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“Access to Quality Health Care for All of South Carolina”

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton St.  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Gov. Haley,

On behalf of the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association, I would like to thank you for your tremendous service to our state. Recently, you’ve received a request from Congressional leaders to weigh in on health care issues. As the dialogue continues around health care, I’d like to highlight the enormous work being done by the state’s 21 Community Health Centers. These centers provide comprehensive, high quality and cost-effective primary health care services to the medically uninsured and underserved.

Community Health Centers are beneficial not only for the patients they serve but also to the state’s bottom line. These private, non-profits have been a model of health care efficiency for more than 50 years as they produce significant local economic returns, reduce health disparities, serve constituents and decrease the taxpayer burden on the Medicaid fund. Community health centers serve more than one out of eight Medicaid patients in South Carolina. Also of note is that 91 percent of the state’s Community Health Center patient population is below 200 percent of the poverty line. In short, we provide access to health care to those who would otherwise not receive it in a cost-conscious way.

This coming legislative year, the two key pillars of stability for Community Health Centers – a strong Medicaid program and federal investments – face great uncertainty. Our mandatory funding must be renewed by this fall by Congress and we’re concerned about how proposed changes to Medicaid could affect our ability to deliver care. Removing or dramatically altering these pillars of Community Health Center stability could cost countless jobs and millions in tax revenue. Worst of all, these events would drive our patients away from quality, cost-effective care into costly ER visits or even no care at all.

We humbly ask for you to voice your support for Community Health Centers to Congress. Community Health Centers embrace the continuous effort to better the health care system, and we’re enthusiastic to be part of the solution.

Respectfully,

Lathan J. Woodard, CEO  
South Carolina Primary Health Care Association