

# WISCONSIN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

**Lawmaker Updates & Resources**  
June 2021



WPHCA is proud to serve the 17 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) also known as Community Health Centers (CHCs) in the state of Wisconsin.

Community Health Centers around the state have been working hard to provide care to their community members during the current pandemic. This newsletter includes information on Community Health Centers' priorities, resources, and stories from patients and centers. Please do not hesitate to reach out to [WPHCA](#) with any questions, concerns, additional information, and constituent support.

## **In this Update**

What is a Community Health Center?

Community Health Centers in the News

WPHCA's 2021-2023 State Budget Priorities

Teledentistry & Wisconsin Health Centers

Federal Policy Priorities

# National Health Center Week 2021: *The Chemistry for Strong Communities*

## WPHCA's Annual Report

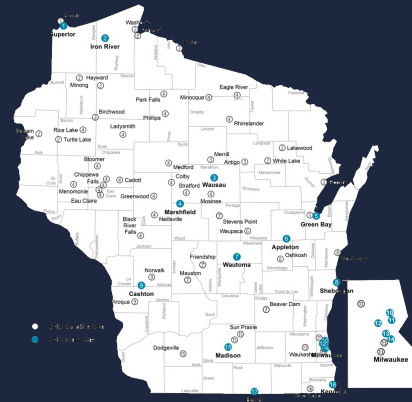
Check out WPHCA's social media for more updates and information!



### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

Community Health Centers provide comprehensive primary and preventative health care services, which include medical, dental, behavioral health, and substance use care, plus connections to enabling and social services. This work is supported in part by federal grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration. Community Health Centers are:

- Private or public not-for-profit
- Located in or serving high need communities
- Governed by a patient-majority board of directors
- Providers of supportive services that promote access to health care
- Providers of services to everyone, with fees adjusted based on a patient's ability to pay.



[Access](#)  
[Bridge](#)  
[Beloit CHS](#)  
[Family Health Center of](#)  
[Marshfield](#)  
[Family Health/La Clinica](#)  
[Gerald L. Ignace Indian](#)  
[Health Center](#)  
[Kenosha](#)  
[Lake Superior](#)  
[Lakeshore](#)  
[Milwaukee Health Services,](#)  
[Inc \(MHSI\)](#)  
[N.E.W.](#)  
[Northlakes](#)  
[Outreach](#)  
[Partnership](#)  
[Progressive](#)  
[Scenic Bluffs](#)  
[Sixteenth Street](#)

*Need a point of contact for your local Health Center?*  
Contact [Richelle](#) for more

# COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IN THE NEWS



**'Come meet me at this fire': Why this health center is taking a new approach to mental health services, Milwaukee NNS**



**Wisconsin Public Health Association Selects Nominees for 2021 Public Health Awards, WPHA**



**Senator Baldwin discusses improving perinatal workforce at Milwaukee roundtable, CBS58**

## WPHCA'S 21-23 Budget Priorities

As the backbone of the health care safety net, Community Health Centers provide cost-effective primary and preventive care that helps people get and stay healthy. See the document below to see WPHCA's budget and legislative priorities for the 21-23 biennial budget session.

WPHCA's priority is an increase in the Community Health Center State Grant. Did you know:

- The Governor's proposed budget includes an increase to the State Grant of \$2 million per year (LFB Summary: Health Services—Public Health Item 4, Page 280).
- An identical recommended increase in the State Grant has been introduced via bipartisan legislation authored by Sens. Testin and Ballweg and Reps. Novak and Magnafici

### Wisconsin Community Health Centers Biennial Budget & Legislative Priorities Spring 2021

#### Budget Priorities

*This year, the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association (WPHCA) has identified several items that would directly benefit Community Health Centers and patients. Relevant priority areas in the proposed budget (LFB Summary Items below) include:*

1. \$2 million annual increase to the Community Health Center State Grant (DHS, Public Health Item 4) – also a standalone bill – AB 66/SB 59
2. Telehealth Parity for commercial payers (OCI Health Insurance Item 8) and broadband infrastructure investment to ensure reliable, affordable access to high-speed internet (PSC Broadband Provisions Item 1)
3. Ensuring fair protections and ending price discrimination for entities such as Health Centers that participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program that supports affordable medications for patients (OCI Drug Costs and Pricing Item 13);
4. Improving access to dental care through licensing Dental Therapists – also a standalone bill – SB 181 – and funding loan forgiveness for dentists practicing in rural areas (DSPS Item 16 and University of Wisconsin System 23)
5. Strengthening and preserving the Medicaid program including expanding post-partum eligibility to one year (DHS - Medical Assistance Item 12) and reimbursement for Community Health Workers (DHS - Medical Assistance Item 17 and DHS - Public Health 1)

#### Other Areas of Interest

*We are also celebrating multiple budgetary equity provisions, standalone bills, and opportunity areas with bipartisan interest for identifying sustainable solutions:*

1. Expanding behavioral health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services, including the focus on school-based services and additional support to increase access for populations such as students and veterans (DHS - Medical Assistance Items 13, 14, 16; DPI Item 9; and VA Item 5)
2. Implementing childcare initiatives that would afford families of Health Center staff and patients new options for early childhood education (DCF Item 12)
3. Investing in a Community Reinvestment Fund, community-based equity initiatives, and a Community Health Benefit Waiver which would provide funding for efforts to expand Community Health Worker models and advance work to address social determinants of health such as housing and food insecurity (DHS - Medical Assistance Item 17 and 18)
4. Streamlining and increasing capacity for licensing, with a focus on dental and behavioral health professions (DSPS 2 and 4)

(2021 Assembly Bill 66/2021 Senate Bill 59). SB 59 has already received a public hearing and was voted out of the Senate Committee on Health. A similar increase was authored and introduced late last session by Sen. Marklein and Rep. Novak.

The State Grant currently accounts for under 5% of all Wisconsin Community Health Center funding. It has been twelve years (FY 09) since the last time Wisconsin Community Health Centers have received an increase in their State Grant. Since the last increase:

- The number of patients seen by Community Health Centers has increased from around 199,000 to over 300,000 per year; and
- The number of locations where Community Health Centers serve patients has increased from 73 to almost 200 sites.

State Grant funding is flexible and can be used to help fund Community Health Center projects that meet local needs. Community Health Centers have identified urgent needs for further investment in dental and behavioral health services, including Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment, which would be funded by increased funding in the State Grant. It is also a sustainable funding source, enabling Community Health Centers to plan for future projects such as expansions or new service lines to help meet specific needs geared to Wisconsin communities.

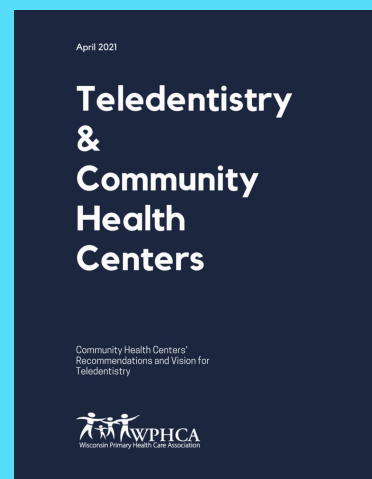
To discuss the State Grant, or indicate your support for an increase, please contact [Richelle](#) for further details about WPHCA and lawmaker efforts to advance this high priority issue in the state budget process.

## Teledentistry & Community Health Centers

In response to the disparities in oral health care access and high needs across the state, Wisconsin Community Health Centers have played a pivotal role in increasing dental services, especially for underserved populations. In 2019, 57% of patients served at Wisconsin Community Health Centers were Medicaid members. Community Health Centers provided dental services for 147,340 patients, accounting for 37% of Community Health Center office visits in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted Community Health Centers' ability to provide routine dental care in person. Given great existing needs, Community Health Centers were able to leverage temporary changes to telehealth policy that allowed them to meet patient needs in more creative ways, as highlighted in the accompanying brief.

Check out WPHCA's brief, "Teledentistry & Community Health



Centers" to see what is working, see Community Health Center examples, the future of teledentistry, and recommendations for permanent Medicaid teledentistry policy.

### Teledentistry Brief

*WPHCA plans to host a webinar in August, inviting lawmakers and partners to learn more about patient-centered care provided via telehealth at Community Health Centers. Stay tuned for an invitation in July.*

# COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IN THE NEWS



**Bilingual COVID-19 pop-up vaccination clinic offered Saturday in Menasha, NBC26**



**NorthLakes Community Clinic establishes endowed Indigenous Health Care Scholarship, APG WI**



**Safety a priority as Juneteenth Day Parade preps to return to in-person celebration, TMJ4**

## Federal Policy Priorities

Community Health Centers across the country currently provide care to 30 million people in 1,400 medically underserved communities. No matter who you are or your ability to pay, you can get high-quality care, whether it's medical, dental, behavioral health, or substance use disorder treatment. Our patient base could grow by between 8 and 11 million patients over the next four years with appropriate resources. In order to continue providing care to our patients, the National Association of Community Health Centers has prioritized the following policy areas:

- **FY22 Appropriation:** We are requesting \$2.2 billion in appropriations, which would provide additional funding to 1,400 CHCs to support ongoing primary care operations. This funding provides the foundation on which Community Health Centers can open their doors to medically underserved



communities, allows these health care homes to expand the range of services regardless of patient insurance status, and enables them to care for seven million uninsured patients. Increased appropriations would allow Community Health Centers to expand these services and build greater capacity in areas of need, such as behavioral health and oral health services. ([See FAQ](#))

- **Infrastructure**: To continue strengthening our communities, we must improve the Community Health Center infrastructure. The last significant investment in infrastructure for Community Health Centers was in 2009, when Community Health Centers served less than 18 million patients. Today, Community Health Centers have nearly doubled their patient base. Infrastructure investment would allow Community Health Centers to expand services to the growing aging population, public housing residents, agricultural workers, rural residents, veterans, and our neighbors experiencing homelessness. It would also allow Community Health Centers to expand critical services such as oral health, mental health, substance use disorder, and school-based Community Health Center services. ([See FQHC Capital Investment Trends & Needs Report](#))
- **340B Pharmacy Program**: Community Health Centers invest *every penny* of 340B savings into activities that expand access to their medically-underserved patients. This is required by Federal law, Federal regulations, and the Community Health Center mission. Common examples include expanded SUD treatment, clinical pharmacy programs, and adult dental services. Community Health Centers are looking to HHS for enforcement of 340B protections, and for Congress to enact further specific protections for the 340B covered entities. ([See Press Release](#))
- **Telehealth Advocacy**: With the transition from in person to virtual services increasing dramatically during the pandemic, Community Health Centers rely on telehealth services to continue operating their facilities and serving the most vulnerable in their communities. We need to make sure that Community Health Centers have the necessary tools to provide high-quality, modern, patient-centered care. ([See Telehealth Policy Priorities](#)) WPHCA has endorsed the CONNECT for Health Act. This bipartisan legislation:
  - Includes provisions to permanently allow FQHCs to provide telehealth services in Medicare as "distant sites" and be paid equal to the Medicare PPS rate;
  - Allows any FQHC to receive the telehealth originating site facility fee regardless of location and recognize a patient's home as a qualifying originating site; and
  - Includes a preamble to support audio-only coverage.

# Save the Date! National Health Center Week 2021: Aug 8-14



National Health Center Week (August 8 – 14) is an annual celebration with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's Health Centers over the past five decades. This year, Community Health Centers are preparing to demonstrate "The Chemistry for Strong Communities."

Community Health Centers serve as the beacon of strength, service, and care in their communities. In moments of pain and loss, they offer support and love. In moments of triumph, they offer hope and a vision for the future. Let's come together this week to celebrate the roles Community Health Centers have played in both our recent moments of loss and triumph.

Please contact your local Community Health Center for information about public events the week of August 8. This is a great opportunity for a visit or community collaboration!

---

## WPHCA'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

WISCONSIN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE  
ASSOCIATION

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## In Annual Report:

- About WPHCA
- Introduction
- Anti-Racism Statement
- Overview
- Strategic Goals
- Strategic Commitments
- Training & Technical Assistance
- Timeline of CHC-related events
- Policy Priorities & Engagement
- Looking Ahead

To see even more data on Wisconsin Community Health Centers check out our most recent [UDS Brochure](#).

[WPHCA's 2020 Annual Report](#)

## THANK YOU!

Contact WPHCA's Government Relations Specialist:

**Richelle Andrae**

[randrae@wphca.org](mailto:randrae@wphca.org)

**(608) 443-2953**

Did you miss our last Quarterly Update? Find the [February 2021 Lawmaker Update](#) here and all [Quarterly Newsletters](#) and [Press Releases](#) here.

