

Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorders

March 2018



Helping People Overcome Addiction

Leading the Way through Integrated Behavioral Health and Substance Use Treatment

Background

Health centers are leaders in integrating medical care, behavioral health, dental care, pharmacy, and other services all under one roof. As communities across America cope with a dramatic increase in the prevalence of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid addiction, health centers are meeting emerging challenges by: **breaking down barriers to care and expanding capacity to deliver SUD treatment.**

The Facts

- SUD often leads to or co-occurs with other social, psychological, or physiological problems. Health centers' comprehensive set of primary medical, behavioral health, dental, pharmacy and other services **ensure that patients receive holistic care.**
- **Each health center is required to serve all patients regardless of ability to pay or insurance status.** Where low-income and uninsured people often cannot afford SUD treatment, health centers offer them access to a wide range of affordable, high quality services, including **alcohol and drug counseling, pain management and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction.**
- With over 10,000 sites, health centers are providing care to some of the hardest to reach urban and rural populations across America. In fact, **health centers serve 1 in 6 Americans in rural communities, where the opioid epidemic has hit the hardest.**
- **Health centers make treatment more accessible** through services that facilitate access to the range of care needed to prevent, manage, and treat addiction, including outreach and education, transportation services and care coordination.

The Challenge

The demand for behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services is on the rise. Since 2010, health center patient visits for behavioral health services including mental health and substance use disorder services have grown by 83 percent, with providers seeing nearly 10 million patient visits for these services in 2016.

Our Request:

To better support health centers' ability to improve access to and delivery of high quality, cost effective behavioral health care and SUD treatment, Congress should:

- **Direct federal SUD prevention and treatment funding** opportunities to health centers;
- **Support a strong Medicaid program** – Medicaid is the largest payer of behavioral health services and a critical source of health insurance coverage for patients; and
- **Expand the list of approved reimbursable behavioral health providers** under Medicare and Medicaid to **build the health center workforce needed to develop and sustain substance use treatment programs.**