



What Are Community Health Centers, How Do They Support Communities, & What Can The Legislature Do To Support Them?

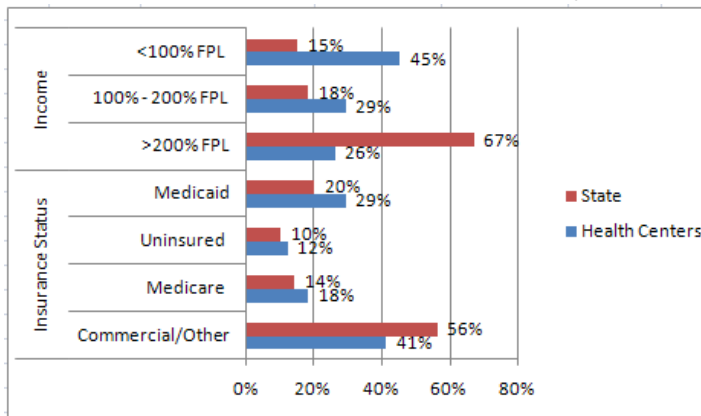
CHCs Play an Important Role in Supporting Underserved Communities through their Provision of High Quality Comprehensive Primary Care

- Community Health Centers (CHCs) are community-run non-profit primary care practices with a mission to provide comprehensive care to all Mainers within their service areas, regardless of insurance status or income level. In Maine this safety net is made up of 19 FQHCs, with over 100 sites statewide. In 2008, Maine CHCs served over 200,000 patients – including one in three MaineCare members – and employed over 1300 FTE across the network of health centers.
- Three quarters of all patients at FQHCs have family incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level. In a recent review by the Maine Health Access Foundation, FQHCs were found to provide much needed access to comprehensive primary care, including oral health and mental health services in underserved areas of Maine: 44% of the patients who were new patients of health centers formerly had no previous access to mental health, while 38% had no prior access to primary care.
- In 2006 generated over \$95 million in economic benefits for Maine communities and in 2009 brought in an extra \$20 million-plus in federal stimulus funding.
- The ARRA funds are being used for such activities as: electronic medical records to improve quality of care; construction of facilities to house needed mental health services; hiring new staff and/or expanding hours of operation to meet increased demand for services; preserving positions that would otherwise have been eliminated in such areas as patient outreach and HIT; and performing necessary and efficiency-improving maintenance, repairs, and replacement of aging facilities and equipment.

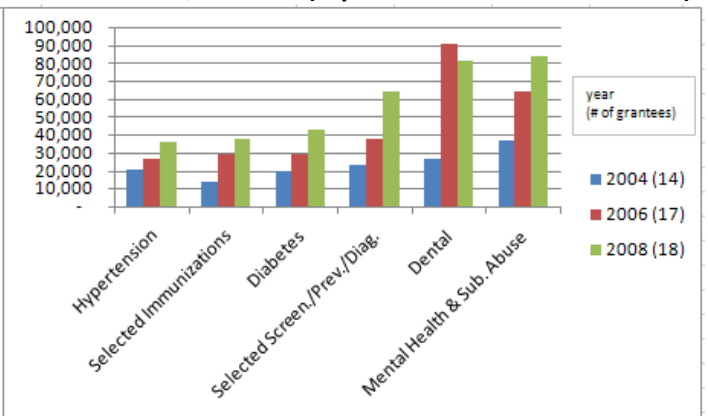
CHCs Deliver Improved Patient Outcomes and Significant Downstream Cost Savings

- By providing increased access to primary care – including mental health and dental care – to medically underserved areas of the state, FQHCs have improved the lives of thousands of Mainers and have saved millions of dollars by reducing higher spending downstream: national studies consistently demonstrate that FQHCs save their respective Medicaid programs three dollars for every dollar spent on FQHC services.
- In a recent review of national studies of CHC effectiveness, the authors of a 2009 published white-paper “found that total annual expenditures for CHC users were \$1,093 lower than for non-CHC users. Ambulatory care expenditures and inpatient hospital expenditures were \$402 and \$218 less (respectively) for CHC users as compared with non-CHC users.”

Health Center vs State Patient Characteristics, 2008



Selected Visits, 2004-08 (represents 52% of all '08 visits)



Turn Document Over for Policies that Support the Safety Net This Legislative Session...

Policies that Support the Safety Net This Legislative Session

LD 1408 - An Act To Establish the Universal Childhood Immunization Program

- Vaccination is one of the most effective things we can do to improve public health and reduce downstream health care costs. Every dollar spent on vaccinations results in direct medical cost savings of \$6.30.
- Whereas Maine once led the nation in vaccination childhood rates, we now rank in the bottom half of states. In 2007, fewer than 80% of Maine kids under age 3 got recommended immunizations, down from nearly 90% in 1995.
- LD 1408 addresses the problems that have led to Maine's decline by pooling public and private resources to leverage federal discounts and setting up a program to guarantee that all Maine kids have access to a uniform set of immunizations. It does so with no new General Fund appropriations.

LR 2357 - An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Create Access to Dental Care throughout the State

- There remains in Maine an overwhelming demand for access to dental care, which translates to a need for greater numbers of dentists practicing in the state, especially those intent on serving all, including MaineCare and low-income patients;
- LR 2357 describes a community-based model for training that places an emphasis on addressing Maine's dental shortage.

Payment Reform

- In 2009, LD 1444 instructed the Governor's Advisory Council on Health System Development (ACHSD) to work with providers, insurers, employers, and consumers to look at reforming the health care payment system to create incentives for providers to work together to reduce waste in the system and get better patient outcomes for lower costs.
- The ACHSD's report is due to the legislature this winter. Any resulting payment reform efforts should include an appropriate protection for FQHCs, with their track record of cost-effectively meeting patient needs.

Supplemental Budget

- In many instances, reductions to community based services and access to care promises to raise the total costs of health care by shifting the costs to more expensive settings such as hospital emergency departments and our county jails. Costs will also shift to our private insurance premium payers, worsening individual access to coverage and exacerbating the effect upon our business climate.
 - MPCA opposes the across-the-board rate 10% rate reduction.
 - MPCA opposes the proposed copayments for indigent elderly who are presently dependent on Drugs for the Elderly to gain access to prescription drugs.
 - MPCA opposes the cuts to community-based services in adult mental health, particularly cuts to NAMI and PIER.
 - MPCA opposes cuts to children's services and other supports necessary for safe and healthy families – notably DV prevention - and urges restoration of funds for the affected agencies.
- Two alternatives to create budget savings include:
 - MaineCare arrangements with FQHCs and other "340B" covered entities for savings on high-cost hemophilia and HIV/AIDS drugs.
 - Conducting a patient safety and pharmacy collaborative that involves partnerships between health care purchasers, providers and patients to improve health and reduce costs.