

2023 Legislative Agenda

Preserve the Health Care Safety Net

Washington state's community health centers are the backbone of the state's health care safety net, caring for over 1 million of Washington's lowest income and at-risk individuals at more than 350 clinic sites statewide. To achieve its goal of advancing health equity, Washington state must preserve this health care safety net by protecting programs that fund access to care for low income and uninsured populations. In 2023, one of the most important ways the legislature can do that is by supporting increased investments in programs that expand health insurance to individuals who are undocumented. Specifically, we ask that lawmakers:

- Fully fund the Apple Health equivalent coverage for undocumented Washingtonians whose incomes are below 138% FPL.
- Provide ongoing funding for expansion of the federal waiver (1332) that allows individuals who are undocumented and have incomes below 250% FPL to purchase insurance on the health benefit exchange.

Invest in the Health Care Workforce

With health care settings across the state experiencing workforce shortage emergencies, Washington must enact innovative workforce solutions as soon as possible. Health centers are critical to developing the health care workforce, providing over 125 job training programs across the state. The legislature should invest in and expand these efforts. Specifically, we ask that lawmakers:

- Reduce barriers for people who want to become health care workers by supporting loan repayment programs for behavioral health and primary care professionals.
- Make long-term investments in behavioral health workforce development programs to ensure Washington has the staff needed to address growing opioid use and mental health issues.

Continue Capital Investments in Community Dental Clinics

Since 2017, the state legislature has invested in 31 community health dental clinics that are expanding access to care to approximately 74,000 patients. Unfortunately, more than 1.2 million Apple Health enrollees are still expected to go without dental care this year. In order to continue expanding care in Washington, we ask that lawmakers:

- Invest \$6.1 million in capital funding in new or expanded facilities at seven CHCs. With this investment, the health centers can serve more than 10,500 additional patients and provide more than 30,300 added visits. The seven projects include: Peninsula Community Health Services (LD 26), Columbia Valley CHC (LD 12), CHC Tacoma (LD 27), HealthPoint (LD 34), Lake Roosevelt CHC (LD 7), Neighborcare (LD 43), Seattle Indian Health Board (LD 34)