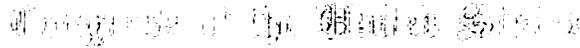


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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

April 2, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
B-300 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt,

We would like to express our deep appreciation for your work to invest in the infrastructure of America's health care safety net. Millions of Americans have lived longer and healthier lives due to your efforts. In order to continue that work with the goal of bringing care to all Americans in need, we respectfully request that you provide \$2.602 billion for the Health Centers program in the FY2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations legislation. The Health Care Safety Net Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-355), which was unanimously passed by Congress, authorized this funding level.

As you know, the Health Centers program is a community-run health care delivery system that is open to all regardless of their ability to pay. At a time when health care costs have dramatically increased across the country, health centers have kept their costs well under those of other health care providers. In addition, years of research have shown that health centers actually save the health system money, and that their patients have better outcomes and use hospital emergency rooms less than those who get their care in other settings. Simply put, the Health Centers program works and we wholeheartedly appreciate your continued efforts to expand this important program.

Thanks to the leadership of the Committee, health centers are now the health care home for more than 18 million Americans. And yet, there continues to be overwhelming demand for community health centers and the primary care services they provide in communities nationwide, with scores more high-quality applications for health centers than funding available. In order to truly serve those in need across the country, we must continue to support and expand existing health centers and develop new centers in areas of need. This FY2010 funding request is an investment in a longer-term plan envisioned by the Health Care Safety Net Act to provide care in a health center to 30 million Americans by 2015.

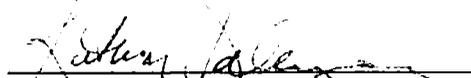
We hope to work with the Subcommittee to guide this investment around several priorities. First, a significant and strategic investment in existing health centers is needed

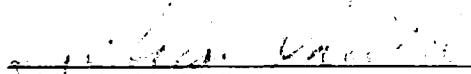
to help them meet the increasing demand for services in the communities they serve. Second, new and expanded health centers should be funded in communities with little or no access to care. Lastly, in order to make a comprehensive range of necessary services available at every health center, funding should be provided to integrate mental health, oral health, and pharmacy services in high need communities.

We know your subcommittee has a very difficult task ahead, but we strongly urge you to continue the health center expansion effort to communities in need by increasing federal funding for the Community Health Centers program to the authorized level of \$2.602 billion for FY2010. Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you this year to continue to expand this important program.

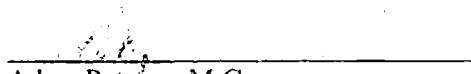
Sincerely,

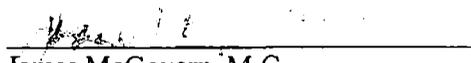
  
Frank Pallone, M.C.

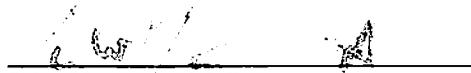
  
Kathleen Dahlkemper, M.C.

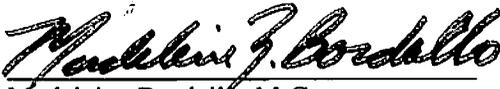
  
Adrian Smith, M.C.

  
Jared Polis, M.C.

  
Adam Putnam, M.C.

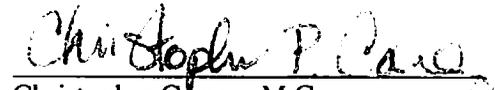
  
James McGovern, M.C.

  
John Yarmuth, M.C.

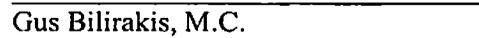
  
Madeleine Bordallo, M.C.

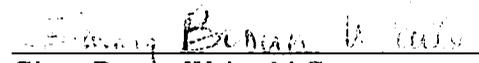
  
Andre Carson, M.C.

  
Phil Hare, M.C.

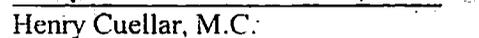
  
Christopher Carney, M.C.

  
Ed Perlmutter, M.C.

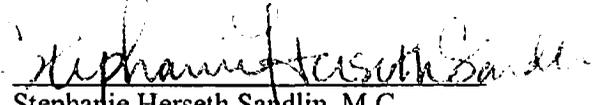
  
Gus Bilirakis, M.C.

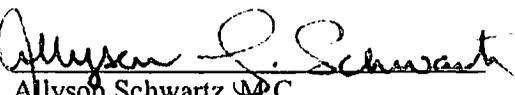
  
Ginny Brown-Waite, M.C.

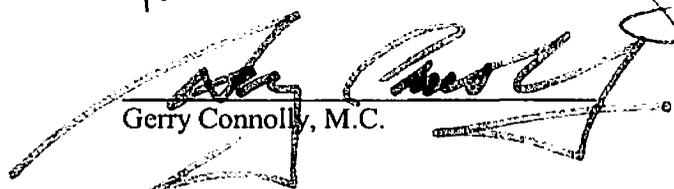
  
Shelley Berkley, M.C.

  
Henry Cuellar, M.C.

  
Jason Altmire, M.C.

  
Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, M.C.

  
Allyson Schwartz, M.C.

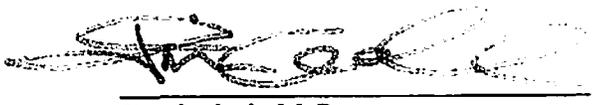
  
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Michael McMahon, M.C.

  
Kay Granger, M.C.

  
Dina Titus, M.C.

  
Ron Klein, M.C.

  
Jim Gerlach, M.C.

  
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Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, M.C.

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Bill Pascrell, M.C.

Ruben Hinojosa, M.C.

Todd Platts, M.C.

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Pete Stark, M.C.

Chris Smith, M.C.

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