



Community Health Centers Receive Federal Support

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Concord, NH – Bi-State Primary Care Association greatly appreciates the federal support from the Congressional delegation and the President in the recently approved federal budget for New Hampshire’s Community Health Centers (CHCs).

The federal budget includes one-time total funding of approximately \$900,000 that will be shared among 14 CHCs later this year to: 1) provide primary care and preventive services to patients who are unable to pay for their care due to lack of jobs and/or health insurance; 2) support the purchase of necessary small equipment; and 3) offset the growing cost of recruiting physicians to work in medically underserved areas of the state.

This one-time money will make small contributions to each of the CHCs to help keep the doors open to everyone in their community at a time when their financial health is being strained by the impact of the economy on their patients and their Center. The money does not replace the need for the existing state funding that is critical to their very survival.

A summary of an October 2008 report on the financial condition of CHCs in New Hampshire presented by Howard Rivenson, PhD, reported that:

- CHCs financing is a fragile puzzle. CHCs are at high risk of financial distress. Each of the pieces for revenue generation (operations, state-federal-private grants, investments, and contributions), expense control, and capital planning and financing must be in place or the puzzle will not be completed.

- CHCs receive critical and necessary grant funds from federal and state sources to help support their practices.
- CHCs operate with very low margins which over the past five years have decreased.
- CHCs do not generate sufficient funds from patient care to provide services, purchase equipment and upgrade facilities.
- CHCs operate with very limited cash reserves.
- CHCs have incurred substantial debt.

CHCs are fragile because of the large percentage of uninsured patients that they serve. Tess Kuenning, Executive Director of Bi-State Primary Care Association stated that, “the combination of federal, state, and private funding that they receive to serve patients is critical to keeping their doors open. We are deeply grateful to our New Hampshire Governor, State Legislature, Congressional delegation, and our President for their support.”

Bi-State Primary Care Association is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the delivery of primary and preventive health services to the people of New Hampshire and Vermont with special emphasis on the medically underserved. For more information concerning CHCs or Bi-State Primary Care Association, please visit www.bistatepca.org