

2020

Policy Priorities

WISCONSIN PRIMARY
HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

Increase to the State Community Health Center Grant

THE ISSUE

Community Health Centers have increased the number of patients, the amount of services provided, and service locations, but the Community Health Center State Grant has remained the same since 2008.

THE WHY

Health Centers use state grant funds to make significant impacts in every community they serve. These improvements include increasing access to oral health care, particularly for vulnerable populations, continuously reinvesting in innovative quality improvement activities, broadening access to substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, and improving access to preventive care and chronic disease management. Community Health centers are able to use this grant to address social determinants of health, which improved the the potential for patients to move from Medicaid to private insurance.

THE DATA

- Total patients served increased by 45% from 210,926 in 2008 to 304,516 in 2018.
- The number of dental patients doubled from 61,575 in 2008 to 161,900 in 2018.
- Health Centers continue to expand services and hire providers for mental health and substance use disorder services.
- Since 2008, Community Health Centers have hired 144 additional Behavioral Health providers.

THE SOLUTION

WPHCA asks the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass *AB 726/ SB 651: An Increase to the Wisconsin State Community Health Center Grant*.² This grant would increase the State Grant by \$2 million annually and would allow Health Centers to reach even deeper into the communities they serve while addressing state health priorities.



WPHCA asks the WI State Legislature to Pass AB 726/ SB 651: An Increase to the Wisconsin State Community Health Center Grant.

Long-term, Stable Funding for Community Health Centers

THE ISSUE

The federal Community Health Center Fund (CHCF) is set to expire on November 30, 2020. The Community Health Center Fund is a mandatory federal funding stream of \$4 billion per year that accounts for 70% of the federal grant funding for Health Centers nationwide. It also funds the National Health Service Corps, which provides a loan forgiveness program for providers who work in federally designated health provider shortage areas.^{3,4}

THE WHY

Congress created the CHCF to support the expansion of Health Centers. Since 2015, Congress has extended the CHCF for 2 years with bipartisan support. However, this is the second time that Congress has not been able to come to a budget agreement and has used short term fixes to flat fund Community Health Centers.⁵

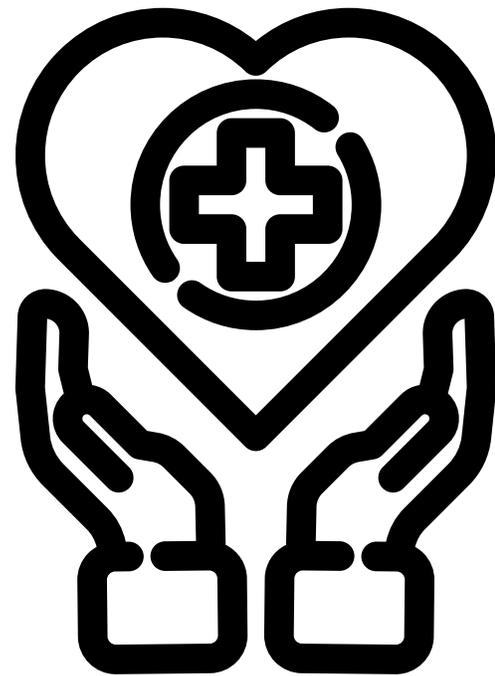
THE DATA

Revenue loss in Wisconsin over a one-year period could range from \$85 million to \$205 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community Health Centers are efficient and save the health care system over \$24 billion every year, reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room use. In addition, they generate \$54.6 billion in total economic activity and bring 236,000 direct jobs to low-income and challenged communities.⁵

THE SOLUTION

Community Health Centers are requesting \$77.3 billion to be included in upcoming legislation.⁵ This includes:

- Reauthorizing the CHCF to stabilize services and care - \$41.9 billion
- Workforce expansion to address national provider shortage- \$7.8 billion
- Infrastructure investment, including telehealth development, IT systems, and future emergency preparedness-\$20 billion
- COVID-19 Emergency Funding- \$7.6 billion



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Strengthening Medicaid for Patients

THE ISSUE

Over 5% of Wisconsinites are uninsured and that number is steadily rising nationwide.⁷ As the unemployment rate increases in response to economic downturns, the number of uninsured rises as well. Medicaid, or BadgerCare as it is known in Wisconsin, is critical to providing access to healthcare for Wisconsinites, from infants to the elderly. It is especially important in times of economic downturn.

THE WHY

Community Health Centers ensure that every patient who needs care, regardless of coverage, has a reliable, accessible, and affordable place to receive comprehensive care. Over 75% of CHC patients are on BadgerCare, are underinsured, or are uninsured. Access to care enables people to take control of their futures, be healthy enough to work, contribute to their community, and live a productive life.

THE DATA

In Wisconsin, Medicaid provides coverage for over 1.2 million residents. This includes the BadgerCare Plus program, which provides a comprehensive package of benefits for over 800,000 individuals, and has grown by nearly 40,000 people since March 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Medicaid patients are able to access essential services from dental care to mental health treatment.⁸

THE SOLUTION

Strengthening and preserving Wisconsin's Medicaid program by maintaining and/or expanding eligibility, preserving a comprehensive benefit package, and ensuring program funding and viability helps people overcome health-related barriers to work, and creates opportunities for other programs, such as recovery services, safe housing, and dental access, to address an unmet need.



The Wisconsin Medicaid program has grown by nearly 40,000 people since March 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increase Funding for Health Profession Loan Assistance Program

THE ISSUE

Wisconsin reports a 14% physician shortage statewide, with rural and underserved areas impacted the most.⁹ Additionally, psychiatrists in Wisconsin only meet 19% of the need for services, and 27 of 72 counties in the state have no OB/GYN.¹⁰ According to federal data there will be a shortage of 160,000 providers by 2025.

THE WHY

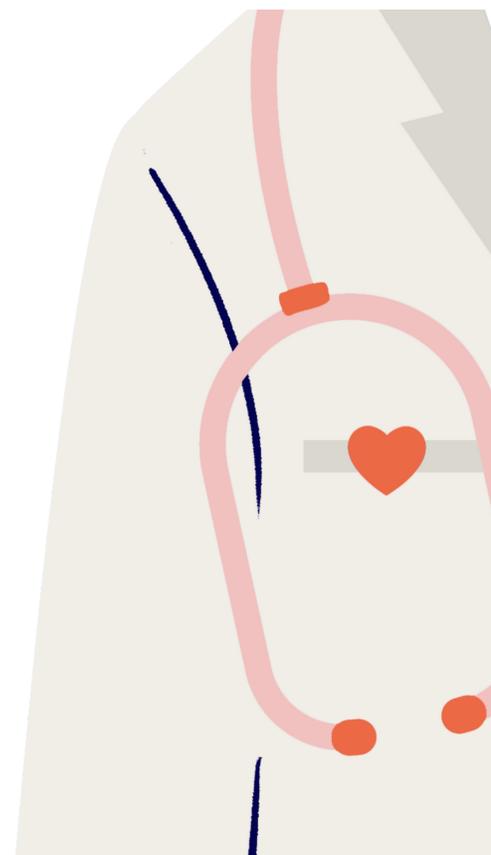
The Health Profession Loan Assistance Program (HPLAP), Wisconsin's state loan repayment program, seeks to increase the number of primary care, dental, and psychiatrist providers working in underserved rural and urban areas of the state. Funding for the program includes state funding as well as a federal matching funds. Health care professionals in Wisconsin can receive up to \$50,000 in education loan assistance through the HPLAP. To be eligible, a provider must work three years, full time in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area. Current funding for this state program is insufficient to grow the provider workforce.¹²

THE DATA

Since 2010, the state has awarded 229 HPLAP awards to Wisconsin providers.¹²

THE SOLUTION

Increasing funding for the Health Profession Loan Assistance Program would allow more people to enter the program and provide additional workforce for Community Health Centers and other safety net organizations. WPHCA is advocating for a \$2 million increase to the HPLAP.



Since 2010, the state has awarded 229 HPLAP awards to Wisconsin Providers.

Expand Medicaid Coverage for Pregnant Women to One Year Post-Partum

THE ISSUE

Currently, women who qualify for Medicaid because of pregnancy are only covered up to 60 days following the birth of their child or post-partum. As maternal mortality rates in the country continue to rise, access to care and trusted relationships with providers are key to lowering and combating racial disparities in maternal death in Wisconsin.

THE WHY

Expanding Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to one year post-partum is one step that could play a role in reducing disparities in both maternal and infant mortality. Medicaid coverage is associated with improved access to health care, less delay in obtaining health care, better self-reported health, and reductions in mortality.¹³

THE DATA

- Maternal mortality rates for Black women in Wisconsin are 5 times higher than white women and 3.2 times higher for Latino women than white women. These are some of the most disparate rates in the nation.¹⁴
- Wisconsin mothers are more likely to be uninsured than the average adult population in the state (7%).¹⁵
- 1 in 3 women experience a disruption in insurance coverage before, during, or after pregnancy.¹⁶

THE SOLUTION

Expanding Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to one year post-partum would ensure that women receive the proper medical care, counseling, and enabling services that they need before, during, and after pregnancy. This not only benefits mothers, but children as well.¹⁷



1 in 3 women experience a disruption in insurance coverage before, during, or after pregnancy.

Sources

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