

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 23, 2019

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

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer:

We write today to express our strong support for the Community Health Center Fund (CHCF), and the funds it provides to Community Health Centers (CHCs) and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). It is essential that these vital programs receive strong and long-term funding at the levels outlined in H.R. 1943/S.962, the Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, we urge you to provide strong funding levels for the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program. We believe that Congress must immediately secure additional funding for these critical public health programs and urge swift action before November 21 to ensure continuous access to medical training and health care services for all who need it.

CHCs, THCGME, and NHSC have long enjoyed bipartisan support and play crucial roles in delivering primary and preventive health care to America's most underserved and vulnerable communities. Avoiding a funding lapse is vital for CHCs, which serve 28 million patients, including over 350,000 veterans, over 8 million children, and 1.4 million homeless patients, in thousands of rural, urban, and frontier communities nationally.<sup>2</sup> CHCs also employ more than 220,000 people across the country, produce nearly \$55 billion in economic activity, and saves our health care system more than \$24 billion per year.<sup>3</sup> In addition, they help patients access healthy and affordable foods, housing support, and transportation assistance, and they are critical to the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents. They have also been on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, providing substance use disorder and mental health treatment to patients in need.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act of 2019, H.R. 1943/S.962, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116th-congress/senate-bill/962>

<sup>2</sup> National Association of Community Health Centers, "United States Health Center Fact Sheet," [http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National\\_19-2.pdf](http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National_19-2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, National Association of Community Health Centers, "A Guide to a Vital Network of Care," [http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NACHC\\_Guide\\_Policy-Brief\\_web.pdf](http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NACHC_Guide_Policy-Brief_web.pdf)

The 56 Teaching Health Centers around the country, meanwhile, support more than 700 medical residents currently training to provide healthcare services to an estimated one million patients annually in underserved rural and urban communities. Over 80% of residents training in a teaching health center did so in a medically underserved or rural community.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the NHSC places thousands of medical professionals in the highest need areas of our country so they can provide primary medical, dental and mental and behavioral health services in underserved communities. These scholarships and loan repayment programs allow clinicians to provide care to more than 11 million people across the country.<sup>5</sup> Together, these programs serve as a crucial supply line to meet our nation's growing demand for primary care physicians.

Less than two years ago, Congress voted overwhelmingly to extend and increase funding for these three public health programs as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.<sup>6</sup> Now that the deadline is upon us again, we must act to provide a five-year extension of the Community Health Center, Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education, and National Health Service Corps programs. We urge you to provide strong funding increases over time – like those envisioned in H.R. 1943/S.962, the Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act. This will afford our health centers the predictability and stability they need to train and recruit providers, purchase equipment, expand services available to patients, and plan strategically to meet the current and future needs of patients.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

<sup>4</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration, "Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program," <https://blhw.hrsa.gov/grants/medicine/thcgme>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "National Health Services Corps Report to the Congress for the Year 2016," <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/organization/bureaus/blhw/reportstocongress/2016-nhsc-rfc.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Public Law 115-141; Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, Public Law 115-123



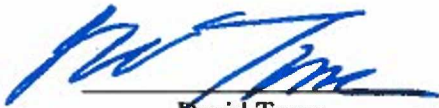


Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

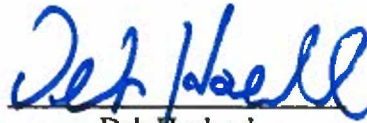


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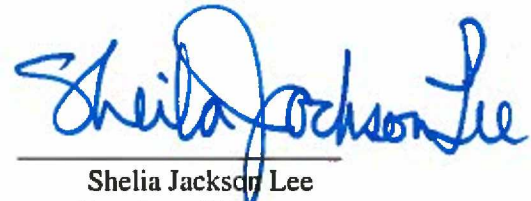
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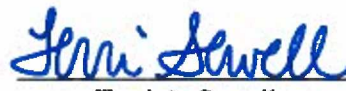
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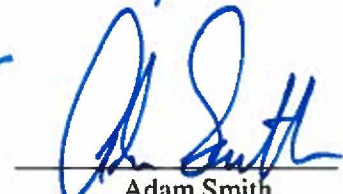
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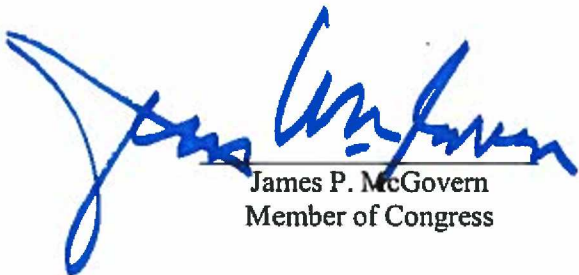
  
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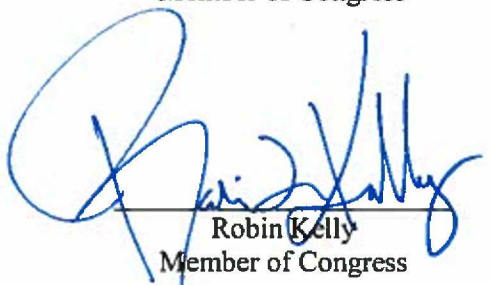
  
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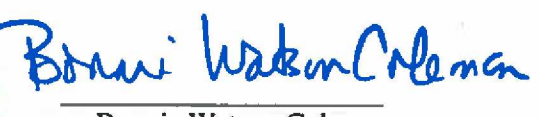
  
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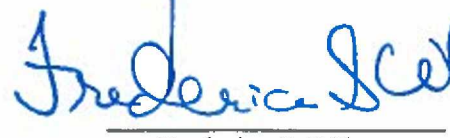
  
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