

Eric Borgerding & Stephanie Harrison: Health care partners call on Congress to address critical health programs

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Critical health programs, all of which have bipartisan support, have been fighting for Congressional attention for months. On September 30, funding for Community Health Centers (CHCs), the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), along with important Medicare policies like the Medicare Low-Volume Hospital Adjustment (LVA) and the Medicare Dependent Hospital (MDH), all expired. Children, families and those that provide care across Wisconsin rely on these programs to offer affordable services, well-trained doctors, and care that is close to home. While we continue to hear from some in Congress that these programs will be funded, the clock continues to tick down. We urge Congress to act now.

Funding for all of these programs are critical for many communities across the state. For example, Community Health Centers in Wisconsin stand to lose \$29 million in federal funding without action. That is funding currently used to provide care for families in financial need, including care management and much-needed addiction treatment and recovery services.

In addition, Community Health Centers and other critical providers in high-need areas will be negatively impacted without the NHSC's loan repayment program. This program helps recruit doctors and dentists and, currently, 150 FTE clinicians, including nearly 50 FTE dentists, utilize this valuable program.

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Both of our organizations also strongly support the continuation of the CHIP program, which provides access to health care for Wisconsin children and families. The estimated impact of could be as much as \$137 million to the State without federal funding. And finally, rural areas will be impacted without LVA and MDH adjustments—two targeted, but important Medicare reimbursement policies that help protect smaller, rural hospitals that see very high or very low Medicare volumes.

During this time of heightened change in the health care sector, ensuring ensure programs like these remain strong are essential to our nation's and Wisconsin's health care infrastructure.

Join us in calling on Congress to fund these programs before the end of the year.

- Borgerding is CEO of the Wisconsin Hospital Association; Harrison is CEO of the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association.