



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers®



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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PREPARED BY





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Framework Overview

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) is an organization reinvigorated. At a vital moment of opportunity for the community health movement and the people it serves, NACHC has committed itself to an expansive understanding of its role as a catalyst for change. What follows here is an adaptive strategic framework—collaboratively designed by our members, their patients, and a diverse group of experts in the field—that will enable NACHC to fully realize that role, even as the conditions in which our movement operates evolve.

The health care system in the United States has many flaws, including underinvestment in primary care, a clinical workforce crisis, and a system that perpetuates health disparities. Yet we—and our patients—know that isn't the full picture. The Community Health Center movement is a model of possibility for equity in access and health. And NACHC's purpose is to advocate for it, strengthen it, and champion it.

NACHC remains steadfast in the pursuit new, expanded, and reliable sources of funding for our health centers to advance our shared mission of achieving primary care access and equitable health outcomes for all. Each of the themes that follow supports these goals. Together, they align to create the conditions that can effect the lasting change we seek.

In the years ahead, this strategic framework will serve as the resilient structure that enables NACHC to lead health centers to become the nation's **employers, providers, and partners of choice—for all.**



How This Framework Was Built

At the beginning of 2024, NACHC began an intentional, facilitated process to solicit bold ideas from, and understand the pressing needs of, our key stakeholders—including Health Centers, Primary Care Associations and Health Center Controlled Networks, movement visionaries, community leaders, issue experts, and NACHC staff and Board members.

That extensive process yielded approximately 1,400 powerful ideas about the future of the health center movement, which have been carefully considered, synthesized, refined, prioritized, and formed into the Strategic Priorities that follow.

Collectively, these priorities form a resilient framework within which two significant things can occur.

First, they bolster NACHC's capacity as a catalytic and adaptive organization that is prepared to navigate a shifting landscape and guide the movement into a more just, equitable, and healthy future. Second, they seek to create the conditions and opportunity for our vast network of partners to enhance the way they conduct their own work.

In short, our future is being co-created by those who best understand our fullest potential.



Our Mission

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high-quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient-centered for all.



Our Vision

NACHC is the leading innovative change agent collaborating with affiliates and partners to advance Community Health Centers as the foundation of an equitable health care system free from disparities and built on accessible, patient-governed, high-quality, integrated primary care.



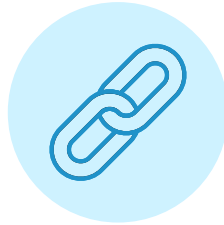
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NACHC Strategic Pillars



EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Center everything we do in a renewed commitment to equity and social justice



EMPOWERED INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthen and reinforce the infrastructure for leading and coordinating the Community Health Center movement, notably consumer boards and NACHC itself



SKILLED AND MISSION-DRIVEN WORKFORCE

Develop a highly skilled, adaptive, and mission-driven workforce reflecting the communities served



IMPROVED CARE MODELS

Update and improve care models to meet the evolving needs of the communities served



SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate new and strengthen existing mutually beneficial partnerships to advance the shared mission of improving community health



RELIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Secure reliable and sustainable funding to meet increasing demands for Community Health Center services

Tools for Action

This strategic framework consists of a carefully considered set of ambitious commitments for advancing the Health Center Movement. Fulfilling those commitments will require a set of detailed work plans—each with its own dedicated goals, strategies, and tactics. To that end, NACHC will pursue action using four core tools known collectively as SEPP.



SCIENCE

Conducting studies, seeking information, and publishing related research to uncover trends, new approaches, and data (including benchmarking reports) to demonstrate the value of health centers.



EDUCATION

Providing relevant, timely information to, and strategically communicating with, health center employees and stakeholders to help develop their capacity and foundation of knowledge, while raising awareness about the Health Center Movement.



PRACTICE

Positioning health centers to advance value through practices and programs that improve health outcomes, improve patient and staff experiences, reduce costs, and improve health equity.



POLICY

Improving legislation and policy that affect health centers and their patients and building relationships with policymakers and other key stakeholders to build awareness of, and support for, health centers.



EMPLOYER of Choice

It's time to create a paradigm shift in thinking about health care employment.

For too long, there has been a belief that top talent must either “do the right thing” at a personal cost or pursue financial success at the expense of ethical convictions. That must, can, and will change.

As we enter a new era, NACHC will develop strategies and spread best practices to educate, recruit, and retain a high-quality, resilient, diverse, and culturally competent workforce that represents the people we serve. The result will be that every health care worker won't simply see health centers as a viable career option...

They'll enthusiastically seek out our movement as their first and best choice.

EMPLOYER of Choice

Strategic Priorities

Improve the Workforce Team and Experience

We will develop strategies for measurably improving the satisfaction, engagement, and wellbeing of the Community Health Center workforce. Building on both existing research and new modes of workforce engagement, we will focus on developing and implementing best practices, setting clear and consistent expectations of employers, redesigning care models to improve the workplace, and leveraging our collective buying power to provide the comprehensive benefits and services that are essential for our workforce to thrive.

Enhance a Workforce Pathways

We will strategically build a flowing pathway of motivated, educated, and incentivized Community Health Center employees who reflect the diversity of patients and communities served. NACHC will support health centers in efforts to embrace their role as teachers and partners - using the philosophy of “grow your own” to foster a workforce recruited from and educated in partnership with local communities. By leveraging existing partnerships and forging powerful new ones to identify, strengthen, and scale effective training models, we will lead the effort to develop and educate the next generation of talent—a diverse, resilient, high impact workforce that is meaningfully reflective of the patients and communities we serve.

Wield the Power of New Technology

We will harness the power of ever-changing technological advancement to create efficiency, alleviate reporting burden, and empower the health center workforce. As new technologies (including AI) rapidly develop, NACHC will create an equity-centered tech strategy to understand and implement tools that support the health center workforce – with a commitment to securing resources and leveraging our collective buying power to make the best technologies accessible to all health centers.





PROVIDER of Choice

Patients make decisions about their health care not merely as a matter of preference or convenience, but also on the basis of trust—in quality, value, and outcomes.

We know that trust in the health care system and access to a usual source of primary care are in rare supply. At the same time, opportunity is abundant to reach the 100 million people in the United States who lack reliable access to primary care, and many more people who are dissatisfied with new care options that lack continuity and relationships with trusted providers.

Community Health Centers serve 1-in-11 people in the United States. We know that health centers, with sufficient resources, can and should be serving many more. NACHC is uniquely positioned to communicate that health centers are the best choice to deliver primary care and health equity for all.

As we work with urgency to build trust in all that our movement has to offer—especially our commitment to improving equitable health outcomes and reducing health disparities—NACHC will partner with health centers on improving the patient experience, improving population health, reducing costs, improving care team well-being, and promoting health equity for all.



PROVIDER of Choice

Strategic Priorities

Advance Equity and Excellence in Primary Care Quality

We will conduct research, develop strategies, and design resources that enable our health centers to ensure that everyone who engages with a CHC is left with a lasting impression of excellent primary care—measured through patient and employee experience, efficiency, and improved health outcomes with equity at the center. Achieving this goal will require the development and deployment of new payment and delivery models, data-driven standards, best practices, and resources that enable health centers to optimize participation in value-based care, achieve high quality health outcomes, and reduce health disparities.

Build Awareness of Health Centers as the Best Option for Primary Care

We will reinforce with every patient and health care stakeholder that Community Health Centers are the best option for primary care, effectively delivering on the *Quintuple Aim* through a uniquely local and innovative care model. By effectively, emphatically, and memorably telling the story and demonstrating the impact of the movement, we will raise awareness, build our capacity, and increase the number of patients we serve—while winning the hearts and minds of all who seek, support, or fund the highest quality care. The quality and value of Community Health Centers should no longer be health care’s “best kept secret”.

Advance and Promote Health Center Innovation

We will serve as ardent ambassadors of Community Health Centers as the best, most innovative part of the nation’s health system. We will support the exchange and expansion of the unique health center care model, including patient-majority governance, hyper-local community partnership, integration of services that promote health beyond the exam room, and a sliding fee model that expands access to care for all, regardless of income or insurance status. We will continue to bolster and empower patient-governed volunteer Boards of Directors to ensure community-based, strategic, and well-informed governance at every health center. With a focus on our model’s key differentiators, we will position Community Health Centers not only as powerful partners, but as the proven visionary leaders for the future of primary care and public health in the United States.



PARTNER of Choice

Health care mirrors the human body, finding harmony when a tremendously complex network of systems is precisely aligned.

To deliver exceptional primary care, achieve high quality health outcomes, and reduce health disparities in the United States, we must work to engineer alignment among key health care stakeholders, including patients, providers, payers, purchasers, policymakers, producers, and pioneers.

Community Health Centers are the only primary care delivery system that integrates medical, dental, vision, pharmacy, behavioral health, and enabling services for “whole person” health. Doing so requires constant innovation, bold imagination, and enduring tenacity—and finding resources with dedicated collaborators.

So, NACHC must position itself and health centers as the partner of choice for all who operate within the health care landscape.

PARTNER of Choice

Strategic Priorities

Build Resilience through Sustainable Funding

We will identify, secure and maximize diverse and sustainable funding streams for Community Health Centers to ensure payment for the value we provide to the health care system. By advocating for sufficient reimbursement, exerting collective influence on the design of value-based care models, protecting essential programs (like 340B, National Health Service Corps, Teaching Health Centers, and FTCA), establishing partnerships with payers, leveraging economies of scale, and advocating for maximal access to private, non-profit, and public grant funding, Community Health Centers will be bolstered to withstand economic and political shifts and so they can focus on what's most important: providing exceptional care to patients.

Leverage the Power of Advocacy and Education

On behalf of those we serve, we will set and lead a bold, proactive advocacy agenda that seeks transformative policy outcomes to strengthen the Community Health Center movement. We will seek out and deepen partnerships with mission-aligned organizations to build a stronger coalition of health center advocates across industry stakeholders and beyond, and in doing so, we will foster an inclusive nonpartisan community of support for our unrivaled value proposition. We will embolden and inspire all health center stakeholders, including health center patients, Patient Board members, and hundreds of thousands of employees, to raise their collective voice in advocacy for the health center mission.

Champion an Integrated Approach to TechQuity

We will develop an integrated strategy to leverage cutting-edge technology and data to advance health equity, unlocking new insights and aligning methods of knowledge sharing throughout the Health Center Movement. We will partner with trusted collaborators to track, analyze, and report on a wide spectrum of data for better understanding of patient experience, to support our workforce, promote efficiency, improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities, and educate partners across the health care landscape on the value that health centers deliver.

Enhance the Value of Membership

We will make strategic investments to strengthen NACHC to better serve health centers, ultimately enhancing the value and experience of membership. We will continue to deliver research to advance best practices and tell our story of impact, convene health center leaders to exchange knowledge and innovation, support education that empowers health center staff and Boards of Directors, and foster a unified collective voice for advocacy on behalf of the Health Center Movement. Using data-driven insights about member needs, we will strengthen our operations and offerings to ensure that NACHC membership is inclusive, empowering, impactful, that we are a Partner of Choice now and into the future.



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