

# Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association: Thanks legislators for swift action in passing Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act

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The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association thanks the Wisconsin Congressional delegation in their bipartisan support in passing the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Act not only provides much needed relief for families and businesses impacted by the coronavirus crisis, but also provides crucial support for protecting the nation's health system and providers and extending their capacity to serve residents.

Support specifically for Health Centers includes:

- \$1.32 billion in Emergency Funding for Health Centers for the detection, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19. The funding will also support Health Centers in maintaining capacity and staffing level during the public health emergency related to coronavirus. The funding will be distributed to Health Centers across the nation through a similar formula to recent emergency funding provided by the Families First Act.
- A short-term fix, only through November 30, 2020, extending mandatory federal funding for the Community Health Center fund, National Health Service Corp, and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical program.
- Flexibility for the duration of the crisis in Medicare reimbursement of telehealth services provided at a Health Center.

The CARES Act also includes:

- Grant funding of \$100 billion for a new program for health care institutions, including Health Centers, to cover unreimbursed health care expenses or lost revenue attributable to this public health emergency.
- \$349 billion to support Small Business Administration (SBA) loans supporting small businesses and non-profits, like Health Centers, to provide support for payroll, insurance premiums, mortgage, rent and utility. The legislation also includes loan forgiveness criteria for employee retainment.

Health Centers in Wisconsin are assessing the needs of their communities daily and have initiated operational changes that serve to meet the needs of their clients and keep them safe, while at the same time curbing the spread of the coronavirus. The federal funding will assist them in maintaining staffing levels, and continuing to implement telehealth programs to support existing and new patients in their medical, behavioral and dental needs, provide emergency dental services to keep people out the emergency department, as well as triage and test for COVID-19 in targeted areas of the state.

The support at the federal level is critical to the health care system's response to this public health emergency. In particular, we need our federal Congressional delegation to continue to push for the implementation of legislation that strengthens and protects our health care workforce in this battle against coronavirus.