

National Health Center Week, 2019

A Proclamation

Whereas: For over 50 years, Community Health Centers have provided high-quality, affordable, comprehensive primary and preventive health care in our nation's underserved communities, delivering value to, and having a significant impact on America's health care system.

Whereas: As the country's largest primary care network, Health Centers are the health care home for 28 million Americans in over 11,000 communities across the nation. One in every twelve people in the United States gets their care in a community health center.

Whereas: Health Centers are a critical element of the health system, serving both rural and urban communities, and often providing the only accessible and dependable source of primary care in their communities. Nationwide, Health Centers serve one in every five residents of rural areas.

Whereas: Every day, Health Centers develop new approaches to integrating a wide range of services beyond primary care, including oral health, vision, behavioral health, and pharmacy services, to meet the needs and challenges of their communities.

Whereas: Health Centers are governed by patient-majority boards, ensuring that the patients of each Health Center are engaged in their own health care decisions.

Whereas: Health Centers are locally owned and operated small businesses that serve as critical economic engines, helping to power local economies by generating \$54.6 billion in economic activity in some of the country's most economically deprived communities.

Whereas: Health Centers nationally employ more than 220,000 people, including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified nurse midwives who work as part of multi-disciplinary clinical teams designed to treat the whole patient.

Whereas: The Health Center model continues to prove an effective means of overcoming barriers to healthcare access, including geography, income and insurance status - improving health care outcomes and reducing health care system costs.

Whereas: Health Centers reduce overall costs of care by helping manage patients chronic conditions, which keeps them out of costlier health care settings like hospital emergency rooms.

Whereas: Health Centers are on the front lines of emerging health care crises, providing access to care for our nation's veterans, addressing the opioid epidemic, and responding to public health threats in the wake of natural disasters.

Whereas: National Health Center Week offers the opportunity to celebrate America's over 1,400 health center organizations with over 11,000 service delivery sites, their dedicated staff, board members, patients and all those responsible for their continued success and growth since the first health centers opened their doors more than 50 years ago.

Whereas: During National Health Center Week, we celebrate the legacy of America's Health Centers, and their vital role in shaping the past, present, and future of America's health care system.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nathan A. McCaffrey, do hereby proclaim August 4-10, 2019 as National Health Center Week. I encourage all Americans to take part in this week by visiting their local Health Center and celebrating the important partnership between America's Health Centers and the communities they serve.

