**REPUBLICAN VERSION – STATE LEGISLATURE**

*This letter was written for Republican state legislators. If your state legislators are Republican, please place this letter on official letterhead, fill in the highlighted sections with information about your health center and mail the letter to his/her capitol office in Sacramento. Please send a copy of this letter via e-mail to* *advocacy@healthplusadvocates.org**. You may contact Ben Avey at* *ben@healthplusadvocates.org* *or (916) 503-9130 with any questions or comments.*

*FOR GREATEST IMPACT LETTERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY DECEMBER 22, 2016*

Date

The Honorable FIRST LAST

California State Assembly/Senate, XX District

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, ST ZIP

Dear Assemblymember/Senator LAST:

On behalf of {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} and the XXXX patients we serve, I write today to offer our partnership and assistance as the nation looks to make changes to the health care system in the coming year, changes that will require action in California. I am joined in this offer by our statewide advocacy organization, CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates, and 1,150 community health centers who serve more than 6.2 million patients each year in California.

For more than 50 years, private, non-profit community health centers like ours have helped solve the national challenge of low-cost access to care with innovative solutions at the local level. Since our founding, both Republican and Democratic policy makers have agreed that community health centers produce positive results. As local businesses, directed by boards comprised partially of people in the communities we serve, health centers deliver quality, affordable and cost-effective health care to thousands of your constituents.

{INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTH CENTER – WHO YOU SERVE, SERVICES PROVIDED, COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS ETC.}

We deliver these results in a way that reduces the overall cost of care in communities. Health centers save, on average, $2,371 (or 24 percent) in total spending per Medicaid patient when compared to other providers, according to a recent multistate study published in the American Journal of Public Health. According to a report by Capital Link, Federally Qualified Health Centers in California produce an annual cost savings of $4.4 billion in our state.

The benefit to our local economy is even greater. Statewide, community health centers have an $8 billion annual economic impact, including 58,234 direct and indirect jobs in low-income communities. At {INSERT HEALTH CENTER}, we currently employ XX people who earn fair wages and benefits that allow them to support their families and communities.

Since the implementation of the Medicaid expansion in California, {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} has seen an XX% increase in the number of patients we serve with XXXX patients walking through our doors last year. This includes a XX% increase in Medicaid beneficiaries who for the first time had access to comprehensive primary care and preventive care in their local community. In addition to medical, dental, and mental healthcare, our patients now have peace of mind in knowing that they will get the care they need.

With support from both Republicans and Democrats, community health centers have been the foundation of the Medicaid program in California for decades. Patients who are covered by Medicaid receive certain core benefits, including FQHC-covered services. California, and other states participating in Medicaid are required to offer FQHC-covered services. {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} has built a system of care to meet the specific needs of our local community and currently provides a variety of health services including {INSERT SERVICES}.

Health centers not only prevent chronic disease and illness, they reach beyond the walls of the exam room to address the factors that may cause it – such as lack of nutrition, poor mental health, homelessness or drug addiction.

We are reimbursed for the cost of the comprehensive care we deliver to eligible patients using a bundled rate called the prospective payment system (PPS). This system ensures that our doors remain open and that patients have access to care in their local community.

**Conclusion**

The expanded Medicaid program is essential to the mission of community health centers and by extension the health of local communities. It ensures access to care for the vulnerable people and communities we serve. We are offering our partnership and assistance as you look to reform these programs and ask that you keep these requests in mind:

1. The financial uncertainty of a wholesale repeal of the ACA without a viable replacement is very concerning for our patients and health centers alike. Please ensure that our patients retain access to the vital health care services we offer;
2. Please protect community health centers’ ability to provide healthcare access in our communities by ensuring that FQHCs remain a covered provider in the Medicaid program and retain the PPS reimbursement methodology that saves taxpayers money.

To further this conversation and help you learn more about our health center, we would be honored to invite you for a tour in December or January and will call your office to coordinate. Please feel free to contact us at E-MAIL or PHONE if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this letter and for your continued support of community health centers.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

 cc: CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates (advocacy@healthplusadvocates.org)