**DEMOCRATIC VERSION - CONGRESS**

*This letter was written for Democratic Members of Congress. If your Member of Congress is a Democrat, 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 office in Washington, DC. 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*

The Honorable FIRST LAST

DISTRICT, California

Member of Congress

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, ST ZIP

Dear Representative LAST:

On behalf of {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} and the XXXX patients we serve, I write today asking for your help defending the health care system that we have built together. I am joined in this request by our statewide advocacy organization, CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates, and 1,150 community health centers who serve more than 6.2 million patients each year – which is 1 in 7 Californians.

Specifically, we are concerned about proposals that promise to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and block grant the Medicaid program. These proposals threaten the health of the people and communities we both serve.

**The Affordable Care Act**

Thanks to the ACA, people are healthier. Communities are healthier. Parents can go to work, children can go to school, and tens of thousands of healthcare workers have good jobs that provide for their families.

Since the implementation of the ACA, {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 in a long 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 knowing that they will get the care they need.

The ACA had other benefits as well. {List other community and patient benefits including outreach and enrollment work, CalFresh enrollment, patient navigation services etc. }

The ACA has also supported the growth of good jobs in low-income communities. At {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} we have created XX new jobs since the ACA was implemented. {Describe the jobs and salary scale to show impact) (Describe economic impact of health center}

To ensure that newly insured people had access to healthcare services, the ACA provided community health centers with financial resources that were used to improve our state’s healthcare infrastructure. {INSERT HEALTH CENTER} was one of many health centers across the country to receive additional resources from the Bureau of Primary Health Care to {INSERT HOW MONEY IS BEING USED}.

**Community Health Centers and Medicaid**

Community health centers have been the foundation of the federal Medicaid program 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 deliver this comprehensive set of services under a bundled rate called the prospective payment system (PPS). This system ensures that patients receive the care they need while saving taxpayers on average, $2,371 (or 24 percent) in total spending per Medicaid patient when compared to other providers.

**Conclusion**

The ACA and Medicaid program are essential to the mission of community health centers and by extension the health of local communities. They ensure access to care for the vulnerable people and communities we both serve. We are asking you to stand up for health and healthcare today:

1. The financial uncertainty of a wholesale repeal of the ACA without a viable replacement is very concerning for our patients and the health centers alike. Please ensure that our patients retain access to the vital health care services we offer;
2. Protect the ACA, particularly the Medicaid expansion;
3. 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 ensures patients have access to comprehensive healthcare.

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)