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**Contact: Julie DiRossi-King, COO**  
**(614) 507-7805**

## **OACHC Commends Funding for Community Health Centers to Help Fight Opioid Crisis**

*Funding announced to expand access to integrated substance use disorder and mental health services*

(COLUMBUS) – The Ohio Association of Community Health Centers applauds the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarding nearly \$400 million to combat the nation’s opioid crisis. The investments – which include \$200 million for Community Health Centers – will establish and expand access to integrated substance use disorder and mental health services.

“Health centers and behavioral health providers are on the front lines of the fight against the opioid crisis and substance abuse, especially in rural communities,” said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “With our evidence-based strategy, HHS is working to support local communities in fighting back against substance abuse, and our united efforts are yielding results. Together, we can end our country’s opioid crisis and lay a foundation for a healthier country where every American can access the mental healthcare they need.”

HRSA is awarding more than \$200 million to 1,208 community health centers (also known as federally qualified health centers, FQHCs) across the nation to increase access to high quality, integrated behavioral health services, including the prevention or treatment of mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders. Health centers are on the front lines in communities affected by the opioid crisis. The number of patients receiving Medication Assisted Treatment at health centers grew nationally by 46 percent from 2017 to 2018. Also during that same time frame, 72,000 more patients were diagnosed with substance use disorders, such as opioid use disorder, for a total of 558,000.

“We welcome and applaud the recognition by HHS Secretary Azar and the Administration of the important work community health centers are providing to address this public health crisis,” said Julie DiRossi-King, Chief Operating Officer of OACHC. “In Ohio, more than 75% of Community Health Centers offer this critical treatment to curb opioid misuse and abuse, coupled with intensive counseling services. This investment will allow Ohio’s Community Health Centers to continue to expand services and provide care to some of the hardest hit communities across our state.”

To learn more on the Ohio recipients visit: [FY 2019 IBHS Ohio Awards](#). This announcement was made as part of National Health Center Week (August 4-10), a national campaign that recognizes the mission and accomplishments of health centers. To learn more visit [www.healthcenterweek.org](http://www.healthcenterweek.org).

**About Ohio's Community Health Centers**

Federally Qualified Health Centers and FQHC Look-Alikes, more commonly referred to as Community Health Centers (CHCs), are non-profit health care providers that deliver affordable, high-quality and comprehensive primary care to medically underserved populations, regardless of insurance status. CHCs provide integrated whole person care, oftentimes providing onsite dental, behavioral, pharmacy, vision and other needed supplemental services under one roof. While each is distinct, they share one common purpose: to provide primary health care services that are coordinated, culturally and linguistically competent and community directed.

**About OACHC | [www.ohiochc.org](http://www.ohiochc.org)**

OACHC is a not-for-profit professional association representing Ohio's Federally Qualified Health Centers and FQHC Look-Alikes. OACHC's Mission is to ensure access to high-quality affordable health care for all Ohioans through the growth and development of Ohio's Community Health Centers. OACHC represents Ohio's 55 Community Health Centers at 378+ locations in 68 of Ohio's 88 counties.

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