

ACCESS GRANTED



THE PRIMARY CARE PAYOFF



The Robert
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Health Centers: A Smart Investment in Health Care and Communities

Americans believe in a strong health care system for all – and thus far, are willing to pay for it. In 2005 Americans spent \$2 trillion – 16% of the entire national economy – on health care.

Yet it's clear our system is not working. Costs continue to rise, yet so do the number of at-risk Americans. The challenges facing the more than 60 million uninsured or underinsured are well documented and serious, but that's only part of the story. Earlier this year, a study by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) and the Robert Graham Center found that 56 million Americans – many of them with insurance – don't have ready access to primary care. Other research shows that half of Americans aren't getting the care they need, and the numbers are even worse for minorities and the poor. Something needs to change in how we spend our health care dollars. As a nation, we are desperate for investment in better care.

This study looks at one promising model, and the results are stunning. Conducted by NACHC, the Robert Graham Center, and Capital Link, *Access Granted: The Primary Care Payoff*, finds that Community Health Centers are a smart investment for a nation desperate for high quality, accessible and affordable health care.

Over 40 years ago, Community Health Centers began delivering health care to the medically underserved. 1,100 Community Health Centers now serve more than 16 million people in 6,000 plus sites located throughout all 50 states and U.S. territories. Community Health Centers never turn anyone away for care – regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. They are local, non-profit, community-owned and federally-supported.

Seven out of ten Community Health Center patients live in poverty. They serve one in every five low income uninsured individuals, one in nine Medicaid beneficiaries, and one in four low income minorities. They are true “health care homes,” with many also providing dental and mental health services, as well as case management, transportation, translation and outreach.

Community Health Centers are a sound investment. This study shows that investing in Community Health Centers results in significant savings to the health care system and substantial economic benefit for the communities they serve. Key findings include:

- Medical expenses for Community Health Center patients are 41% lower (\$1,810 per person annually) compared to patients seen elsewhere. This is due to their patient-centered and high quality care, reducing reliance on expensive emergency rooms.
- As a result, they save the health care system between \$9.9 and \$17.6 billion a year.
- If Congress invests in Community Health Centers today, an estimated 30 million Americans could have access to their high-quality by the year 2015, resulting in health care savings of between \$22.6 and \$40.4 billion annually.
- Community Health Centers generate an overall economic impact of \$12.6 billion, and they produce 143,000 jobs in some of the country's most economically deprived neighborhoods.
- If Community Health Centers reach 30 million patients by 2015, these figures would rise to an estimated total economic impact of \$40.7 billion and over 460,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

Every dollar spent in support of Community Health Centers reduces health disparities and costs while contributing to local economies. As America searches for an answer to its growing health care challenge, the success of Community Health Centers today provides valuable lessons for the health care investments of tomorrow.

Access Granted: The Primary Care Payoff

The U.S. health care system currently faces three major challenges that will ultimately impact the health of every American: inadequate access, sky-rocketing health care costs, and a host of economic and systemic pressures that have chipped away at what experts and consumers alike understand as quality. Despite a staggering \$2 trillion or 16% of the national economy that the U.S. spent on health care in 2005,¹ 44.8 million Americans are living without health insurance coverage² and an additional 16 million are underinsured.³ Even those who are adequately insured can face daunting barriers to care, such as lack of transportation, unaffordable out of pocket costs, language differences, lack of specialized “enabling” services to facilitate health care use, and a diminishing supply of primary care doctors. Only half of all Americans receive the care they require,⁴ and the persistence of health disparities affecting the poor and racial/ethnic minorities indicate that the problem is more far-reaching in scope than mere numbers can convey.

There is a growing consensus among the nation’s political and industry leaders that the U.S. health care crisis has shifted from the realm of the poor and disenfranchised, to the doorstep of middle-class America. As policymakers debate health care reform it is critical that our elected leaders and tax-payers consider the range of proposed solutions in terms of access, cost, and quality. We submit that a growing body of evidence converges on a single critical conclusion: that expanding access to primary care has a significant impact on health care outcomes, health care costs, and the national economy. Community Health Centers are a critical platform for expanding access and there is good evidence for their delivery of all three of these outcomes.

Most Americans agree that an expansion of health insurance coverage is needed, but coverage alone is no guarantee of access to health care. A strong and evenly distributed primary care workforce is essential for good health. America, sadly, is far from reaching that goal. This report is the second in a series developed by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), the Robert Graham Center of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and Capital Link. The first report, *Access Denied: A Look at Americans Medically Disenfranchised*,⁵ revealed that a staggering **56 million Americans – nearly one in five – lack adequate access to primary health care because of shortages of such physicians in their communities.** These “**medically disenfranchised**” **live in every state; many of them are insured. More importantly their numbers are increasing.** The medically disenfranchised and the millions of others who face additional barriers to care require a place and a relationship in which they can receive preventive care, make sense of their conditions, integrate their care, and be coached on changing their behaviors to improve their overall health. Such medical homes have been shown to prevent sickness, manage chronic illness, and reduce the need for avoidable, costlier care such as an emergency department visits or hospitalizations.⁶

Providing a medical home to the disenfranchised has been a hallmark of the national network of Community, Migrant, and Homeless Health Centers since their inception. For over 40 years, health centers have brought affordable health care services to communities overlooked and underserved by mainstream medicine. Health center patients – who total over 16 million in all – are predominately low income, uninsured or publicly insured, and members of racial or

ethnic minorities. In fact, health centers currently serve one in every five low income uninsured individuals, one in nine Medicaid beneficiaries, and one in four low income minorities. Most health centers have broadened the scope of conventional health care services to include dental and mental health services, as well as case management, transportation, translation, and outreach. Because they go above and beyond the role of a medical home, health centers may be more appropriately described as “health care homes.”

The public health benefits that health centers generate are well-documented in a growing body of research; less appreciated, until now, has been their economic value in terms of cost-savings, economic growth, and production of jobs. The Lewin Group recently found that taking full advantage of primary care medical homes would produce \$67 billion in annual health care savings.⁷ Health centers provide access to primary care for people, and by doing so, increase potential savings. This report – prepared jointly by NACHC, the Robert Graham Center, and Capital Link – finds that people who receive a majority of their medical care at a Community Health Center have significantly lower medical expenses than do people who receive the majority of their care elsewhere, due to health centers’ record as effective medical homes. Medical expenses for health center patients are 41% lower (\$1,810 per person) compared to patients seen elsewhere. As a result, NACHC estimates that **health centers save the health care system \$9.9 to \$17.6 billion a year – a figure that could grow to \$22.6 billion or even \$40.4 billion once health centers are expanded to serve a total of 30 million people by 2015.** These substantial savings are attributed to a host of factors, not least of which is a reduced reliance on hospital emergency departments among Medicaid beneficiaries and the poor – populations increasingly marginalized from primary health care services.

Perhaps even more remarkable are the substantial economic gains that can be realized locally from the investment in primary health care services. Today, **health centers nationally generate \$12.6 billion in economic benefits for their predominately low income, rural and inner-city communities**, through direct employment of local residents, goods and services purchased from local businesses, and capital development projects. Health centers also generate more than 143,000 jobs for local residents. **Expanding health centers to serve 30 million people by 2015 will produce \$40.7 billion in overall economic gains**, predominantly benefiting the very communities that need them most.

The Primary Care Payoff

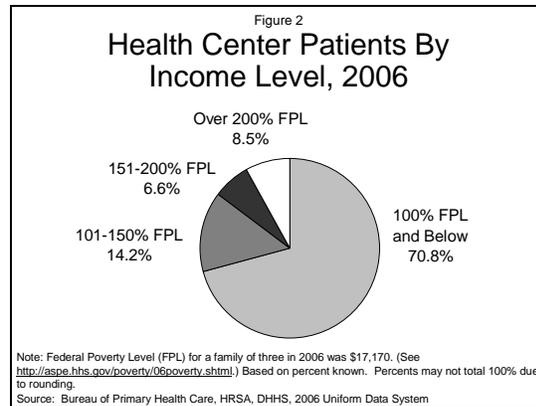
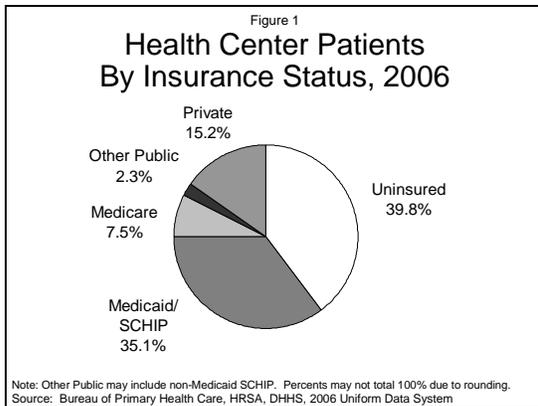
If every American made use of primary care, the health care system would see \$67 billion in savings annually.⁸ This reflects not only those who do not have access to primary care, but also those who rely extensively on costly specialists for most of their care, leading to inefficiencies in the system. More specifically, the expansion of medical homes can even more dramatically facilitate effective use of health care, improve health outcomes, minimize health disparities, and lower overall costs of care.⁹ Medical homes are patient-centered, regular, and continuous sources of care, coordinated by a team of medical professionals committed to quality improvement.¹⁰

While health insurance often facilitates access to care, it does not guarantee access to a usual source of care or to a medical home.¹¹ In fact, people who have a usual source of care but no health insurance actually receive more primary and preventive care than those who have insurance but no usual source of care. Not surprisingly, those who have both fare best.¹² Having a medical home is associated with better utilization and outcomes, including recognizing the need to seek care, receiving earlier and more accurate diagnoses, reduced emergency department use, fewer hospitalizations, lower overall costs, better prevention, fewer unmet needs, and higher patient satisfaction.¹³ Moreover, primary care characterized by enhanced accessibility, continuity, and interpersonal relationships with physicians is associated with better self-rated general and mental health, and is found to mitigate disparities related to income, race and ethnicity, and insurance inequalities.¹⁴ Low income, minority, and uninsured populations would especially benefit from the expansion of medical homes because their health is more likely to be compromised and they run the greatest risk of using costly hospital-based care for avoidable conditions.¹⁵

Clearly, medical homes play an important role in the balancing of health care cost, access, and quality. With growing numbers of uninsured and underinsured individuals, policymakers will want to pay close attention to where those individuals are able to turn for affordable, accessible primary health care, both now and after they gain coverage. One such viable solution is the national network of Community, Migrant, and Homeless Health Centers. The Health Centers Program is designed to overcome access, quality, and cost challenges in a health care marketplace that too often leaves the most vulnerable behind. The program accomplishes this by supporting the development and operation of local health centers that:

- Remove barriers by being located in areas designated as medically underserved and where too few physicians and other health care sources locate,
- Serve all without regard to insurance coverage or ability to pay,
- Customize their services to meet the specific health care and cultural needs of their patients, and
- Offer services that make accessing health care easier, such as transportation, translation, case management, health and nutrition education, and home visits.

Health center patients are predominately low income, uninsured or publicly insured, and members of racial or ethnic minorities. Nearly 40% of health center patients are uninsured, but because they have access to care, they enjoy better health.¹⁶ Another 35% of health center patients depend on Medicaid (Figure 1). Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, 71% of health center patients have family incomes at or below 100% of poverty. Two-thirds of health center patients are members of racial or ethnic minorities.



Health centers also go above and beyond the traditional role of preventive medicine, providing dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and community outreach service. This longstanding mission of providing comprehensive health care under one roof, engagement in quality improvement initiatives, delivery of patient-centered care, and a “team approach” to care, have lead to improved screening rates and outcomes, as well as reduced health care disparities, for their patients.¹⁷ In fact, numerous independent experts have found health centers’ quality of care is as good as or better than the quality of other primary care providers.¹⁸

By serving as effective medical homes – indeed, health care homes – health centers have the ability to create a much more efficient health care system. Recognizing the growing need for health center care, especially among the 56 million medically disenfranchised who come from all walks of life, NACHC’s **Affordable Comprehensive Care, Expanded to Strengthen Service (ACCESS) for All America** plan charts a course for future health center growth. The ACCESS for All America plan guides future increases in federal support for the Health Centers Program and the accompanying policy priorities necessary for continued expansion. By consistently escalating their rate of growth over the next eight years, health centers can become health care homes for nearly twice the number of patients currently served. **An estimated 30 million Americans could have access to high-quality primary care at a health center by the year 2015.** Eventually, the plan envisions program growth to reach all Americans who are without a health care home today, with health centers serving as a model and innovation leader for what primary care practice could become.

A Smart Investment in Health Care and Communities

A growing body of literature on the performance of health centers continually points to the fact that they are highly cost effective, generating savings to payers, patients, and communities.¹⁹ In light of these findings, and the fact that health centers, by their very nature, function as medical homes – indeed, as health care homes – which have been documented to generate cost savings while improving outcomes, we sought to determine how much health centers save the health care system.

The Robert Graham Center research team found that people who receive the majority of their medical care at a health center have significantly lower overall medical expenses than do people who receive the majority of their care elsewhere. **Annual medical expenses for health center patients are 41% lower (\$1,810 per person) compared to patients seen elsewhere.** The beneficiaries of these savings include both patients and payers. Payers include insurers, as well as federal and state governments who contribute to public insurance programs such as Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and Medicare. State and county governments, which bear the cost of the un- and underinsured, also benefit from the savings generated by health centers. These savings occur despite the fact that health center patients are more likely to be poor and uninsured or publicly insured than patients relying on other health care providers. Moreover, health centers' lower expenditures occur even while health centers provide important enabling services – such as transportation, case management, translation, outreach, health education, and home visits – that facilitate the use of needed health care.

Methodology

To understand the patient centered effects of health centers as medical homes, we analyzed data from the most recent Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) data available (2004). This survey is a nationally representative sample survey of all non-federal and non-institutionalized people, meaning that its results can be weighted to reflect health care experiences for most people living in the United States. It is maintained by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. We identified survey respondents who reported visiting a Community Health Center or a neighborhood/family health center in the 2004 calendar year. Of the 213 million persons who had an office visit in 2004, we estimate that about 6.84 million had at least one visit to a Community Health Center. This figure is lower than the 2004 estimate of 11.6 million health center medical users reported by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration,* indicating that our estimates will be conservative. We were interested in understanding how many people of this total might depend on health centers as their medical or health care home. For this we focused on health center clients who obtained the *majority* of their care in a Community Health Center, a group we estimate at about 3.21 million people. While this is clearly lower than the actual number of health patients who rely on the health center as a medical home, the MEPS allows us to confidently measure the average and median savings for people whose medical home is a health center. We also assessed how this relationship was associated with emergency department visits.

* Bureau of Primary Health Care, Health Resources and Services Administration, DHHS. "Uniform Data System National Trend Data for Years 1996 – 2005." <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/nationaldata.htm>.

The results in Table 1 show differences in total medical expenditures, not just expenditures for office-based visits. This includes hospital and outpatient visits, emergency care, medications, and out-of-pocket health care spending. We estimate average annual expenditure of \$4,379 in 2004 for persons who obtain office based care outside of a health center compared to \$2,569 for persons who obtain their care mainly in a health center. The \$1,810 difference in total cost produces an estimated overall difference of approximately \$5.8 billion for persons who routinely obtain care from a health center today. This estimate is likely quite conservative due to the evident undercount of people cared for by health centers in the MEPS. Accordingly, when extrapolating these figures to reflect actual patients of federally-funded health centers, NACHC estimates that health centers are currently generating **savings between \$9.9 and \$17.6 billion.**²⁰ NACHC's estimates do not account for the roughly 1.5 million patients served by non-federally funded health centers. Under NACHC's ACCESS for All America health center expansion plan, **health centers would generate at least \$22.6 billion, and perhaps as much as \$40.4 billion, in savings annually by 2015.**²¹

There are substantial differences in the potential savings across the board among different population groups (Table 1, with a more detailed table in Appendix A). The largest differences were among African Americans (\$2,312), the poor (\$2,202), those in good/fair/poor health (\$2,038), and those ages 35 to 64 (\$2,021). Health centers also generate substantial savings for those who rely on Medicaid and the uninsured. These findings demonstrate the direct impact of health centers on traditionally underserved and vulnerable patients. Interestingly, health centers generate large expenditure savings for people with private insurance. Health center patients with private insurance generally have limited coverage and likely face high levels of cost-sharing that characterize the types of private insurance coverage held by low income individuals generally. In fact, private insurance pays health centers less than 60% of the cost of treating patients.²² Consequently, health center patients who are privately insured struggle with fewer options in specialty services than privately insured patients elsewhere.

Table 1
A Comparison of Per Patient Medical Expenditures,
Health Center vs. Non-Health Center Patients, Calendar Year 2004

	Estimate of Population (1,000s)		Mean Total Medical Expenditures		
	Not-CHC	CHC	Not-CHC	CHC	Difference
Overall	208,016	3,206	\$4,379	\$2,569	\$1,810
Race					
Hispanic	22,559	1,092	\$2,680	\$1,133	\$1,548
NH, White	150,951	1,317	\$4,875	\$4,478	\$397
NH, Black	21,473	666	\$3,680	\$1,368	\$2,312
Poverty					
Not Poor	184,479	2,157	\$4,292	\$2,429	\$1,863
Poor	23,537	1,049	\$5,060	\$2,858	\$2,202
Insurance					
Medicaid	25,644	983	\$3,128	\$2,132	\$996
No Insurance	21,958	1,200	\$2,138	\$1,216	\$922
Private	121,407	638	\$3,370	\$1,456	\$1,914
Reported Health					
Excellent/Very Good	63,551	931	\$2,178	\$757	\$1,421
Good/Fair/Poor	144,465	2,275	\$5,348	\$3,310	\$2,038
Age					
0-17	51,126	1,025	\$1,416	\$1,217	\$198
18-34	38,539	883	\$2,753	\$954	\$1,798
35-64	83,696	989	\$5,130	\$3,108	\$2,021

Note: All data are weighted to produce population estimates for 211 million people in the U.S. who received care anywhere in 2004. Of these, 3.2 million received the majority of their care in a health center. Median values give a better estimate of the midpoint costs, and difference from the mean, or average, shows just how wide the differences in peoples' health care spending can be. The average difference is the figure to focus on in terms of how much health centers save per person. Some groups of people, including Medicare patients, have been removed due to inadequate sample size. The overall difference and all reported subpopulation differences between the CHC and non-CHC group reported in the table are statistically significant ($p < .05$). For more information, see Appendix A.

Source: 2004 MEPS.

Health Centers Reduce Emergency Department Use Among Vulnerable Populations

A wealth of literature documents that health centers lower Emergency Department (ED) visits for their patients, particularly among the uninsured who live near a health center.²³ State and regional Medicaid studies have also revealed reductions in ED visits among health center users,²⁴ and those who rely on health centers as their usual source of care.²⁵ Furthermore, over \$18 billion dollars are wasted annually for ED visits that are non-urgent or primary care treatable and could have been treated in a health center.²⁶

Using the MEPS to look at peoples' experiences with health care, we found that health centers are lowering ED use for certain, key subgroups. Poor and Medicaid beneficiaries who had a health center as their usual source of care were significantly less likely to have an ED visit. For Medicaid beneficiaries, this was a 35.5% relative reduction in ED visits. For the poor, there was a 31.6% reduction. The findings for poor and Medicaid beneficiaries are similar to the prior state and regional studies.²⁷ In some cases, health centers may facilitate more appropriate ED use or may have to direct patients to the ED as a way to get to subspecialty care. Others may postpone needed emergency care if they are not directed there by health center providers.

		Any ER Use Calendar Year	
		Not-CHC	CHC
Overall		16.6%	17.1%
Race/Ethnicity			
	Hispanic	15.4%	13.9%
	Non Hispanic, White	16.6%	21.4%
	Non Hispanic, Black	20.8%	13.0%
Income			
	Not Poor	15.7%	17.5%
	Poor	24.0%	16.4%
Insurance Type			
	Medicaid	21.4%	13.8%
	No Insurance	19.0%	18.3%
	Private	13.3%	18.1%
Reported Health			
	Excellent/Very Good	12.4%	10.7%
	Good/Fair/Poor	18.5%	19.7%
Age			
	0-17	15.5%	15.9%
	18-34	18.2%	17.8%
	35-64	14.7%	18.0%

Note: All data are weighted. The overall difference between CHC and Not CHC is not statistically significant. Only the differences for Poor (24.0% vs. 16.4%) and Medicaid (21.4% vs. 16.4%) are statistically significant (p<.05). The difference observed for other groups are not sufficiently large for us to conclude that there is a true difference.

Source: 2004 MEPS.

Community Health Centers as Economic Engines

While health centers have long been recognized for the critical role they play in providing access to quality primary health care, the contributions they make to the economic viability and growth of the communities in which they are located are often less well known. Health centers employ people in their communities, including critical entry-level jobs, training and career-building opportunities that are community-based. Health centers also purchase goods and services from local businesses and engage in capital development projects. Every dollar spent and every job created by health centers has a direct impact on their local economies. Health centers also serve as anchors for existing and new businesses and investments in the community. In addition to the direct economic effects, they also provide indirect economic effects through their purchases of goods and services from other local business, as well as induced economic effects which represent the response by all local industries caused by the expenditures of new household income generated by the direct and indirect effects. To give an everyday example, imagine a health center that purchases waiting room chairs from a local furniture store (direct effect). The furniture store in turn purchases paper from an office supplies store to print receipts and a truck from a car dealer to make deliveries (indirect effect). The furniture store, the office supplies store, and the car dealership all hire staff and pay them salaries to help run the various businesses. These employees spend their income on everyday purchases such as groceries, clothing, cars, and TVs (induced effect).

Federally-supported health centers injected \$7.3 billion of operating expenditures directly into their local economies in 2005, and directly generated 89,922 full-time equivalent jobs. These expenditures produced additional indirect and induced economic activity of \$5.3 billion, and created an estimated additional 53,152 full-time equivalent jobs. Thus, **the overall economic impact of all health centers was \$12.6 billion, and they produced 143,000 jobs in some of the nation’s most economically challenged neighborhoods** (Table 3). Because this analysis does not include the more than 100 health center organizations that do meet all federal requirements but do not receive federal health center grant funding (commonly known as “FQHC Look-alikes”), this is a conservative estimate. Methodology and further explanation can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3		
Total Economic Activity Stimulated by Federally-Funded Community Health Centers’ Operations, 2005		
	Total Economic Impact	Employment (Full Time Equivalents)
Direct	\$7,261,975,096	89,922
Indirect	\$1,124,387,922	10,233
Induced	\$4,172,328,893	42,918
Total	\$12,558,691,911	143,073
<p>Note: Total Economic Impact includes Value-Added Impact. For an explanation, see Appendix B. Payroll (Value-Added), estimated at 73% of Operating Expenditures, is based on Capital Link’s financial database Fiscal Year 2005 median value for health centers nationally. Each Full Time Equivalent (FTE) denotes one full time employee. Total FTEs denote total workforce generated by health centers. For the definition of FTE, see Appendix B.</p> <p>Source: Capital Link, Inc with MIG, Inc. IMPLAN Software Pro version 2.0.1025 and 2004 structural matrices with the 2002 state level multipliers. Direct CHC Operating Expenditures derived from Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, DHHS, 2005 Uniform Data System.</p>		

Through the ACCESS for All America health center expansion initiative, federally-supported health centers are projected to serve 30 million patients by 2015, with total operating expenditures estimated at \$23.5 billion.²⁸ **These expenditures are projected to generate an estimated total economic impact of \$40.7 billion along with over 460,000 full-time equivalent jobs in 2015.** The economic impact of health centers underscores how their multiple roles as service provider, employer, and local business create a unique niche of opportunities in the surrounding community. Health centers also generate additional economic effects through capital projects and the resulting expansion of services. When a health center undertakes a capital expansion and/or renovation project, a significant economic revitalization occurs within the local community. In most instances, the capital developments and facility expansions of health centers act as catalysts for significant economic revitalizations and create a “ripple effect” of positive change in communities. This “anchor concept” is similar to the effect a large department store has in a shopping mall – the health center attracts investment and other businesses to the community. These long-term economic stimulus effects will accrue in addition to the obvious benefit of increased health services to poor, low income, and racially and ethnically diverse communities of both urban and sparsely populated rural areas.

The total economic impact of any particular health center varies according to size, urban and rural location, state, and other factors. We therefore sought to determine the average impact of a large and small health center. The tables below show the estimated 2005 economic impact of two such typical health centers, one urban and one rural. The average large urban health center (one with an annual budget of about \$12 million) generates a total economic impact of \$21.6 million for its local community, while the average small rural health center (defined by an annual budget of about \$3 million) generates about \$3.9 million. Depending on the characteristics and dynamics of a particular local economy, there are often substantial regional variations in the economic impact of the same amount of expenditures. As such, \$3 million of annual expenditures of a health center located in a large, densely populated and economically thriving area is likely to have a larger total economic impact than the same amount of annual expenditures in an area that may be less densely populated and/or economically depressed. The application of county level multipliers, which take into account the local characteristics of an economy, will present a more accurate picture of a particular health center’s economic impact within its region.

Table 4
Total Economic Activity Stimulated by an
Average Large Urban and Small Rural Health Center, 2005

	Large Urban Health Center		Small Rural Health Center	
	Total Economic Impact	Employment (Full Time Equivalents)	Total Economic Impact	Employment (Full Time Equivalents)
Direct	\$ 12,252,801	187	\$ 3,333,321	45
Indirect	\$ 2,273,314	24	\$ 261,600	3
Induced	\$ 7,114,112	70	\$ 287,124	4
Total	\$ 21,640,227	281	\$ 3,882,045	52

Note: Total Economic Impact includes Value-Added Impact. For an explanation, see Appendix B. Actual health center with an annual budget of \$12.3 million (large) and \$3.3 million (small), based on Capital Link's financial information database. Each Full Time Equivalent (FTE) denotes one full time employee. Total FTEs denote total workforce generated by health centers. For the definition of FTE, see Appendix B.

Source: Capital Link, Inc with MIG, Inc. IMPLAN Software Pro version 2.0.1025 and 2004 structural matrices with 2004 county level multiplier. Direct CHC Operating Expenditures derived from Fiscal Year 2005 audited financial statements.

Appendix C depicts the total economic impact by state. The two states with the largest number of health centers had the largest total economic impact; **California** health centers generated over \$2 billion and **New York** over \$1.1 billion. The seven states with the most health centers (**California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Texas, and Washington**) generated about half of the total economic impact. Predominately rural states also see a substantial economic benefit driven by health centers. In 13 states and Puerto Rico, at least 75% of grantees are located in rural areas and together they generate a combined impact of \$1.8 billion. Furthermore, health centers located in rural areas are often among the largest employers in their communities.

Important Challenges

The promise of health center expansion relies on a strong clinical workforce, as well as funding for health center capital projects. Today, the failure of the American health care system to adopt a primary care focus results in poorer health outcomes for all Americans compared with our nation's industrialized peers, and at a much greater cost. Evidence comparing the U.S. with other industrialized nations has found that the U.S. ranked lowest in its primary care functions and lowest in health care outcomes, but highest in health care spending.²⁹ Having an adequate number of primary care physicians carries important personal and population health benefits, specifically higher rates of preventive screenings and lower rates of morbidity and mortality.³⁰ Higher primary care physician-to-population ratios and improved primary care quality also minimize health care disparities related to income and race/ethnicity. Such disparities are often co-occurring and are well-documented factors contributing to poorer access to care, poorer health outcomes, and even death.³¹ Health centers responded to the President's call to double capacity to care for people over the last five years, and further expansion is needed to meet the growing demand. This effort, however, is hampered by a persistent shortage of primary care

physicians that will have broad and far reaching impact on the entire health care infrastructure.³² The implications of the looming primary workforce shortage will be the focus of the final report in this series.

Future and existing health centers require support for capital and construction projects. Without investment, health centers cannot achieve the technological improvements and quality measurements that ensure high quality of care. Moreover, NACHC and Capital Link surveys reveal that one in three health centers currently operates in buildings that are over 30 years old, while one in five are in buildings at least 40 years old. Additionally, about two-thirds of health centers nationally need to modernize or expand their buildings or construct new facilities. Yet construction, modernization, or expansion of health centers cannot be paid for with federal grant dollars. Health centers have limited financial capital to undertake much needed facility improvements, expansions, and new site development. Preliminary results from a nationwide study recently conducted by Capital Link show an estimated \$4.4 billion in capital development needs over the next 5 years for health centers to maintain just the current level of growth. Taking into account the growth envisioned under the ACCESS for All America health center expansion initiative, overall capital needs from 2008 through 2015 are more likely to be between \$10 billion and \$11 billion, considering additional costs for new or expanded facilities and equipment, including Health Information Technology.

Conclusion

Despite measurable improvements in health care accessibility achieved by health centers, millions of Americans still do not have a medical home. Health centers are expanding to reach more people by removing geographic, language, and cultural barriers for patients who do not have a health care home. In the absence of fundamental health system change, continued growth of the un- and underinsured populations and rising health care costs only serve to elevate the importance of health centers as a nationwide system of care. Health centers provide personalized, coordinated, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate care to communities that are otherwise locked out of the system. They have conclusively demonstrated their capacity to reduce costs, improve access and quality, and reduce disparities in communities all across America. Even as policymakers work to develop solutions to the growing number of uninsured Americans, a further expansion of health centers can be undertaken immediately, paving the way for expanded insurance coverage by helping to successfully convert coverage into improved health care access that brings about better health and lower overall health care costs.

Health centers' mission to serve all regardless of ability to pay or insurance status brought the promise of good health to people like Shirley Dorsey, 51, an uninsured health center patient in Baltimore who recently told a *USA Today* reporter, "I have no idea where else I would go for health care. It's important to have some place where poor people who don't have insurance can come and not be afraid of being turned away."³³

This report finds that health centers already save billions in avoidable health care spending, and that further expanding and strengthening health centers will help to reduce overall health care spending significantly, in part because of their lower cost of care and ability to reduce

emergency department use among key at-risk populations – and it leads to far better care. At the same time, these expansions will bring vital economic benefits to underserved communities that desperately need them. Health centers are therefore an excellent public investment that generates substantial benefits for patients, communities, insurers, governments, and taxpayers – indeed, for all of America.

Appendix B

Economic Impact Analysis Definition of Terms

The *direct* economic impact is defined as the total operating expenditures of the health centers. Industries producing goods and services for consumption, in this case the health centers, purchase goods and services from other producers. These other producers, in turn, purchase goods and services and so on, thereby generating an *indirect* economic impact. Effects of increased household spending are called *induced* economic impact.

This analysis uses the “multiplier effect” – and more specifically a complete integrated economic planning tool called IMPLAN (Impact analysis for PLANning) – to capture the indirect business effects of a health center’s business operations. IMPLAN was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota IMPLAN Group (MIG) and employs multipliers, specific to each county and each industrial sector, to determine total output, employment, and earnings.

Output Multiplier: measures the increase in total output generated in a defined regional economy for each dollar spent by a given industry. For example, if the multiplier for health care services is 3.0, then every dollar spent by a health care center would create \$3.00 in economic activity in the local community.

Value-added (Earnings) Multiplier: measures the earnings (purchasing power) that an industry generates, through payroll and the multiplier effect, for households employed by all industries within a defined area. Consequently, the Value-Added impact represents the amount of dollars that aggregate households in a given area will gain in household income based on the dollars put out into that community by a Community Health Center through operating expenditures.

Employment Multiplier: measures the number of jobs generated across all industries by the activity within a given industry needed to deliver \$1 million of products or services to a defined geographic area. The multiplier produces an estimate of the total number of new jobs that a local economy can support in all industries due to the dollars being injected into the community by the health center. In other words, the economic activity of the health center stimulates job growth because of the “snowballing” of the dollars expended.

Full –Time Equivalent (FTE) Employee: of 1.0 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time worker. In an organization that has a 40 hour work week, a person who works 20 hours per week (i.e., 50 percent time) is reported as “0.5 FTE. FTE is also based on the number of months the employee works. An employee who works full time for 4 months out of the year would be reported as “0.33 FTE” (4 months/12 months).

IMPLAN’s output, earnings, and employment figures are aggregated based on direct, indirect, and induced economic effects:

Direct effects: represents the response for a given industry (in this case, Total Operating Expenditures of Community Health Centers with the exception of Nevada).

Indirect effects: represents the response by all local industries caused by “the iteration of industries purchasing.”

Induced effects: represents the response by all local industries to the expenditures of new household income generated by the direct and indirect effects.

Within the field of economics, the multiplier effect is used to determine the impact of each dollar entering, impacting and eventually leaving a defined economy (i.e., “dollar turnover”). This results in increased production and expenditures, employment creation and attraction, and retention of new residents, businesses and investments. State multipliers are factored in to estimate the spin-off activity from the expenditures of the Community Health Center in providing health care services.

The total economic impact of \$12.6 billion is likely is a conservative estimate of the total economic impact of all health centers nationally since it includes only the federally-funded Community Health Centers located in the U.S. and Puerto Rico for which data is available through the 2005 Uniform Data System (UDS). There are approximately an additional 150 plus health centers across the country that are either not federally funded or newly funded but serve the same or similar communities. These health centers also have a considerable economic impact.

Appendix C
Total Health Center Economic Impact by State, 2005

State	Number of Federally-Funded Health Centers	Percent Rural	Number of Delivery Sites	Total Economic Impact	Total Employment (FTEs)*
Alabama	15	60%	115	\$121,382,364	1,541
Alaska	24	96%	107	\$144,528,348	1,376
Arizona	14	79%	86	\$286,830,888	3,277
Arkansas	12	83%	60	\$78,795,465	1,068
California	97	40%	716	\$2,037,609,155	22,395
Colorado	15	53%	135	\$373,364,151	4,069
Connecticut	10	20%	100	\$199,959,243	2,168
Delaware	3	33%	8	\$15,092,736	196
District of Columbia	3	0%	43	\$71,586,512	833
Florida	36	50%	202	\$537,168,777	6,434
Georgia	23	61%	105	\$163,682,141	1,873
Hawaii	11	64%	51	\$117,206,087	1,418
Idaho	10	100%	51	\$64,286,155	854
Illinois	33	18%	314	\$658,087,959	7,097
Indiana	13	15%	72	\$123,745,679	1,596
Iowa	9	33%	51	\$77,082,402	978
Kansas	9	78%	27	\$35,089,879	514
Kentucky	14	64%	66	\$145,069,297	1,850
Louisiana	18	56%	48	\$78,432,187	1,028
Maine	16	88%	67	\$95,132,259	1,203
Maryland	13	38%	80	\$201,502,347	2,123
Massachusetts	33	12%	285	\$610,958,760	6,607
Michigan	26	42%	141	\$323,832,254	3,741
Minnesota	12	25%	69	\$127,925,653	1,407
Mississippi†	19	84%	141	\$148,879,146	1,939
Missouri	17	47%	104	\$278,798,343	3,228
Montana	12	83%	53	\$44,619,157	593
Nebraska	5	40%	15	\$34,274,030	459
Nevada	2	50%	32	\$33,600,556	438
New Hampshire	8	63%	42	\$59,285,597	746
New Jersey	17	0%	79	\$225,955,243	2,337
New Mexico	14	79%	102	\$192,466,789	2,474
New York	47	11%	425	\$1,143,732,348	11,745
North Carolina	24	79%	112	\$203,433,165	2,519
North Dakota	4	75%	27	\$14,662,971	203
Ohio	23	35%	115	\$232,736,644	2,726
Oklahoma	9	67%	28	\$59,581,749	764
Oregon	21	62%	131	\$292,735,806	3,415

State	Number of Federally-Funded Health Centers	Percent Rural	Number of Delivery Sites	Total Economic Impact	Total Employment (FTEs)*
Pennsylvania	29	38%	164	\$337,934,781	3,968
Puerto Rico	20	80%	49	\$143,823,565	2,177
Rhode Island	7	43%	44	\$67,410,498	878
South Carolina	21	67%	132	\$201,023,876	2,529
South Dakota	7	71%	36	\$33,223,901	420
Tennessee	22	64%	111	\$171,825,379	2,037
Texas	43	47%	258	\$560,203,991	6,989
Utah	11	64%	30	\$60,401,822	688
Vermont	3	67%	20	\$34,069,199	410
Virginia	21	67%	88	\$143,116,890	1,778
Washington	23	57%	209	\$610,452,536	6,901
West Virginia	27	96%	128	\$294,209,387	2,551
Wisconsin	15	33%	59	\$229,500,072	2,313
Wyoming	5	80%	12	\$18,383,772	205
U.S.	952	52%	5,703	\$12,558,691,991	143,076

* Total Employment is in Full Time Equivalents (FTE). Each FTE denotes one full time employee. Total FTEs or employment denote total workforce generated by health centers. For the definition of FTE, see Appendix B.

Note: All numbers in the above table include direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts. Total economic impact includes Value-Added impact. For an explanation, see Appendix B. Estimates are based on UDS financial and FTE data for federally-funded health centers only and may vary from other state estimates that may include non-federally-funded health centers and reference different financial and FTE data sources. U.S. total includes Puerto Rico but not other territories given unavailable data.

Sources: Based on 2005 Uniform Data System, Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, DHHS. Nevada health center data provided directly from Nevada health centers. Prepared by Capital Link, Inc using MIG, Inc. IMPLAN Software Pro version 2.0.1025 and 2004 structural matrices with the 2002 state level multipliers.

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The **National Association of Community Health Centers** (NACHC) represents the nation's health safety net: over 1,100 Community Health Centers, serving over 16 million people at 6,000 sites located throughout all 50 states and U.S. territories. Community Health Centers provide health care to low-income and medically underserved Americans, and they never turn anyone away – regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. They are local, non-profit, community-owned and federally funded.

NACHC is the leading source for information, data, research and advocacy on key issues affecting Community Health Centers. NACHC provides education, training, technical assistance and leadership development to promote excellence and cost-effectiveness in health delivery practice and community board governance. In addition, it builds partnerships that stimulate public and private-sector investment in quality health care services.

For more information on NACHC and Community Health Centers, please visit www.nachc.com.



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The **Robert Graham Center** is a health policy research center that is part of the American Academy for Family Physicians and operates with editorial independence.

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Capital Link is dedicated to assisting health centers in accessing capital for building and equipment projects and to providing extensive technical assistance to health centers throughout the capital development process. From financial and market feasibility reviews to program, staff & facility planning and financing assistance, Capital Link assists health centers in strengthening their abilities to plan and carry out successful capital projects.

To date Capital Link has assisted 106 individual health centers in obtaining grants and loans for capital projects totaling more than \$436 million. Through this network, and as a NACHC partner, we are able to address health center individual capital project needs more readily.

Capital Link was founded through the joint efforts of the Community Health Center Capital Fund, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, National Association of Community Health Centers and Primary Care Associations in Illinois, North Carolina and Texas.

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