

February XX, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We write to express our concern over funding for community health centers, which expired on September 30, 2017. We strongly urge you to reauthorize this funding in the next legislation to be signed into law.

Community health centers serve a vital function, providing affordable health care to our nation's most vulnerable citizens. They provide quality medical, dental, vision and behavioral health care to more than 27 million patients, including 330,000 of our nation's veterans and 8 million children, at over 10,000 sites nationwide. By offering preventative care, treating chronic conditions, and working to fight the opioid epidemic, community health centers are not only greatly improving the health and well-being of those they serve, they are also saving significant taxpayer dollars.

Without extension of the Community Health Center Fund (CHCF), community health centers will lose seventy percent of their funding. This will result in an estimated 2,800 site closures, the loss of 50,000 jobs, and approximately 9 million Americans losing access to their health care. Moreover, community health centers operate as small businesses and require a level of predictability to operate and respond to the needs of their communities. Since the expiration of the CHCF, community health centers have not been able to adequately plan for everything from staffing needs to securing loans for capital projects. In addition, the expiration of the National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education program threatens the ability of health centers to meet their workforce needs.

For more than fifty years, community health centers have experienced strong bipartisan support. In fact, twenty bipartisan senators cosponsor legislation which reauthorizes funding not only for community health centers but also for the National Health Service Corps.

We look forward to working with you to reach a bipartisan agreement to fund the community health center program and enable our community health centers to continue providing high quality and affordable care to those in need.

Sincere Regards,

Roy Blunt  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator