



The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

November 14th, 2017

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO). AAPCHO is a national not-for-profit association of 33 community-based health care organizations, 28 of which are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). AAPCHO members are dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration, and leadership to improve the health status and access of medically underserved Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AA&NHPs) in the U.S., its territories, and its freely associated states. We strongly support the health center program and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and call on the Senate to take immediate action to ensure that these critical programs are fully funded to ensure that children, families and all patients have access to the care and coverage they need. It is important to move forward quickly and with bipartisan policies and offsets that do not reduce care or coverage. Our health centers, our children and our families can no longer wait.

The health center system is essential to meet the needs of over 23 million patients across the country. AAPCHO's member centers provide care to over half a million patients a year in 12 states, including AA&NHPs, many of whom have limited English proficiency. To address the needs of these low-income patients, AAPCHO members provide culturally and linguistically concordant care within the health center model and are a critically important source of care in their communities.

The health center program serves disproportionately low-income, rural, and ethnic minority patients and is a fundamental aspect of the safety net, providing equal access to all regardless of ability to pay. Health centers reduce costs for the disproportionate number of patients they serve with costly chronic conditions by lowering preventable emergency room use and implementing care plans that are preventive, local and community supported. By providing community-based delivery sites with an emphasis on meeting patient needs, health centers are able to provide better care at a lower cost, saving the healthcare system over \$24 billion annually.

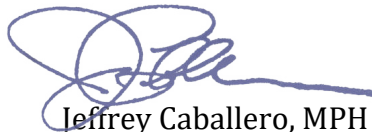
The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is an essential source of coverage for a significant number of AAPCHO member center patients. Of AAPCHO member patients, about 155,000 (nearly 30%) are 18 years of age and younger, and CHIP is a reliable source of coverage for many of them. CHIP plays a huge role in covering millions of children, ensuring that they are able to get the health care services they need to grow and thrive. Stable and

affordable health insurance coverage is important for all families---including the 25% of AA&NHPIs who rely on CHIP/Medicaid for their children's health care needs. Many states rely on CHIP funding to support the needs of their citizens; last minute changes disrupt state funding cycles, making it more difficult for states providing health care to be as effective as we know they can be.

While the Health Resources and Services Administration has stated that they have funding for Section 330 grants until the end of the year, the ongoing uncertainty of funding past that point puts health center leaders in a tough place. Provider contracts and operational costs need to be budgeted out. Decisions about the maintenance of health center infrastructure are needed, and are nearly impossible without the certainty of incoming funds. Programs that have extensive requirements are being phased out, and high-skilled health professionals with language skills and cultural competency are being let go. At the ground level, the delays make it very difficult for health centers to continue to provide as effective care as possible.

We appreciate the work done by both the House and the Senate to identify policies that would extend health center and National Health Service Corps funding for 2 years and providing 5 years of funding for CHIP. We urge the Senate to pass into law these policies in a bipartisan way as quickly as possible to meet the needs of the communities that health centers serve. **The Senate must act quickly to fund health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and CHIP so that health centers can continue to help the lives of millions, and so no child loses access to health insurance.**

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Caballero', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Caballero, MPH
Executive Director