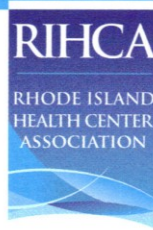


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Community Health Centers and Congressional Delegation Announce Federal Stimulus Funding Plan

*Funding will Strengthen Safety Net for
Uninsured and Underserved*

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[Providence, Rhode Island] – The Rhode Island Health Center Association today announced how its member health centers plan to use funding released under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funding falls into three categories: New Access Points, Increased Demand for Services and Capital Improvement Program. The state’s congressional leaders joined the association’s membership for the announcement.

The focus of all of these programs is the expansion of health care access for Rhode Islanders in need of high quality, affordable health care whether or not they have insurance. While expanding access to health care, the programs will also create jobs and strengthen communities.

Jane Hayward, President and CEO of the Rhode Island Health Center Association, thanked the congressional delegation. “The health centers appreciate the ongoing support from the entire congressional delegation. Our delegation understands and supports the critical role of community health centers in the provision of high quality primary care services in Rhode Island.”

“We need to reform our health care system. The federal funding that we secured for community health centers is a smart investment that will save taxpayers money in the long run and ensure that more Rhode Islanders have access to quality, preventive care,” said Senator Jack Reed, a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. “Not all of the

clients who use community health centers have health insurance, but everyone who comes through their doors gets the medical attention, care, and respect they deserve. I applaud the outstanding doctors, nurses, and administrators who make our community health centers work for patients and who continue to help make our community a better and healthier place.”

“Rhode Island’s community health centers are working hard every day to keep Rhode Island’s working families healthy,” said Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. “In these tough economic times, it’s more important than ever to help these centers continue to provide high quality health services throughout our Ocean State.”

"Community health centers are on the front-lines protecting public health by providing preventive and primary health care to America's uninsured and underinsured. We need to make sure people have access to quality-health care and do not forgo treatments or check-ups. It's essential that we make these funds a priority, and I'm pleased that the stimulus bill reflected this. These funds will also help to create jobs, relieve pressure in our emergency rooms, and protect communities with improved health," said Rep. Patrick Kennedy.

“Our community health centers are critical to keeping safe, affordable treatment available to some of our most vulnerable neighbors,” said Rep. Jim Langevin. “This infusion of funding allows them to grow and continue their commitment to the patients they serve. Investing in these facilities will not only create employment opportunities but expand access to vital health services too.”

On March 2, President Obama announced the release of \$255 million to support 126 new access points at community health centers across the country. Two of these sites are in Rhode Island: Tri-Town Community Access Agency in Johnston, and Northwest Community Health Care’s Bayside site, in North Kingstown. These two centers will receive a combined total of \$2,391,700 over the next two years in federal funding, provide health services to 7,380 patients and create 55 jobs.

On March 27, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the release of \$338 million to expand services at the nation’s community health centers, in order to help the centers meet the increased demand for their high-quality, affordable primary health care services during the current economic downturn. Rhode Island’s eight federally-funded community health centers were awarded a total of \$1,999,160. This funding is projected to create or retain 33 jobs and expand access to an additional estimated 16,607 new patients, of whom about 7,028 will be uninsured.

On Friday, May 1, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced the availability of funding under the Capital Improvement Program

(CIP) initiative to support a one-time, 2-year funding request from federally-funded community health centers. This funding is available for capital improvement, and will be used by Rhode Island's health centers to address delayed maintenance, upgrade technology including electronic medical records, or expand facilities to meet the increased demand for services. Total funding nationally is expected to be about \$850 million. Grant applications are due on June 2, and Rhode Island's health centers expect the grants to range from \$250,000 to about \$1.4 million, depending on the size of the health center.

"The community health centers are grateful for this funding opportunity at a time of increased need," said Hayward. "Many of the centers have deferred important infrastructure projects due to lack of funding. With this money, Rhode Island's health centers will be able to maintain facilities that reflect the high level of care patients receive." Projects the health centers hope to fund through these grants include replacing old roofs, adding additional exam rooms, and improving technology. Rhode Island's health centers have been leaders in the adoption of electronic medical records (EMR). This funding will help increase even more the level of technological ability in many of our centers. Centers will be able to use this additional resource to increase their level of technology.

Rhode Island's ten community health centers are a critical element in the state's health care landscape. Serving 112,000 Rhode Islanders annually, the community health centers provide comprehensive, high quality primary and preventive care to some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable populations. In addition, the health centers are small businesses. Together, they employ well over 700 health care providers and support staff. The combined yearly economic benefit for local communities is over \$67 million.

Eight of the ten health centers are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and receive funding under the Health Center Program. The FQHCs are: Blackstone Valley Community Health Care, Comprehensive Community Action Program, East Bay Community Action Program, Northwest Community Health Care, Providence Community Health Centers, Thundermist Health Center, Tri-town Community Action Agency and Wood River Health Services. Chad Brown Health Center, located in Providence, is a FQHC look-a-like, and Block Island Health Services is located in a health provider shortage area (HPSA).

Founded in 1972, the Rhode Island Health Center Association supports, sustains, and strengthens Rhode Island's community health centers so they can provide high quality, comprehensive health care.