



ADVOCATES FOR
COMMUNITY
HEALTH

America's Chronic Disease Crisis

ISSUE BRIEFS



America at a Tipping Point

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in the United States—and they're getting worse.



More than **6 in 10 adults** live with at least one chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, or asthma. Nearly **4 in 10** live with two or more.



These conditions account for 90% of our nation's \$4.5 trillion in annual health care spending.

Prevention is Lagging

Despite overwhelming evidence that prevention and early intervention work, our system remains focused on crisis care.

Only a fraction of spending goes toward primary care, prevention, and community-based interventions, even though these strategies can reverse these chronic disease trends.



The Ripple Effects on Every Community

- **Rising Costs:** Chronic disease drives unsustainable increases in health care spending for families, employers, and taxpayers.
- **Lost Productivity:** Chronic conditions cause millions of missed workdays and early retirements, straining the economy.
- **Health Inequities:** Low-income, rural, and minority populations bear the brunt of chronic disease, facing barriers to prevention, early diagnosis, and consistent treatment.
- **Fragmented Care:** Many patients bounce between hospitals, specialists, and ERs without coordinated, continuous care.

The Bottom Line

Many chronic diseases are preventable and manageable—but only if we invest in accessible community health centers.



Community Health Centers: A Solution that Works

The Frontline Against Chronic Disease

Community health centers (CHCs) serve nearly 34 million Americans across every state, providing comprehensive care where people live and work. They are uniquely positioned to prevent and manage chronic disease where it matters most.

How CHCs Make a Difference

- **Integrated Care:** Medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services in one place.
- **Prevention-Focused:** Screenings, education, and wellness programs reduce disease progression.
- **Trusted Community Partners:** Deep local ties improve access and adherence.
- **Team-Based Approach:** Nurses, community health workers, and care coordinators support patients every step of the way.
- **Proven Outcomes:** Health centers achieve better control of blood pressure, diabetes, and other chronic conditions than national averages—despite serving high-risk populations.

Root Causes Addressed

CHCs connect patients to food, housing, transportation, and social supports to tackle the social determinants that fuel chronic illness

The Way Forward

To combat chronic disease effectively, we must support CHCs through:

- Stable, long-term funding
- Workforce development
- Protection of the 340B Drug Pricing Program
- Investments in innovations in issues like telehealth and AI

\$1 invested in CHCs =

\$13 saved in downstream health care costs

Community health centers are not just treating disease - they are building healthier communities.