community Health

The Latest From DC

What We Know About the Federal Funding Freeze

On Tuesday, the White House OMB issued a memo [rescinding its memo on Monday that ordered all agencies to freeze federal grant funding](#). Soon after, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt [released a statement](#) saying it was:

“NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze. It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo...The Executive Orders issued by the President on funding reviews remain in full force and effect and will be rigorously implemented by all agencies and departments. This action should effectively end the court case and allow the government to focus on enforcing the President’s orders on controlling federal spending. In the coming weeks and months, more executive action will continue to end the egregious waste of federal funding.”

This means that while the initial freeze has been lifted, future restrictions could still be implemented. Unfortunately, there is continued confusion around the scope and implementation of this policy.

ACH is staying in close contact with congressional contacts and other relevant stakeholders to advocate aggressively for swift resolution for health centers to ensure access to grant funding is not paused or disrupted.

For now, we are reasonably confident that health centers should have normal access to federal funds. Please [reach out to us](#) if you cannot access grant funds through PMS or other government sources. We are also confident that the Administration will continue to evaluate federal grant programs for compliance with President Trump’s executive orders on DEI, gender-affirming care, and other issues. We will keep you posted as we learn more about how these actions may impact community health centers and their patients.

Given the unpredictability of federal funding, ACH urges you to inform your members of Congress about the importance of protecting health centers and their patients.

Call to Action: Tell Congress to Lift the Freeze in Federal Funding for Health Centers

As the new President and Administration implement a strategy to administer government programs as they see fit, these oversight efforts must be done precisely to ensure patients have access to care. Unfortunately, even with the best intent, this type of funding freeze can do tremendous harm.

This week, a federal judge in the District of Columbia temporarily blocked the order in response to a lawsuit filed that argued that the directive violated the First Amendment and a law governing how executive orders are to be rolled out.

The judge said she would issue a more permanent decision on Feb. 3.

ACH has developed an [advocacy script](#) for you to use in phone or email conversations. We urge you to contact your members of Congress to let them know how a freeze in funding can impact your ability to serve health center patients.

[Visit Our Grassroots Advocacy Center](#)

ACH Policy Priorities in Action

ACH Featured in CBS News: White House Blames "Outage" for Locking Out Medicaid, Head Start, Health Centers from Funding Site

"Even with the best intentions, these funding freezes can do tremendous harm. And could be irreversible to some communities," said **ACH CEO Amanda Pears Kelly**. "What we're really talking about is a health center's ability to pay salaries."

Pears Kelly said that health centers often rely on being able to request money every other week through the system, drawing down their grant to pay bills and make payroll for their staff. Without the money, she warned many health centers facing already slim margins could be forced to trim staff or close their doors.

"When the system's down, and there's no one to talk to to understand what they need to do, and then on top of that there's an uncertain time to the delay, it's paralyzing," **said Pears Kelly**.

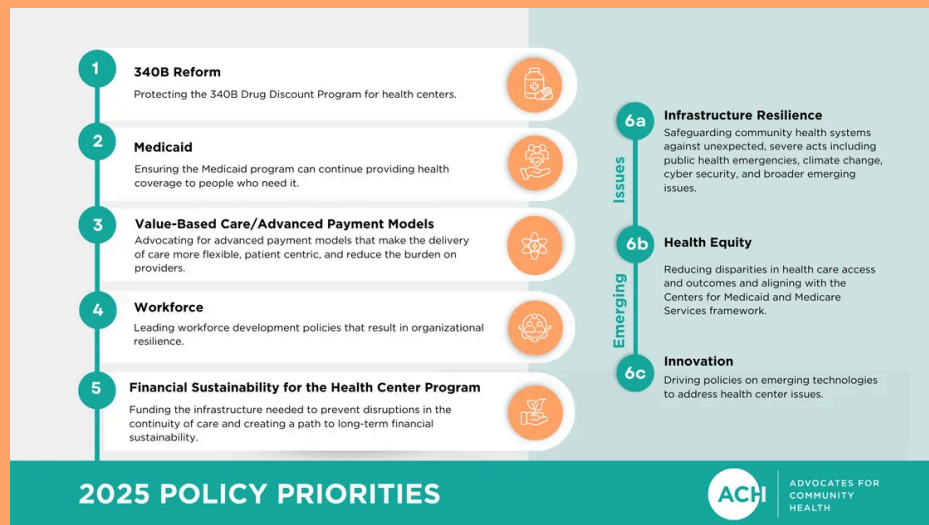
[Read the Article](#)

ACH 2025 Policy Priorities

On January 22, ACH held a webinar to cover how we plan to leverage a set of forward-thinking and bold policy priorities to meaningfully impact health centers and the patients they serve.

If you missed it, you can [watch the webinar](#) and/or [download the slides](#).

We will keep ACH members informed of our progress and additional opportunities to engage they arise, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to advance the Health Center Program mission.



HRSA Scope of Policy Manual Feedback Requested

On Wednesday, ACH held a special Members-Only Office Hours to learn more about the changes to the [HRSA Scope of Project Policy Manual](#). This session gave members the opportunity to provide feedback to ACH on how these changes might impact health centers to inform ACH's comments.

If you missed it, there's still time to send any comments/questions regarding the draft Health Center Program Scope of Project Policy Manual to [Molly Grady](#), Director of Policy & Government Affairs, by **Monday, February 3rd**.

Annual Member Meeting Hill Day Feedback Requested

As we begin scheduling Hill Day meetings with members of Congress and their staff on March 27th during our Annual Member Meeting, we'd like to understand your scheduling preferences.

Please provide us with your feedback for Hill Day by taking this short survey.

[Take the Hill Day Survey](#)

ACH Policy Advisory Applications Now Open



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

[Apply Now](#)

ACH invites all members and their leadership to join ACH's committees and help shape ACH's work. Please submit the form **by Friday, February 14**. ACH will notify all new members by email on Monday, March 3.

Policy advisory opportunities include:

Committees

- Executive Policy Advisory Committee (only open to CEOs)
- Membership Committee
- Programs Committee

Subcommittees

- 340B Reform Subcommittee
- Emerging Issues Subcommittee
- Financial Sustainability for Health Centers Subcommittee
- Payment Reform / Value-Based Care Subcommittee
- Workforce Subcommittee

Working Groups

- Grassroots Advocacy Working Group
- Medicaid Working Group

Programming News and Events



U.S. Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA), Chairman of the Committee on Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health

Countdown to ACH's Annual Member Meeting

With less than two months to go until our 4th Annual Member Meeting, we are pleased to announce that **U.S. Representative Buddy Carter (R-GA)**, Chairman of the Committee on Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health, will give the keynote address on March 26!

[Learn more about additional planned sessions](#) and register now to attend **before February 28** to receive the early-bird rate and save!

In addition, please book your hotel accommodations at the Royal Sonesta Dupont Circle **by Monday, March 3, 2025**. Reserving your room by this date will allow you to take advantage of our special discounted rate. You can make your reservation by visiting the [hotel's website](#) or by calling 202-448-1800 and mentioning "ACH Annual Member Meeting."

Register Now

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, CO 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 Funding Opportunities

We've just added new funding opportunities for FQHCs to our [Members-Only Portal](#) (using password: *ACHMember*), including details on California's new Healthcare Payments Database Study.

Application Due Date: **February 14, 2025**

Agency: California Health Foundation

Funding Amount: Up to \$500,000 in the spring 2025 and another \$500,000 in the spring of 2026

Purpose: This RFP is intended to identify an initial set of up to five grantees for awards that will be announced in March 2025. Applications from a broad group of researchers are welcome, including those who are earlier in their careers, those who self-identify with a demographic group currently underrepresented in health services research, and those who research interests include health care affordability challenges among historically disadvantaged groups.

[View All Grant and Funding Opportunities](#)

Membership News

ACH Members Receive HRSA Grants to Expand Hours at Community Health Centers

"No one should have to delay or skip a trip to the doctor because of work or school. The millions of Americans who can't miss their daytime work shift, whose kids are in school, who have limited child care, or who face transportation challenges deserve the same access to quality care," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra.

Congratulations to ACH members who received additional HRSA funding to expand their hours of operation and improve patients' access to health care services! [Read more](#)

Best Practices Spotlight: Jordan Valley Community Health Center

[Jordan Valley Community Health Center \(JVCHC\)](#), Missouri's largest FQHC, has begun taking walk-in appointments at all nine locations across southwest Missouri thanks in part to a \$1 million investment over two years to improve access to health care services.

Walk-in appointments will provide services like dental, primary care, vision, and substance use disorder treatment. They allow a patient to visit any Southwest Missouri JVCHC clinic without a scheduled appointment.

“By offering a variety of walk-in services across all locations, we are continuing to make visiting a health provider more convenient while responding to the needs of our community,” said Melissa Wehner, vice president of operations. “We are committed to providing high-quality, accessible care to all.”

Walk-in services include behavioral health and medicine, dental, express care, foster care support and resources, pediatrics, women’s health, and vision.

Must-Read Articles

A shortage of 20,200 to 40,400 primary care doctors is projected by 2036. Can medical schools funnel more doctors into the primary care pipeline? [Read more](#)

Greater access to community health centers may improve outcomes for Medicaid recipients and adults without insurance who have end-stage kidney disease, according to this study. [Read more](#)

A recent survey by the Connecticut Dept of Social Services found that the state falls dramatically short when it comes to reimbursing health centers for care under the Medicaid program. [Read more](#)



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

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