

## MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### DELAWARE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS TO BENEFIT FROM HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

The landmark health insurance reform legislation passed on Sunday March 21, 2010 in the House of Representatives and signed on March 23, 2010 by President Barrack Obama will provide significant increases to federally qualified health center (FQHC) funding over the next five years. The reconciliation bill, which goes to the Senate for approval later this week, provides \$1 billion in guaranteed additional Community Health Center funding for fiscal years 2011, which begins October 1, 2010. The total funding level for community health centers under this legislation will increase by \$9.5 billion over the next five years. In addition, the bill also provides \$1.5 billion for facility and capital funding costs that will be essential in helping health centers cover expansion costs. In 2009 over 1,000 FQHC organizations across the nation received approximately \$1.9 billion in funding and served over 17 million patients, the majority of whom were low-income or did not have health care coverage<sup>i</sup>.

“The health insurance reform legislation provides community health centers in Delaware with a tremendous opportunity for growth”, states Miguel McInnis, Chief Executive Officer for the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC). “In turn, the beneficiaries of this growth will be Delaware’s underserved and vulnerable populations; those who are low-income or without health insurance. This is a momentous day not just for our nation, but for Delawareans as well”.

In 2008, FQHCs in Delaware served over 33,000 patients and received nearly \$6 million in federal funding to assist them in paying for these services.<sup>ii</sup> Currently, there are 4 organizations in Delaware with FQHC status. Increasing the national budget for FQHCs nearly five-fold will result in competitive expansion opportunities that health centers and other organizations in Delaware can apply for funding. Mr. McInnis further states, “There are an estimated 95,000<sup>iii</sup> uninsured adults and children in Delaware today – and right now we are able to serve less than 20% of this group. The

need to expand health center funding to allow them to serve a greater number of people has been especially pressing in our current economic climate. This couldn't have come at a better time.”

FQHCs are not-for profit private or public primary care organizations that receive federal funds to help subsidize the health care costs for people who are uninsured or underinsured. They use a sliding fee scale based on a person's income and family size – people pay what they can afford for their medical care and no one is denied care. Health centers also accept insurance payments – including Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance. In addition to providing essential primary care services, some health centers also provide high-quality dental and mental health services to their communities. Health centers are located in areas of high need, where either elevated levels of poverty or few providers have created medically underserved areas. Since 1965, community health centers have filled a crucial gap in health care services.

MACHC is the federally designated primary care association representing community health centers in both Maryland and Delaware. MACHC represents our members in areas of advocacy, policy, quality improvement and community development.

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If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Miguel McInnis please call Melissa Noyes at 301-577-0097 ext. 126 or e-mail Melissa at [melissa.noyes@machc.com](mailto:melissa.noyes@machc.com).

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<sup>i</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Primary Health Care, 2008 Uniform Data System.

<sup>ii</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Primary Health Care, 2008 Uniform Data System, Delaware Grantees.

<sup>iii</sup> Urban Institute and Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured estimates based on the Census Bureau's March 2008 and 2009 Current Population Survey