

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of Health Centers as a longstanding bipartisan solution to the primary care access problems facing this country. **During the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue to recognize Health Centers as providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care and that you work to ensure their continued sustainability and viability in the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation for FY2016.**

This year marks fifty years since the first health centers opened their doors. Since the inception of the program, health centers have worked to provide primary care, dental, behavioral, pharmacy and a variety of support services to America's most vulnerable patients and communities. Today, nearly 1,300 health center organizations serve more than 9,000 urban and rural communities nationwide. Health centers are the health care home for more than 23 million patients, including nearly 7 million children and more than 268,000 veterans. Health centers employ more than 156,000 Americans, and generate both economic impact and overall cost savings of over \$24 billion to the health care system.

Health centers have continually proven to be a worthwhile investment by delivering high quality, affordable health care - and the demand for health center services has grown in recent years. A reduction, interruption, or loss of funds may hurt these centers ability to fulfill their mission and cause site closures, staff layoffs, and most importantly, a loss of access to care for millions of patients nationally. Without access to primary care, many people, including the chronically ill, delay seeking health care until they are seriously ill and require inpatient hospitalization or care at an emergency room at a much higher cost to the entire health care system.

As Congress works to improve access to primary care in a cost effective manner and reduce health care expenditures, we urge the Subcommittee to continue to support Health Centers so they can continue to providing cost-effective primary care in this country. It is our hope that you will take into account the impending health center funding cliff as you determine

programmatic funding levels in the Subcommittee bill, but we also urge you to work with your colleagues on the committees of jurisdiction to develop a bipartisan solution that averts the funding cliff and ensures stability of access to care as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continual support of the vital role Health Centers play in preserving and expanding access to care in the communities they serve. We ask that as you continue to face difficult choices on budget priorities, that you support this proven and cost-effective model of care.

Sincerely,



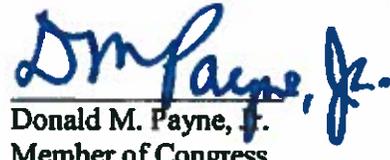
Gene Green  
Member of Congress



Gus Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
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Tammy Duckworth  
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