



STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER WORKFORCE

THE ISSUE

Community Health Centers (CHCs) provide primary care to nearly 34 million patients, yet workforce shortages threaten access to care—particularly in rural and underserved communities. Primary care is essential to prevention, chronic disease management, and early treatment.

Approximately 92 million people live in a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), and 64 million live in a dental health HPSA. The federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) projects a national shortage of 70,610 full-time primary care physicians and 17,590 dentists by 2038, widening the gap between patient need and provider capacity.

A strong CHC workforce is essential to access, outcomes, and health system resilience.

THE OPPORTUNITY

ACH envisions a strong CHC workforce that reflects the communities it serves and is prepared to meet current and future needs. With targeted federal support, CHCs can strengthen workforce pathways, invest in infrastructure, and support high-quality, patient-centered care.

This requires:

- **Professional development** and career advancement opportunities
- **Workforce resilience** and mental health supports
- **Sustainable workloads** and retention strategies
- **Continuous learning** and leadership opportunities

POLICY PRIORITIES

ACH urges Congress to strengthen and sustain the community health center workforce by:

1. Advance the *Developing the Community Health Workforce Act* (H.R. 8629) to:

improve recruitment and retention through increased loan repayment; create CHC workforce pipelines; expand CHC-hospital GME partnerships; and grow the behavioral health workforce.

2. Expand Workforce Pathways

- Invest in and increase funding for the *National Health Service Corps (NHSC)* to \$950 million per year.

- Support college pathway and grow-your-own partnerships.

3. Improve Recruitment & Retention

- Expand and modernize loan repayment and scholarship programs.
- Ensure predictable federal funding for competitive compensation.

4. Support Workforce Resilience & Innovation

- Invest in burnout prevention, leadership training, and flexible staffing models

OUR ASK:

Congress must increase funding for the National Health Service Corps to \$950 million per year so health centers can recruit, retain, and support the workforce patients depend on—today and in the future.