

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

We want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support and recognition of Health Centers as a longstanding bipartisan solution to the primary care access problems facing this country. **During the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Appropriations process, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue to recognize Health Centers as providers of high quality, cost-effective primary care and that you work to ensure the continuation of the innovative, high-value health center model within the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies legislation.**

Since the first health centers opened their doors more than fifty years ago, health centers have provided primary care, dental, behavioral, pharmacy, vision, and a variety of complementary services to America's most vulnerable patients and communities. Today, thanks to longstanding bipartisan support, well over 1,300 health center organizations serve more than 9,000 urban and rural communities nationwide. Health centers are the health care home for more than 24 million patients, including more than 7 million children and nearly 300,000 veterans. Health centers employ more than 175,000 Americans, and generate billions of dollars both in economic impact and overall cost-savings to the health care system.

Health centers have continually proven to be a worthwhile investment by delivering high quality, affordable health care, and the demand for health center services has grown in recent years. Combined with the investments made on a bipartisan basis through the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization of 2015 (MACRA), the annual appropriation is critical to the operations of health centers nationwide as they meet that demand. Without access to primary care, many people, including the chronically ill, delay seeking health care until they are seriously ill, leading to higher costs and worse health outcomes. The health center model is designed to address this and other health challenges by fostering innovation and high-value care at the community level.

As Congress works to improve access to care, reduce health care expenditures, and promote patient-centered solutions to our health care challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue to support Health Centers, which have a proven track record of success. Thank you for your continued support of the vital role Health Centers play in preserving and expanding access to care in the communities they serve.

Sincerely,


Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

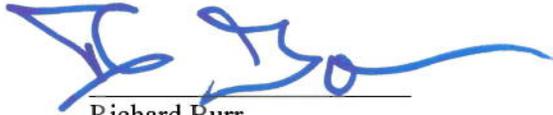

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



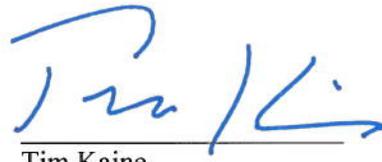
Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senator



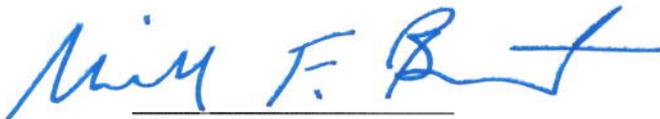
James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



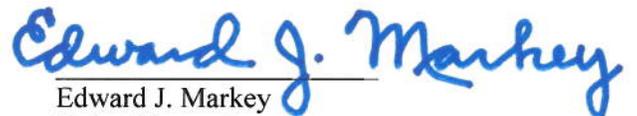
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



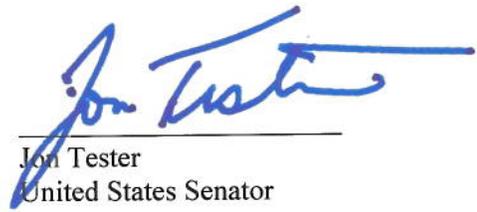
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



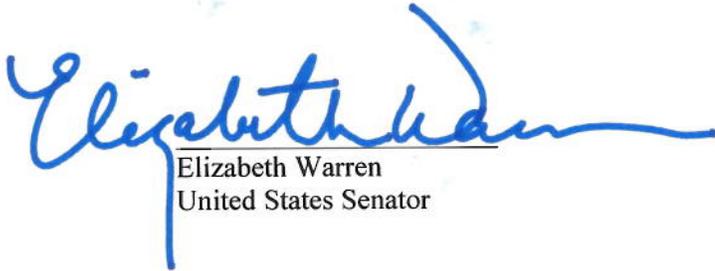
Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



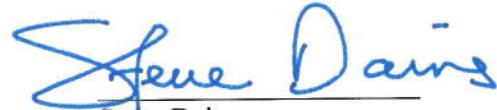
Christopher S. Murphy
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Jon Tester
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



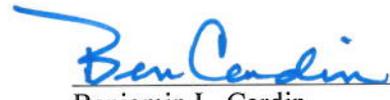
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



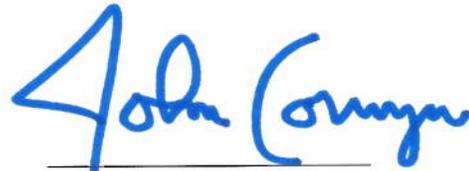
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Mark Kirk
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

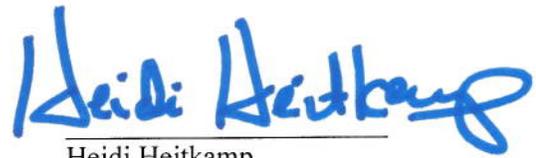

Brian Schatz
United States Senator


Gary C. Peters
United States Senator


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator


Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator


Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator


Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

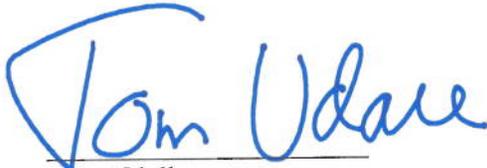

Richard J. Durbin
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David Vitter
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Robert Menendez
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Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

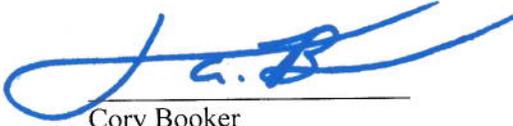

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



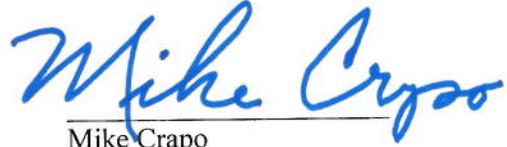
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



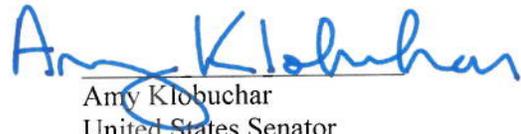
Cory Booker
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



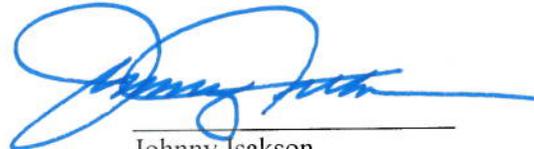
Deb Fischer
United States Senator



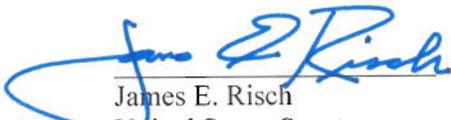
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



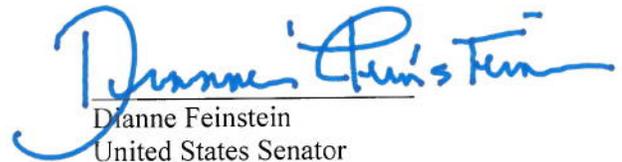
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
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Al Franken
United States Senator



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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Marco Rubio
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David Perdue
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Dan Sullivan
United States Senator