



AGENDA ITEM NO.
C-3

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: November 14, 2014

Date: November 3, 2014
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Virginia Bass
Subject: Open Door Community Health Centers Letters of Support.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the Board of Supervisors ratify authorization for the Chair to sign the letter of support.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION: The Board of Supervisors has been asked to send a letter in support of Open Door Community Health Centers federal funding. Open Door Community Health Centers, including 1200 plus other Federally Qualified Health Centers across the country are facing devastating reductions of up to 70% of grant funding at the end of the fiscal year. It is vital that Congress understand the value and the impact the Federal Qualified Health Centers have in our local communities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT: N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS: Letter of Support.

Prepared by Kathy Hayes Signature Virginia Bass
REVIEW: Auditor _____ County Counsel _____ Personnel _____ Risk Manager _____ Other _____

TYPE OF ITEM:
 Consent
 Departmental
 Public Hearing
 Other _____

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. _____

Meeting of: _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
Upon motion of Supervisor Fennell Seconded by Supervisor Bass
Ayes Sundbug, Lovelace, Bohn, Bass, Fennell
Nays _____
Abstain _____
Absent _____

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: November 14, 2014

By: _____
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5TH STREET

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501-1153 PHONE (707) 476-2390 FAX (707) 445-7299

November 3, 2014

Senator Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Diane Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman Jared Huffman
1630 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Boxer, Senator Feinstein and Congressman Huffman:

On behalf of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for the Community Health Center program and to bring to your attention the critical role health centers play in Humboldt County. As we work together to curb the rising cost of health care in this country, health centers will play a critical role in addressing our local and federal budget issues. I am asking for your help to preserve their vital role in our local health care system.


As you know, Humboldt County's centers provide high-quality, cost effective primary and preventive health care to low income and medically underserved communities across Northern California. Today, our health centers serve as the health care home for 45,506 patients at 13 delivery sites across Humboldt and Del Norte counties. 86 percent of our health center patients are below 200 percent of poverty with 28 percent uninsured and 30 percent covered by Medicaid. With many state and county residents living in rural areas, a local Health Center is often the only option for access to high-quality care.

Our local health centers provide primary care, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and a variety of support services to Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. These efforts keep patients out of costlier health care settings, coordinate care amongst different health providers, effectively manage chronic conditions, and save \$1,200 per patient per year – a total annual savings of \$24 billion to the entire health care system. In addition, health centers are locally-owned and directed by patient majority boards ensuring the centers are accountable and responsive to the needs of the community, lower health care costs, and create jobs and economic activity in the communities they serve.

It is imperative the health centers in our community have funding stability so they can continue to meet the pressing needs of those who would otherwise go without access to basic primary care. Health centers are currently facing a significant loss of federal funding in the years ahead, which would immediately reduce access to care in our community. Limited access to primary care has an impact on health at significant costs to the taxpayer. Those without access, including the chronically ill, often delay seeking health care until they are seriously ill and require inpatient hospitalization or care at an emergency room at a much higher cost to all payers- local and federal. Health centers play a vital role in preserving and expanding access to care in the communities they serve and with millions of individuals still lacking access to primary care, we will be relying on them now more than ever.

I greatly appreciate your history of support for Health Centers and I am hopeful we can count on your future support as we work to meet the persistent demand for affordable primary care in Humboldt County while at the same time responsibly addressing our budgetary needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Bohn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rex Bohn, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

RB:kh

cc: Herrmann Spetzler, CEO
Open Door Community Health Centers