



Connecting Communities Who Care

TENNESSEE PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Jackie Crumley

p: 615.329.3836 x30

f: 615.329.3823

e: jackie@tnpca.org

Health Center Reauthorization Passes in Senate *Critical for reaching Health Care Home Tennessee goals*

Nashville, TN — After several years of Community Health Center supporters advocating for reauthorization of the federal Health Centers Program, both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted in favor of renewing this program. Senator Lamar Alexander and Senator Bob Corker, Tennessee's U. S. Senators were co-sponsors and supporters of the bill (S 901), which was passed in the Senate unanimously on Tuesday. The bill continues funding the program that provides quality, comprehensive health care for over 17 million individuals nationwide and over 270,000 Tennessee residents.

The Tennessee Primary Care Association (TPCA), on behalf of Tennessee's Community Health Centers and the hundreds of thousands of patients they serve, would like to thank Senator Alexander and Senator Corker for their support of the program. In addition to reauthorizing the program through 2012, this bill will preserve the program's core elements, enabling uninsured and low-income individuals to access care at 1,150 Community Health Centers across the country, including over 150 sites in Tennessee. It will also grant liability protection for physicians who volunteer at Health Centers or travel to provide services in emergencies.

"In addition to the bill passing, the support of Senator Alexander and Senator Corker is key in strengthening and expanding the ability of Community Health Centers to be the health care home for so many medically underserved individuals, families, and communities that otherwise would not have access to health care," said Kathy Wood-Dobbins, Chief Executive Officer, TPCA. "Our Health Center community across the state appreciates the Senators' support by helping to pass the Health Centers Renewal Act in the Senate."

Now, Members of the House and Senate will have the opportunity to merge their two versions into one piece of legislation that is imperative as the Association begins a new campaign. "**Health Care Home Tennessee**" calls for continued investment and partnership in Tennessee's Health Centers to strengthen their infrastructure and provide the necessary tools for growth so that they can serve over 500,000 Tennesseans by the year 2015.

"Strengthening the primary care infrastructure in the state will lead to long-term systemic savings and a healthier state as a whole," said Wood-Dobbins. In order for the Health Centers to keep up with the rising demand for accessible and affordable health care in Tennessee, they will require sustainable state and federal funding, increases in the primary care workforce, capital funding for renovated or new facilities, a focus on quality care that improves health outcomes and, of course, continued support in Congress.

###

Tennessee Primary Care Association (TPCA) is a nonprofit corporation connecting Tennesseans with a health care home, especially the medically underserved. Since its inception in 1976, TPCA committed to 1) identifying unmet needs and gaps in service access, 2) developing systems of care, 3) advocating for resources, and 4) promoting awareness of Community Health Centers. Membership includes 34 nonprofit primary care clinics across the state operating over 150 sites providing comprehensive medical care.

416 Wilson Pike
Circle

Brentwood, TN
37027

615-329-3836

www.tnpca.org