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For Immediate Release

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WPHCA Celebrates National Health Center Week

Madison, WI - The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association (WPHCA), on behalf of the state's Community Health Centers (CHCs), joins the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) and over 1,500 Community Health Centers (CHCs) across the country to celebrate [National Health Center Week](#). We celebrate the vital role health centers play in providing affordable, effective, comprehensive primary care to over 300,000 Wisconsinites, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. This year, we highlight the essential role that CHCs play in improving access to oral health care for under-resourced communities, especially Medicaid enrollees and uninsured patients.

WPHCA's new [Oral Health Issue Brief](#) and [Workforce Report](#) demonstrate the impact of CHCs, while showing the significant work to be done to improve access to care in the state. Access to oral health care for Medicaid enrollees in Wisconsin continues to remain limited. About half of children and only one-fifth of Medicaid-enrolled adults received any dental care in the last year. However, CHCs are making progress - they have increased dental care sixfold over the last two decades, reaching 430,000 dental visits in 2025. Staffing challenges are a major limiting factor - over one-third of dental team positions are vacant, and the need for Hygienists in rural areas is especially acute. Without sufficient staff, patients face wait lists or limited access to preventative care, or patients will seek care only when necessary. For example, there were over 30,000 oral health-related emergency department visits in Wisconsin in 2024.

CHCs not only provide improved access to oral health care but also are cost-effective. For just 1% of national health care spending, CHCs deliver primary care to 14% of the U.S. population and [save the health care system billions of dollars](#) each year by preventing costly hospital visits. WPHCA and Wisconsin's 18 CHCs are proud to be part of this critical mission.

WPHCA's CEO, Scott Stewart, shared, "CHCs are a staple of the health care ecosystem across the state - not only filling gaps, but finding innovative approaches to meeting local community needs. Throughout Wisconsin, CHCs have deployed new mobile units to meet patients where they are, established physical locations in key areas of need across the state, and expanded services such as chiropractic care and substance use disorder services. During National Health Center Week, we celebrate the importance of CHCs to the daily fabric of our communities and look toward a future where every Wisconsinite is achieving their health potential."

Throughout this fall, CHCs will be hosting community education events, patient and staff appreciation days, and sharing more about their mission and impact. Reach out [to your local CHC](#) today to visit a clinic and learn more.



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WPHCA is the member association for Wisconsin's 18 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs, or Community Health Centers). Community Health Centers are non-profit, community-directed medical, dental, and behavioral health clinics. Learn more about WPHCA at www.wphca.org.