

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

One strong united voice for Minnesota workers

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June 3, 2019

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Burgess:

On behalf of the more than 43,000 AFSCME Council 5 members who provide services to protect, improve and strengthen communities across the state of Minnesota, we write in support of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic program. We ask that this letter be included in the official record for Subcommittee on Health June 4, 2019 hearing on "Investing in America's Health Care."

Today's hearing on investments in health care that require urgent congressional action is extremely timely. Through Section 223 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 Congress established a federal definition and criteria for CCBHCs. This program invested in a new type of provider and delivery model in Medicaid. These clinics must provide high-quality physical, addiction and mental health services, making it easier for individuals of all ages to access care in one place. These services include 24-hour crisis mental health services and crisis stabilization to psychiatric rehabilitation to target case management to peer and family support.

In return, Congress invested in the CCBHC model with a Medicaid reimbursement rate based on anticipated costs of expanding services to meet the needs of these complex populations. This Medicaid prospective payment is a pivotal investment providing CCBHCs with sustainable financing to expand services.


Come June 30, the CCBHCs in our state, along with Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon and Pennsylvania, face a dire financial threat. The investment in the CCBHC model ends. We urge the subcommittee to act without delay to ensure that CCBHCs continue to operate with full funding. This fiscal cliff must be averted.

AFSCME Council 5 members who are certified peer recovery specialists, nurses, social workers, and other mental health practitioners provide behavioral health care services at the Ramsey County CCBHC. These workers are on the frontlines of the CCBHC program and provide flexible services to all individuals, including those who have not found recovery through traditional treatment. While any delivery model can be improved, our members see the services they provide at this CCBHC offer hope, change the trajectory of a person's life and help repair fractured families.

When a person is ready to recover from an opioid or other addiction, they need help now, not in months. AFSCME Council 5 members are ready to help our fellow Minnesotans begin that road to recovery, find resilience to come back from a relapse and support recovery. But to do so the Ramsey County CCBHC needs to maintain the federal investment in sustainable financing.

On behalf of our members who provide behavioral health care services and their clients and communities we urge you to act to avert the June 30 fiscal cliff facing all CCBHCs.

Sincerely,



Paul Westman
Executive Director
AFSCME Council 5