

Sen. Wicker and Sen. Stabenow FY2017 Community Health Center Support Letter
Deadline: March 15

March XX, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of Health Centers as a longstanding bipartisan solution to the primary care access problems facing this country. **During the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue to recognize Health Centers as providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care and that you work to ensure the continuation of the innovative, high-value health center model within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation.**

Since the first health centers opened their doors more than fifty years ago, health centers have provided primary care, dental, behavioral, pharmacy, vision, and a variety of complementary services to America's most vulnerable patients and communities. Today, thanks to longstanding bipartisan support, well over 1,300 health center organizations serve more than 9,000 urban and rural communities nationwide. Health centers are the health care home for more than 24 million patients, including more than 7 million children and nearly 300,000 veterans. Health centers employ more than 175,000 Americans, and generate billions of dollars both in economic impact and overall cost-savings to the health care system.

Health centers have continually proven to be a worthwhile investment by delivering high quality, affordable health care, and the demand for health center services has grown in recent years. Combined with the investments made on a bipartisan basis through the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization of 2015 (MACRA), the annual appropriation is critical to the operations of health centers nationwide as they meet that demand. Without access to primary care, many people, including the chronically ill, delay seeking health care until they are seriously ill, leading to higher costs and worse health outcomes. The health center model is designed to address this and other health challenges by fostering innovation and high-value care at the community level.

As Congress works to improve access to care, reduce health care expenditures, and promote patient-centered solutions to our health care challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue to support Health Centers, which have a proven track record of success. Thank you for

your continued support of the vital role Health Centers play in preserving and expanding access to care in the communities they serve.

Sincerely