District of Columbia Community Health Centers: The Role of Medicaid

Community health centers (CHCs) deliver comprehensive, high-quality, affordable primary and preventive care and reduce overall costs for the health care system. CHCs improve access to essential health care services in communities with shortages of other providers, in both isolated rural and densely populated urban areas. They also integrate services such as behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, dental care, and pharmacy. CHCs depend primarily on Medicaid and federal grants to sustain their operations.

Community Health Centers in DC

- DC has 8 CHCs serving patients at 89 service sites. [1]

Patients Served at Health Centers in DC

- In DC, 184,916 people were served by health centers in 2023, including more than: [1]
    - 48,000 children under age 18 (26 percent of patients),
    - 1,400 children served in school-based service sites,
    - 998 veterans, and
    - 16,000 older adults age 65+.
- Two-thirds (65 percent) of patients had income at or below the federal poverty level. [1]

Quality of Care at Health Centers in DC

CHCs delivered preventive and screening services to their patients. For 2023, CHCs in DC reported the following. [1]

- 60 percent of pregnant patients received early prenatal care.

- 71 percent of adult patients were screened for tobacco use and got help to stop if using.

- 73 percent of patients 12 and older were screened for depression and had a follow up care plan if needed.

- 37 percent of adult patients ages 46-75 were screened for colon cancer.

- 32,952 patients with hypertension (high blood pressure) received care.

- 16,946 patients with diabetes received care.

Medicaid's Role in Sustaining CHCs in DC

- The 103,082 Medicaid enrollees served by CHCs in DC in 2023 [1] represent 37 percent—nearly 1 in 4—of the state's total Medicaid enrollees. [2]
- CHC patients enrolled in Medicaid include approximately: [1]
  - 39,000 Medicaid enrollees who are children under age 18, and
  - 63,000 adults age 18 and older, and
  - 8,900 who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid
- Over half (56 percent) of patients were covered by Medicaid. [1]
- Medicaid accounted for 47 percent of patient care revenue charges in 2023. [1]

CHCs Economic Impact on Communities

- CHCs in DC created good jobs of many types, employing 2,277 total FTEs in 2023. [1]
- These health care providers generate millions of dollars in positive economic impact in local communities. [3]

Impact of Medicaid Losses on CHC Patients and Care

Medicaid funding reductions now being considered by Congress would be devastating for patients and CHCs' ability to furnish care, resulting in widespread loss of insurance by health center patients as the state loses federal funding critical to maintaining program operations, and a crippling loss of Medicaid revenue needed to maintain CHC operations and staffing, followed by widespread reductions and closures.

Sources

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2. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. *Enrollment data for December 2023.* US Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/national-medicaid-chip-program-information/medicaid-chip-enrollment-data/monthly-medicaid-chip-application-eligibility-determination-and-enrollment-reports-data/index.html Retrieved January 12, 2025.
3. National Association of Community Health Centers. *DC Health Center Fact Sheet.* February, 2025. Available at: https://www.nachc.org/community-health-centers/state-level-health-center-data-maps/

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January 2025