

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER LAWMAKER QUARTERLY UPDATE

May 2022

WHAT'S IN THIS UPDATE?

LETTER FROM OUR
CEO

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER?

STATE
UPDATES

WPHCA HAS A NEW
BRAND

HIGHLIGHTS FROM
COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTERS

FEDERAL
UPDATES

A Letter from our CEO

Over the past two years, Community Health Centers have shone – and shown what they are really made of. Born of a deep connection to the communities they serve, they have mutated as quickly as COVID itself to meet the changing needs of the people they serve: from becoming supply chain experts when personal protective equipment (PPE) was in short supply, to standing up parking lot testing sites in conjunction with the National Guard, to administering vaccines and antivirals as soon as they were available – Community Health Centers have pivoted to meet the emerging needs of their communities while meeting the ongoing health needs of their patients. Impressive!



As I think about the environment we are entering – a post-pandemic world with just as much ambiguity, a more dire workforce situation, and concerning trends regarding mental health and worsening chronic disease – I think about the backbone of Community Health Center resiliency:

1. **Adaptive Leadership:** Unlike technical problems that have a known solution, adaptive problems require adaptive leadership, which is essentially about fostering learning, managing change, and iterating even faster. Community Health Centers did it every day while managing COVID-19. It is up to us to figure out how to apply those skills to our core work in a sustainable and energizing way.
2. **Community Connection:** Community is baked into a Community Health Center's DNA, through patient advisory groups, direct community engagement, and a requirement that the Board is comprised of at least 51% patients. The future will depend on Community Health Centers being even more connected and more responsive to community needs, and the payoff will be even more loyalty and engagement in the mission.
3. **Mission:** At the end of the day, the mission of Community Health Centers – that all people live their healthiest possible lives – is what motivates and drives the work. Doubling down on mission is going to mean greater retention of the existing workforce and better recruitment and retention of a new workforce.

WPHCA is pleased to collaborate with and support Community Health Centers, policymakers, and partners across the State of Wisconsin in navigating this new terrain.

Stephanie Harrison
CEO, WPHCA

State Updates

LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

WPHCA, working alongside state lawmakers, agency staff, and partners, celebrates several wins from the 2021-2022 legislative session, and looks toward future priorities. We are proud to support the following legislation that was signed into law this biennium:

- [2021 WI Act 254](#): Authorizing certification of Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries which will help reduce access barriers for oral health care and increase efficiency in the provision of dental services for both children and adults.
- [2021 WI Act 158](#): Creating the Wis-Mac Veterans Program to mitigate loss of military medics and personnel transitioning from the armed forces to civilian life. The legislation creates a temporary flexibility for veterans with medical experience to practice in a health care setting while pursuing permanent state licensure in the health care field.
- [2021 WI Act 98](#): Allowing Pharmacists to provide billable services for Medicaid program enrollees, expanding access to clinical

pharmacy services, chronic disease prevention, and other valuable services, following submission of a Medicaid State Plan Amendment.

- [2021 WI Act 58](#): The state budget included investments in Medicaid rate increases for behavioral health and dental private practice providers, and an increase in grant funding for Community Health Centers.

WPHCA also supported various interstate licensure compacts to increase license portability for health care providers, worked closely with the Department of Health Services on telehealth policy, and moved the ball on several other key legislative priorities. WPHCA was encouraged that Dental Therapy (AB 169 / SB 181) and Extended Medicaid Post-Partum Coverage (AB 592 / SB 562) received Senate hearings, though both bills failed to move forward in the Assembly.

**Session
Recap**

2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

WPHCA will continue to work on oral health policy issues, including Dental Therapy, and extending Medicaid coverage for pregnant women next session. Health care workforce priorities are top of mind for all Community Health Centers, and WPHCA looks forward to exploring solutions with legislators.

Community Health Centers report critical shortages of entry level providers such as Medical and Dental Assistants, and behavioral health providers such as Licensed Professional Counselors and Substance Use Disorder specialists. MAs and DAs are important members of an integrated health care team, and shortages restrict the capacity of nursing and medical providers. Increasing capacity of training programs, providing incentives for education, and ensuring distribution of staff in underserved areas are key to supporting the Community Health Center workforce.

Contact WPHCA's Government Relations Specialist to discuss health care workforce issues and help identify policy, partnership, and funding solutions.

**2023-2024 State Policy
Agenda**

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

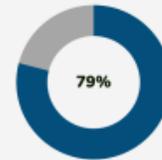
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

May 2022

There are 17 federally-designated Community Health Centers in Wisconsin with almost 200 service delivery sites, serving nearly 300,000 patients.

DID YOU KNOW?

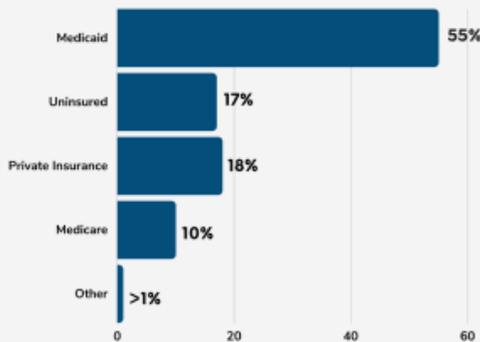
- Community Health Centers are clinics that provide **primary care services, including check-ups, behavioral health, dental care, substance use disorder treatment,** and enabling services like care coordination and community referrals.
- Wisconsin's 17 Community Health Centers are part of a national network of clinics that serve as the medical home for nearly **29 million people** of all ages in over 12,000 communities.
- Community Health Centers provide services to everyone **regardless of insurance status,** with fees adjusted based on a patient's ability to pay.
- Because of their special federal designation, Community Health Centers participate in unique programs like the **National Health Service Corps,** a program to locate providers in health care deserts.
- Community Health Centers receive **limited funding from public investments** to provide care for uninsured individuals and high-need populations (approximately one-third of revenue is state or federal grant funding).
- Every \$1 in federal investments generates \$7 in economic activity across Wisconsin, delivering over **\$652 million in economic activity annually.**



79% of Community Health Center patients live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.

The Federal Poverty Line in 2020 is \$26,200 for a family of four.

Insurance Status of Wisconsin Community Health Center Patients



WHAT MAKES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS UNIQUE?

Community Health Centers are:

- Dedicated to filling gaps in traditional health care systems by serving under-resourced communities
- Private or public not-for-profit organizations
- Located in or serving high need communities, based on federal requirements, which may be urban or rural areas
- Governed by a patient-majority Board of Directors
- Responsible for meeting performance and accountability requirements and publicly reporting clinical and financial data to the federal government

Community Health Centers sit at the crossroads of health care and public health. They are not:

- Hospitals or health systems
- Free and charitable clinics
- Local public health departments

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 **WPHCA**
Serving Wisconsin Community Health Centers

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

WPHCA HAS A NEW BRAND!



WPHCA STATE & FEDERAL ISSUES

**WPHCA ISSUE BRIEFS &
DATA**

**WPHCA ADVOCATE
RESOURCES**

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM
COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTERS**



PAVE THE WAY: PARTNERSHIP ACTIVATES VACCINE EQUITY

Partnership Community Health Center hosted over 50 pop-up vaccine clinics with over 60 community and multicultural partners from Latino, Black, Hmong, and refugee communities in conjunction with the Multicultural Coalition. PAVE the Way (Partnership Activates Vaccine Equity) does more than just vaccines. It also provides wrap around services and resources to help connect with the community.

[Read the Article](#)



KENOSHA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER AWARDED \$5.92 MILLION GRANT

In 2021, the Kenosha Community Health Center (KCHC) applied for the competitive **Healthcare Infrastructure Capital Investment Grant** administered by the Department of Administration on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. The proposed capital project was submitted with the support of local and state officials to serve as a pilot site for an innovative, evidence-based care model targeted to address health disparities and improve overall community health. The grant awarded to KCHC was the fifth highest in the field of 23 recipients.

[Read the Article](#)



N.E.W. COMMUNITY CLINIC MARKS 50 YEARS WITH NEW LOCATION

The N.E.W. Community Clinic is marking its 50th anniversary with the groundbreaking of its new \$4.5 million west side facility. The new clinic, going up on the northeast corner of N. Broadway St. and Mather St., will consolidate some of its west side locations into a single location. Like its other locations, the new clinic will provide healthcare to greater Green Bay residents who are uninsured or unable to afford medical care. The new clinic is expected to start welcoming patients in the spring of 2022.

[Read the Article](#)

SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM ALL 17 WISCONSIN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Federal Updates

WPHCA continues to prioritize **capital infrastructure funding**, strengthening **workforce programs** in under-served communities, and education regarding the **340B Drug Pricing Program** with Wisconsin's Congressional delegation. The majority of Wisconsin's House Representatives signed on to support a bipartisan letter in support of Community Health Centers in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

THANK YOU

Representatives
Steil, Lind,
Moore,
Fitzgerald,
Tiffany, and
Gallagher for
your support!



WPHCA is proud to serve Wisconsin's 17 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) also known as Community Health Centers (CHCs). Community Health Centers around the state have been deploying every tool available to continue providing care to patients throughout the pandemic. This newsletter includes information on Community Health Centers' priorities, resources, and stories from patients and clinics.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to [WPHCA](#) with any questions or to request additional information and constituent support to identify primary care providers. Find your local clinic [here](#).

[Visit WPHCA Website](#)

THANK YOU!

Contact WPHCA's Government Relations Specialist:
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Did you miss our last Quarterly Update? Find the [January 2022 Lawmaker Update here](#) and all Quarterly Newsletters and Press Releases [here](#).



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