



Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas

CHAD Policy Priorities - 2017

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:

Reauthorization of Medicaid Expansion

Providing access to care regardless of ability to pay is core to the CHC mission. Health coverage enables us to serve more patients and it gives our patients access to the full range of health care services when they need them.

When we ask patients what health coverage means to them, we get answers like:

- One patient told the story of how services received under Medicaid enabled her to work more hours and eventually earn enough to purchase private insurance on the Marketplace.
- North Dakota Medicaid expansion is described as “lifesaving.”
- Consumers describe how thankful they are; if Medicaid were not here, they don’t know what they would do.
- A man went 18 years without insurance because he couldn’t afford it. Now he’s “glad the ACA is here.”
- A homeless person said, “I’ve never asked for anything in my life but I need health coverage.”
- Many individuals expressed fear of losing their current coverage.

Medicaid expansion is a critical part of the financing picture that enables CHCs to be successful in underserved rural and urban communities. In 2015, 30.1% of our patients received Medicaid (up from 24.6% in 2013) while 8.7% received Medicare, 28.5% were uninsured, and 32.5% had private coverage.

Increased Medical Workforce Capacity

Inability to recruit health professionals has been identified by CHC leaders as one of the top threats to the long-term viability to community-based health care in North Dakota. Please support common sense licensing standards that allow North Dakota providers to recruit across state lines and reduce unnecessary barriers to licensure in North Dakota. CHAD also supports state-based loan repayment programs for health professionals who provide care for the underserved.

Behavioral Health Services

CHCs provide an integrated approach to preventive and primary care that includes behavioral health services (mental health and substance abuse treatment), dental care, pharmacy services and other support services such as help enrolling in health insurance. As North Dakota grapples with its need for additional behavioral health services, we hope that you will look to CHCs as a part of the solution and keep in mind the importance of integrated primary care and behavioral health services.
