

Protecting Louisiana's Safety-Net

Louisiana's Fiscal Cliff and Its Impact on Community Health Center Patients

As Louisiana's state lawmakers work to avoid the fiscal cliff, Louisiana's Community Health Centers (and the 385,000 patients who depend on them for healthcare services) are following their actions very carefully. Of particular concern are the proposed cuts to our state's department of health. In a worst case scenario, Louisiana's Department of Health will face a total budget cut estimated to be more than **\$2.4 billion, of which more than \$656 million is state general fund dollars.**

Threats to Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services

Community Health Centers have long been at the forefront of providing high quality, cost effective care to underserved rural and urban communities across the country. They are leaders in integrating medical care, behavioral health, dental care, pharmacy, and other services all under one roof.

- In 2016, Louisiana's Community Health Centers provided behavioral health services to over **47,000 individual patients** accounting for over **182,000 separate clinic visits.**
- In 2016, Louisiana's Community Health Centers provided substance abuse services to **541 individual patients** accounting for over **7,000 separate clinic visits.**
- Community Health Centers served **3,026 veterans**, many of whom rely on mental health services.

3,566	5,405	22,467	62,717
Patients diagnosed with alcohol related disorders.	Patients diagnosed with other substance related disorders.	Patients diagnosed with tobacco use disorders.	Patients suffering from depression and other mood disorders, plus those suffering from anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder.

As communities across America cope with a dramatic increase in the prevalence of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid addiction, health centers are meeting this challenge by providing much needed SUD services to their patients. Health centers are the first stop in the referral pathway for patients needing care and they routinely treat patients with multiple chronic conditions including behavioral health.

- Since 2010, Louisiana's Community Health Centers have increased the number of behavioral health patients treated by **144%.**

The combined reduction of \$43.6 million in State General Funds would drastically reduce statewide residential and outpatient treatment for people with mental illness and other behavioral health conditions.

This cut would have a devastating impact on Community Health Centers. In order to continue providing mental health services to our state's vulnerable populations, health centers depend on Medicaid for payment reimbursement. Community Health Centers, in many aspects, are like any other small businesses. They rely on financial stability and a predictable business environment in order to avoid a disruption in services.