

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell,

Thank you for taking the priorities of Community Health Centers (CHCs) into account as you put together COVID-19 response packages. We write today to urge you to include robust funding for Community Health Centers in the next COVID-19 package and ensure that those funds can be used to make up for lost revenues as these centers have reduced services in response to federal guidance and to conserve in demand supplies of personal protection equipment.

Community Health Centers in Wisconsin and across the nation are feeling the effects of falling revenues even as they remain on the frontlines of the coronavirus epidemic. A scenario planning analysis of Wisconsin Community Health Centers conducted by BKD, a national leader in financial accounting, indicates that this impact could range from a revenue loss of \$85 million, as a best-case scenario, to a \$205 million revenue loss in the worst-case scenario. We cannot impress upon you the magnitude of financial strain that this will put on Wisconsin Health Centers. Without additional action and support, CHCs will not be able to continue operations. While even the financially healthiest centers will need significant investments and support to return to previous operation, those previously operating on tight margins with little cushion may require even more support in order to continue services to communities without access to other health care options. Community Health Centers across the nation have estimated that they need at least \$7.6 billion in emergency funding to reemploy staff, maintain services, and expand outreach in response to COVID-19.

Wisconsin Health Centers greatly appreciate the lifeline of nearly \$15 million that has been distributed from the Families First Act and CARES Act. Several Health Centers have also been able to leverage loans through the Paycheck Protection Program. These resources, while significant and appreciated still fall short of “keeping the lights on” beyond the next 6-8 weeks. Additionally, these funds were not explicitly authorized to help address revenue loss, and the

separate fund created to help hospitals, providers, and other health facilities to address revenue loss has yet to provide support to these centers.

Wisconsin CHCs have made significant operational changes in response to COVID-19. Health Centers and health care providers are doing all they can to provide care and support to members of their communities during these difficult times. Milwaukee Community Health Centers recently expanded COVID-19 diagnostic testing across seven locations. This was made possible with support from the state and county Emergency Operations Centers coupled with contributions from other community partners, including local health systems. The state noted that partnering with community health centers on these efforts is beneficial because of their strong “networks within the community and with other social service organizations” that can help ensure access to support additional testing.

In addition to expanding COVID-19 testing, all 17 Health Centers now offer a form of virtual visits to their patients. These virtual visits include medical care, behavioral health/SUD services, telehealth dental, and outreach and enrollment services. All Health Centers in the state are providing in-person visits for emergency and urgent services including dental, medical, and behavioral health as well as some limited non-urgent care.

While Community Health Centers need an immediate infusion of cash, they are also facing long term funding uncertainty as well. The CARES Act extended mandatory funding for Health Centers through November 30, 2020, the latest in a series of short-term extensions. These short-term funding solutions adversely impact the centers’ ability to respond to the needs of their community, including their ability to respond to the current public health crisis. We encourage leadership to look towards long-term funding solutions for Community Health Centers. While Health Centers fight to keep their doors open to serve the most vulnerable of patients, all of this effort is futile if a solution to long-term funding is not reached.

Now more than ever it is essential that Community Health Centers have all the necessary funds and equipment in order to keep their doors open, keep their health care workers employed, and provide care to all in need. Now is not the time for Health Centers to worry about how to stay open or worry about their ability to reopen. They are an integral part of our health care system and are critical in combatting the current pandemic. We encourage you to adequately fund Community Health Centers in the next COVID-19 response legislation.

Sincerely,




Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner Jr.  
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Senator



Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress