



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 2-2007

Support for State Funding to Community Health Centers and Safety Net Providers

Sponsors: Shelley S. Hughes, APCA Government Affairs Director

WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association recognizes the necessity of improving access to primary care for all Alaskans as one of the key ingredients in improving the public health of all Alaskans; and

WHEREAS access to primary care for medically underserved areas and for medically underserved populations affects public health outcomes in Alaska; and

WHEREAS a network of 26 Community Health Centers (CHCs) with 124 delivery sites in Alaska provide services to more than 80,000 people through 360,000 patient visits¹ in medically underserved areas and for medically underserved populations; and

WHEREAS CHCs are open to all residents, regardless of insurance status, and provide reduced cost care based on ability to pay through a sliding fee scale; and

WHEREAS Community Health Centers offer a wide range of onsite services including primary care, prenatal, dental, behavioral health, substance abuse, health screenings, pharmacy, preventive care, self-management programs, and services aimed at reducing barriers such as translation and transportation, distinguishing them from most private, office-based practices; and

WHEREAS 30% or 34,000² of Alaska's 114,000³ uninsured are served by CHCs; and

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA. Bureau of Primary Health Care Section 330 Grantees Uniform Data System (UDS) Calendar Year 2006 Data Alaska Rollup Report. Calendar Year 2006.

² Ibid.

³ Department of Labor and Workforce Development. *Alaska Population Projections 2007 to 2030*. July 2007. <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/pop/projections/AlaskaPopProj.pdf>



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WHEREAS more than 83% of the patients seen at CHCs in Alaska are below 200% of the FPL;⁴ and

WHEREAS 42% of the patients seen in CHCs are uninsured⁵ and 32% more uninsured patients received primary care in 2006 than in 2003;⁶ and

WHEREAS the growth in patients served at CHCs has steadily increased over the years: from 2002 to 2006, the number of patients served has increased over 65%;⁷ and

WHEREAS the cost of salaries, recruitment, locum tenens, insurance, equipment, health benefits, and utilities has risen, the cost of running Alaska's Community Health Centers has also increased: costs have more than doubled from 2002 to 2006;⁸ and

WHEREAS the level of the funding streams for CHCs in 2006 began declining: Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) grants, public insurance, self-pay, private insurance and indigent care funds; and

WHEREAS needs at Alaska's CHCs are mounting and are affecting the ability of the CHCs in Alaska to provide quality primary care to their target populations, which in turn will affect the health outcomes for the uninsured and medically underserved and public health overall ; and

WHEREAS state funding support will help alleviate the primary care workforce shortage crisis for Alaska's Community Health Centers and other safety net providers by providing local assistance with loan repayments, housing, relocation, signing bonuses, recruitment travel and other recruitment costs, and by providing a statewide recruitment support program; and

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA. Bureau of Primary Health Care Section 330 Grantees Uniform Data System (UDS) Calendar Year 2006 Data Alaska Rollup Report. Calendar Year 2006.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA. Bureau of Primary Health Care Section 330 Grantees Uniform Data System (UDS) Calendar Year 2006 Data Alaska Rollup Report. Calendar Year 2006.



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WHEREAS state funding support will provide the infrastructure for the Alaska Community Health Information Network, essential in improving the safety and quality of health care delivery, as well as cutting out waste and duplication, while allowing physicians more time to spend with patients and providing them with the decision support they need to give the best health care possible; and

WHEREAS state funding support will help educate individuals, families and communities through a CHC marketing campaign on the access available to all Alaskans at CHCs by providing assistance with local community marketing and statewide public awareness marketing; and

WHEREAS state funding support will assist the 124 CHC delivery site facilities with energy costs: heating fuel, electricity, and gasoline; and

WHEREAS state funding support will be offset by the provision of cost-effective primary care and the value of quality primary care for vulnerable populations who otherwise would not have access; and

WHEREAS medical expenses for health center patients are 41% lower compared to patients seen elsewhere;⁹ and

WHEREAS Medicaid patients who use the Community Health Centers as their regular medical homes save Medicaid 33% nationally,¹⁰ a percentage that is expected to be higher in Alaska due to saved travel costs; and

WHEREAS strengthening Alaska's Community Health Centers through state support would assist in reducing inappropriate emergency room use: based on 2007 figures, if CHCs in Alaska provided care for 4172 of the 20,858 non-urgent ER visits that occur each year, \$2.7 million could be saved annually; 8344 non-urgent visits to CHCs rather than to the ER would equate to \$5.4 million in savings;¹¹ and

⁹The Robert Graham Center, National Association of Community Health Centers and Capital Link. *Access Granted: The Primary Care Payoff*. August 2007.

¹⁰ Health Services Utilization and Costs to Medicaid of AFDC Recipients Served and Not Served by Community Health Centers. Duggar BC, et al. *Center for Health Policy Studies*. 1994.

¹¹ APCA calculations based on data from UDS, State of Alaska, and NACHC.



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WHEREAS 37 states provide direct funding to Community Health Centers totaling nearly \$632 million, Alaska is one of the few remaining states that does not currently provide direct funding support; and

WHEREAS the CHC program has repeatedly received high scores as a proven federal program by expectmore.gov from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget;¹² and

WHEREAS CHCs are providing access cost-effectively, efficiently, and in a quality manner in communities throughout Alaska and should be strengthened, expanded where needed, and funded accordingly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association supports an adequate financial appropriation from the state to strengthen and expand Community Health Centers and the safety net via workforce recruitment and retention support, health information technology infrastructure, public awareness marketing, and energy assistance for clinic facilities, so that primary care access may be available to all Alaskans, including uninsured, under-insured and underserved Alaskans and that the public health of all Alaskans will be positively impacted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association will promote and advocate for state funding support for Community Health Centers and engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts for this purpose such as:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to membership
- Circulation of advocacy action requests to partners and other individuals
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association's website and/or making this resolution available
- Participation in email advocacy campaigns
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums
- Contribution of op-ed articles and/or letters to the editor
- Contributions to radio programs via calling-in or scheduled interviews
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the position of the Alaska Public Health Association until it is withdrawn or modified by a subsequent resolution.

¹² U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Expectmore.gov (program assessment service). Retrieved 11-2-07 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10000274.2007.html>.



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Adopted by vote of the ALPHA general membership on the 3rd day of December, 2007.

Fiscal & Public Health Statement: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders. This action will improve Alaskan's access to primary care.