

CHAD SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - 2018

The Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD) is a membership organization of the North Dakota and South Dakota community health centers (CHCs) dedicated to assuring high-quality primary and preventive health care through public policy and community-driven health services.

CHCs are dedicated to providing the components of a medical home to all in need: care that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, patient-centered, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally sensitive. CHCs are directed by community-based boards and receive federal funding to support care for the medically underserved in rural and urban communities throughout the Dakotas.

To achieve high-quality primary health care, CHAD supports these policy priorities:

Ensure Access to Care

Providing access to care regardless of insurance status or ability to pay is core to the CHC mission. In 2016, CHCs in South Dakota provided comprehensive, integrated care to more than 69,000 individuals at 42 delivery sites in 33 communities. Of those individuals, more than 17,500 were uninsured, paying what they are able according to a sliding fee scale schedule. Health coverage is critical for CHC financing, and when our patients have access to coverage, we are able to serve more patients and expand services to existing patients. Health coverage also gives our patients access to the full range of health care services when they need them.

Enhance Medicaid Services

CHAD supports access to health care for all South Dakotans and Medicaid coverage ensures quality health care services are available to the state's most vulnerable populations. As a result, CHAD is supporting:

- **House Bill 1300**, which allows for Medicaid enhancements by capturing the savings generated for health care and preserving it for use in the health care sector.
- Recommendations generated by the **Health Care Solutions Workgroup** because they will allow for enhanced Medicaid services for Medicaid beneficiaries.
- While there is not a bill that would expand Medicaid being considered during this legislative session, we **continue to support expanding Medicaid** in order to make health care affordable for those who need it most.

Expand the Health Care Workforce

Difficulty in recruiting health professionals has been identified by CHC leaders as one of the top threats to the long-term viability of community-based health care in South Dakota. For that reason, CHAD is supporting:

- **Senate Bill 31**, which would fund the recruitment programs that provide workforce for community health centers. Health centers have benefited from having dentists, nurses and physicians enrolled in these recruitment programs.
- **House Bill 1319**, legislation introduced by Governor Dennis Daugaard that would ease licensure requirements for professionals moving across state lines. This initiative would allow health centers to broaden their recruitment options and reduce some of the barriers to sustaining a strong workforce.
- **Reimbursement for telehealth services**. Community health centers in South Dakota make use of telehealth to provide primary care and behavioral health services in rural and frontier communities. Telehealth expands access to health care services and extends the services that can be provided by the existing workforce.

Reduce Tobacco Use

CHAD has been a leader on tobacco issues in the past and supports the efforts to decrease tobacco consumption to reduce health care costs and improve the health and well-being of all South Dakotans. To further that mission, CHAD is supporting:

- **House Bill 1250**, which would increase the minimum age for purchasing tobacco to 21 years of age.
- **House Bill 1274**, which would raise the tax on tobacco by \$1 per pack and dedicate the new revenue to technical school tuition, community support providers and nursing homes.