

Priority Response Area: Health Care Safety Net

Rationale:

Safety net health care clinics provide ongoing physical, mental and oral health care services and connection to community-based services for people facing significant barriers to health. In the last month, they have stepped up to serve as front line responders to the COVID-19 pandemic. Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community-Based Health Clinics and School-Based Health Centers are established in communities that experience the greatest barriers to health and well-being, based on geography and/or other systemic factors, and they provide essential infrastructure in those communities. Safety net health clinics often provide health care to communities whose only alternative for care is the emergency department, and they currently play a critical role in keeping patients out of an overburdened hospital system.

- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) have responded to shifting guidance by canceling many in-person visits and increasing telehealth capabilities; medical and behavioral health visit volume is down 35% - 40% across the state and dental visits are down 90%, based on recommendations to provide only emergency dental services.
- Telehealth visits are now billable as encounters for FQHCs, but what normally would have been a months-long process to integrate telehealth visits has become a rushed 10- to 14-day process for many clinics; telehealth visits require up-front investment and the infrastructure, including both internet and phone service, is a challenge for many communities in both urban and rural regions.
- Many FQHCs are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars each week in reimbursement for services; individual clinic impact varies based on normal and adjusted patient volume.
- FQHCs across the country will share \$1.3 billion from the most recent \$2 trillion federal stimulus package; spread across the 1,362 FQHCs in the country, that money is expected to keep the clinics afloat for about 37 days.
- FQHCs and Community-Based Health Clinics (CBHCs) do not have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) and have encountered financial and logistical challenges to obtaining additional PPE, especially N95 masks.
- FQHCs and CBHCs are seeing as many patients as possible via telehealth, but many are also setting up curbside testing, triage and consults, requiring additional PPE and increasing risks to providers and staff working in those settings.
- Providers and staff in all safety net clinics will be exposed to patients positive for COVID-19 and inevitably some will also get sick; all clinics are attempting to create staffing plans to account for illness among providers and staff.
- School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are the only source of health care services, including mental and reproductive health care, for many students and their families and most SBHCs are unable to operate with schools closed.
- While SBHCs have deployed staff to community clinics and/or begun providing telehealth visits, their operating costs have not changed while their patient visit revenue has declined 50% - 80%, and they hope to retain providers and staff until they are able to reopen and continue providing in-person visits in school settings.
- All safety net health clinics have either already begun or are planning for a combination of layoffs and furloughs for staff due to the drastic reductions in reimbursement.

Funding Recommendation

Federally Qualified Health Centers (through CCHN), \$765,000

- **Colorado Community Health Network**, statewide, to administer the grants below, \$10,000
- **Axis Health System, La Plata Integrated Healthcare**, La Plata and Montezuma counties, \$33,500
- **Clinica Family Health**, Adams, Boulder and Broomfield counties, \$33,500
- **Clínica Tepeyac**, Denver, Adams, Arapahoe counties with a focus on immigrant communities, \$33,500
- **Colorado Coalition for the Homeless**, clinics in metro Denver and services provided statewide, \$33,500

- **Denver Health's Community Health Services**, City and County of Denver, \$33,500
- **Frontier Community Health Clinic**, Dolores, Montezuma and San Miguel counties, \$33,500
- **High Plains Community Health Center**, Prowers, Baca, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Kit Carson counties, \$33,500
- **Inner City Health Center**, City and County of Denver and surrounding communities, \$85,000*
- **Marillac Clinic**, Mesa County and neighboring communities, \$33,500
- **Mountain Family Health Centers**, Garfield, Eagle, Pitkin and Rio Blanco counties, \$33,500
- **Northwest Colorado Health**, Moffat and Routt counties, \$33,500
- **Peak Vista Community Health Centers**, El Paso, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Park, and Teller counties \$33,500
- **Pueblo Community Health Center**, Inc., Pueblo and Huerfano counties, \$33,500
- **River Valley Family Health Center**, Montrose and Delta counties, \$33,500
- **Salud Family Health Centers**, Weld, Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Morgan, Sedgwick, Phillips, Washington, and Yuma counties, \$33,500
- **Sheridan Health Services**, Arapahoe, Adams, Denver, and Jefferson counties, \$33,500
- **STRIDE Community Health Center**, Arapahoe, Adams, Jefferson, Douglas and Park counties, \$33,500
- **Summit Community Care Clinic**, Summit County and neighboring communities, \$33,500
- **Sunrise Community Health**, Weld and Larimer counties, \$33,500
- **Uncompahgre Medical Center**, San Miguel, Montrose, and Ouray counties, \$33,500
- **Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.**, Alamosa, Bent, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Delta, Fremont, Garfield, Kit Carson, Mesa, Mineral, Otero, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties, \$33,500

Community-Based Health Clinics, \$280,000

- **Asian Pacific Development Center**, clinic in Aurora, serves and supports all immigrant and refugee communities with a focus on the Asian American Pacific Islander community, \$35,000
- **Chanda Center for Health**, clinic in Lakewood, delivers integrative therapy, primary care, and other complementary services for persons with physical disabilities, \$35,000
- **Clínica Colorado**, clinic in Adams County and telehealth services across the state, provides equitable primary health care and resources for those with limited access, \$35,000
- **DAWN Clinic**, clinic in Aurora, serves and supports patients without health insurance and/or insured by Medicaid with comprehensive health care and community connection, \$35,000
- **Denver Indian Health & Family Services**, serves the metro Denver area as the only urban Indian Health Program providing culturally appropriate health care for American Indian and Alaskan Native adults, children, and families, \$35,000
- *Doctors Care*, clinic in Littleton, provides access to quality, affordable health care and services designed to reduce barriers to health for low-income people in need, \$35,000
- **Every Child Pediatrics**, clinics in Denver, Aurora, Thornton and Lakewood, provides comprehensive, affordable health care to 24,000 children from 300 zip codes, \$35,000
- **Kids First Health Care**, clinics in Commerce City and Westminster, dedicated to providing high quality health care for Adams County children through integrated health care services, \$35,000

School-Based Health Centers, \$220,000

- **Colorado Association of School-Based Health Care**, statewide organization that supports existing and emerging school-based health centers through policy development, advocacy, training, technical assistance and quality improvement projects, \$10,000
- **Denver Health's Community Health Centers**, 19 clinics in Denver Public Schools with some still open and some staff deployed elsewhere, \$30,000

- **Every Child Pediatrics**, 11 clinics in Cortez, Dolores, Basalt, Carbondale, Aurora and Fort Collins, \$50,000
- **Kids First Health Care**, 8 clinics in Adams County, \$35,000
- **Mountain Family Health Centers**, 1 clinic in Avon, \$7,500
- **STRIDE Community Health Center**, 2 clinics in Lakewood, \$15,000
- **Regents of the University of Colorado (Sheridan School District)**, 1 clinic in Englewood, \$7,500
- **Southwest Health Systems**, 1 clinic in Cortez, \$7,500
- **Summit Community Care Clinic**, 6 clinics in Summit, Lake and Park counties, \$20,000
- **Sunrise Community Health Clinic**, 2 clinics, Evans and Greeley, \$15,000
- **Peak Vista Community Health Centers**, 1 clinic in Colorado Springs, \$7,500
- **Pueblo Community Health Centers**, 6 clinics in Pueblo, \$25,000

Resources/Articles:

- [Just When They're Needed Most, Clinics for the Poor Face Drastic Cutbacks](#) (New York Times)
- [Under Financial Strain, Community Health Centers Ramp Up for Coronavirus Response](#) (NPR)
- [The Poorest Will Suffer: Safety-Net Health Clinics Forced to Cut Services Amid Coronavirus Pandemic](#) (USA Today)
- [School-Based Health Centers Can Deliver Care to Vulnerable Populations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (Child Trends)