

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS?

- Community Health Centers, or Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are non-profit, 501(c)(3) organizations that deliver primary medical, dental, mental and preventive health services in medically underserved areas and/or to medically underserved populations.
- Community Health Centers make up the largest health care system in the United States, serving over 15 million unduplicated users in 2005.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

- Must be located in a federally designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA) or serve a federally designated Medically Underserved Population (MUP)
- Must be a non-profit, tax exempt organization or public entity
- Must offer a sliding fee scale based on family size and income and provide services to all regardless of ability to pay
- Must have a Board of Directors, a majority of whom are consumers of the health center's services
- Must be subject to periodic reviews that audit compliance with administrative and financial requirements as well as clinical procedures

WHERE DO COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS OBTAIN FUNDING?

- Community Health Centers receive federal grants which partially support health center services. Less than thirty-four percent (34%) of the support for South Carolina's Community Health Centers comes from federal grants; the remaining sixty-six percent (66%) must be generated through patient revenue and other funding sources.

FACTS ABOUT SOUTH CAROLINA'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

- South Carolina's Community Health Centers served as the "health care home" for more than 295,000 patients in 2005, providing nearly over 907,000 medical encounters.
- There are twenty-one Community Health Center organizations in South Carolina, delivering high-quality primary, preventive, and behavioral health care at more than 132 locations across the state.
- South Carolina's Community Health Centers are community-based non-profit businesses which employ over 240 physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, and other providers all licensed in South Carolina, as well as more than 259 nurses. Overall, Health Centers provide more than 1650 jobs across the state.
- Over 39% of health center patients are children.

- Eighty-three percent (83%) of those served by Community Health Centers represent some of the state's most vulnerable populations; those without insurance or covered by Medicaid and Medicare.
- Seventy-Six (76%) percent of Community Health Center users are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Embedded in that statistic is the reality that Community Health Centers serve a large number of South Carolina's workforce, many of whom are not offered or are unable to afford employer-sponsored health insurance.
- Community Health Centers save state governments millions of dollars. According to the *Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured*, Bureau of Primary Health Care 330 funded Community Health Centers save the state of South Carolina over \$11 million annually by reducing the need for specialty care and hospitalization. The Kaiser Commission also estimated that South Carolina could save nearly \$120 million annually by increasing the number of patients receiving preventive and primary care at a local community health center rather than the emergency room.
- Because South Carolina's Community Health Centers have demonstrated that they are a best practice model for delivering high quality, accessible, culturally appropriate, and sensitive care in a cost effective manner – and in response to President Bush's Initiative to double the Community Health Center network - South Carolina's Community Health Centers have compiled a Five Year Growth and Resource Plan which identifies forty-four (44) communities with critical need for primary health care services. In addition to these new sites, the plan also identifies the need to expand capacity at twenty-three (23) existing sites and expand services to include dental, mental health, and pharmacy services at many sites. When fully implemented, this plan will expand South Carolina's Community Health Center network to provide a health care home for nearly half a million people.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS,
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