

Washington Association for Community Health



Annual Report



Photos Courtesy of Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic & Unity Care NW

2025

A Message From Dave



> The CHC movement will undoubtedly meet each moment and find every possible avenue to care for communities.

Sixty years ago, the federal government recognized and funded a comprehensive and community-informed model of primary health care: the Health Center Program. Since that time, community health centers (CHCs) have provided care for all our neighbors – regardless of their ability to pay and regardless of their health-related social needs.

Twenty years later, the Washington Association for Community Health (WACH) was born to provide our CHC membership with state-specific programs and other key resources so they could focus on serving their communities. Through difficult times over 40 years, WACH has continued its steadfast advocacy and support, giving a voice to the voiceless – our underserved neighbors who are in the most need of quality, affordable primary care.

In my time leading WACH, I have gained knowledge, worked closely with our incredible team and partners and gained tremendous respect and admiration for the way our members consistently provide incredible services through creativity and innovation. Their dedication and commitment are hallmarks of the CHC movement and reflective of our proud history and future potential.

- Our Policy and Advocacy work is leading the charge to ensure our members are equipped to tackle the challenge of policy change.
- Our Learning and Innovation team supports CHC staff by facilitating peer learning networks, delivering impactful technical assistance programs, and publishing reports that showcase the innovative practices of our members.
- InReach Career Pathways and Southwest Washington Area Health Education Center (SW WA AHEC) are working tirelessly to find, train, encourage, and grow our next generation of health care workers.

Looking to the future, we see glimmers of hope. The CHC movement will undoubtedly meet each moment and find every possible avenue to care for communities. I look forward to working with all of you to provide compassionate care for friends and neighbors across Washington.

Yours for community health,



Dave Pearson
Chief Executive Officer

Leading in Difficult Times



Community health centers passionately pursue an ambitious goal – to provide high-quality, cost-effective, fully integrated, and comprehensive health care services to anyone in their communities regardless of their ability to pay.

Even under ideal political and economic circumstances, this bold mission is challenging at best and a heavy responsibility requiring deep commitment. In periods of shifting ideological priorities and shrinking financial resources - such as the one we find ourselves currently in - the challenges can begin to feel overwhelming and ominous. Such adversity, however, also presents an opportunity for us to display the leadership and fierce determination that lies at the core of the health center movement.

From the earliest days of the health center program, CHCs have fought an uphill battle against long odds to provide for the people and communities we serve. Limited financial support through the years has forced us to be resourceful, innovative, and nimble in meeting our patients' needs. As were Jack Geiger and John Hatch in the early days, we remain driven by the fundamental importance and moral imperative of the work we do. We know that we will survive the challenges we face and ultimately thrive because we must --- there are simply too many lives and livelihoods dependent upon our success.

Achievement of that success is more likely because we do not stand alone. I am comforted and inspired by the dedicated, resourceful, and strategic CHC leaders across the country, including my colleagues with whom I am honored to join through the Washington Association for Community Health. We are fortunate to have such a wealth of experience, perspectives, and ideas among the Association's 28 members to help us successfully navigate the rapids we find ourselves within currently. Further, with the support of our competent and committed Association staff, our passion for our communities and patients can be harnessed and leveraged for effective advocacy.

It is precisely during times of adversity that our action as CHC leaders becomes most important and impactful. Together, we are empowered to fight the good fight and advance our joint and respective missions. Through our collective leadership and success, our communities and patients win.



Michael S. Maxwell, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer, North Olympic Healthcare Network
Board President, Washington Association for Community Health

Board Members

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CEO, Community Health Association of Spokane

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CEO, Moses Lake Community Health Center

TONI LODGE
CEO, The NATIVE Project

VAZASKIA CROCKRELL
Director of Community Health Services,
Public Health Seattle King County

Who We Are

For forty years, the Washington Association for Community Health has brought together federally qualified community health centers (CHCs) to collaborate and expand access to high-quality health care statewide. As our state's primary care association, we help our 28 member CHCs navigate state and federal policy, provide evidence-based health care, and problem solve as a group. Our services include policy and advocacy, technical assistance and learning events, and workforce development programs.

Our Mission

To strengthen and advocate for Washington's Community Health Centers as they build health care access, innovation and value.

Who We Serve

Our members deliver health care to roughly 1.3 million (or 1 in 6) Washingtonians each year at more than 450 clinic sites. CHCs are directed by local consumers and respond to the needs of the community, serving all without regard to economic or insurance status. CHCs are vital providers in the state's health care safety net. We strengthen our member health centers' work with information, relationships, and tools that make high-quality care a reality for all people across our state.

1.3 MILLION
TOTAL PATIENTS SERVED

367,507
PATIENTS IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

25,113
VETERANS

117,356
AGRICULTRAL WORKERS

118,890
PATIENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

703,296
PATIENTS ENROLLED IN MEDICAID

16,228
PATIENTS AT SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS

106,793
PATIENTS WITH MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS

332,077
PATIENTS AT DENTAL CLINICS

28 Member Health Centers Across the State



1. North Olympic Healthcare Network
2. Valley View Health Center
3. Cowlitz Family Health Center
4. Peninsula Community Health Services
5. Community Health Care
6. Sea Mar Community Health Centers
7. Public Health – Seattle & King County
8. Seattle Roots Community Health
9. International Community Health Services
10. Neighborcare Health
11. Seattle Indian Health Board
12. Unity Care NW
13. HealthPoint
14. Community Health Center of Snohomish County
15. One Community Health
16. Community Health of Central Washington
17. Yakima Neighborhood Health Services
18. Yakima Valley Farmer Workers Clinic
19. Columbia Valley Community Health
20. Mattawa Community Medical Clinic
21. Tri-Cities Community Health
22. Family Health Centers
23. Moses Lake Community Health Center
24. Columbia Basin Health Association
25. Lake Roosevelt Community Health Centers
26. NEW Health
27. The NATIVE Project
28. Community Health Association of Spokane

Advocacy and Policy

Over our 40-year history, a main priority of our work has been navigating health care policy on behalf of CHCs at the state and federal levels. Our goal is to ensure health centers have what they need to continue serving as the backbone of Washington's primary care safety net. In 2025, the health center movement entered a challenging time as access to care and financial sustainability continued to be threatened by changes in federal policy and state budget deficits.



State & Federal Engagement

The 2025 Legislative Session focused on writing a biennial budget, which was unfortunately defined by a significant budget deficit. Health centers worked hard to educate legislators on the impacts of cutting programs that their patients rely on, which resulted in preservation of the most significant programs.

Health centers were still able to seek capital funds to expand access to dental and school-based health center services. This included:

- $5.5 million for six community health center dental projects
- $2.6 million for five school-based health capital projects

Another highlight of the session was passing a budget proviso that is a step towards advancing a capitated, value-based payment model for health centers. The proviso asked the Health Care Authority to come back to the table to develop a model that allows for true team-based care and population health outcomes.

Over 120 health center advocates attended our annual Joint Legislative Days in Olympia. Health centers held over 130 meetings with state lawmakers to advocate for priorities including preserving the health care safety net and funding dental and school-based health center capital projects.

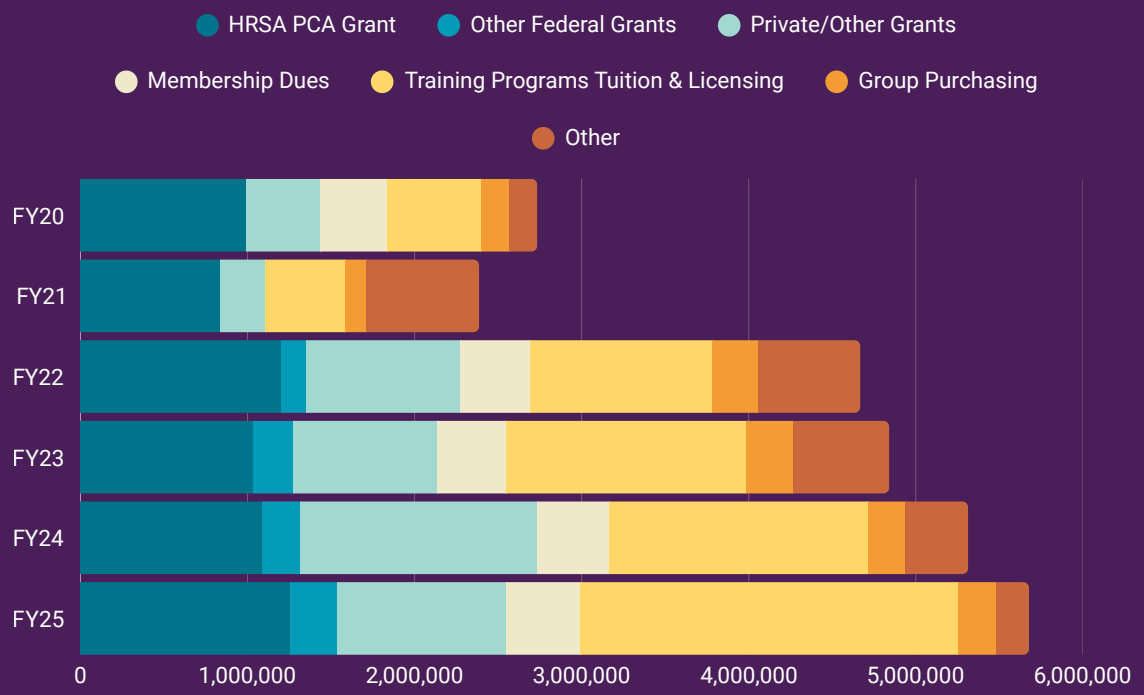
The Association also engaged in federal policy and advocated to protect our health centers and their patients from damaging policy changes. WACH and our CHCs advocated for the preservation of Medicaid, continuation of CHC and workforce funding, and enhanced premium tax credit ACA subsidies.

"Our partnership with the Washington Association for Community Health has been invaluable to our mission and operations. By keeping us informed about the constantly evolving political and regulatory landscape, the Association not only helps us stay prepared but also empowers us to actively engage and drive meaningful change. Together, we advocate for the needs of community health centers and the patients we serve, ensuring that our collective voice has a strong presence in shaping policies that promote access and equity in healthcare."

Manuel Navarro, CEO, Columbia Valley Community Health

Association Revenue Mix

Over the past six years, the Association has diversified and expanded its revenue.



"What I appreciate most about our relationship with WACH is the steadfast partnership and advocacy you've provided over the years. WACH has consistently been a strong and trusted voice for CHCs and the communities we serve, helping us navigate complex federal and state changes while staying rooted in equity and access. That partnership has allowed us to focus on what matters most—meeting people where they are and ensuring care for those who need it most.



The program or service that has brought the greatest value to CHS has been WACH's role in policy leadership and shared learning. Whether it's preparing us for emerging federal shifts, facilitating peer connections through statewide collaboratives, or helping us elevate local challenges to a broader platform, WACH has provided both the technical expertise and the collective strength we need to move forward. Those opportunities for collaboration have shaped how we operate, advocate, and continuously improve our work with the communities we serve.

As CHS looks ahead, I am grateful for four decades of partnership with WACH and excited for the future we will continue to build together."
Vazaskia V. Crockrell, Division Director, Community Health Services, Public Health–Seattle & King County

"In working with WACH, I have greatly appreciated the team's willingness to listen to my perspectives and unique needs, which often differ from those expressed by health centers in other parts of the state. The most valuable service has been their support in shaping our regional policy and advocacy efforts. Their partnership in hosting and engaging with policymakers has been truly invaluable."
Kristy Needham, CEO, Tri Cities Community Health

InReach Career Pathways

InReach Career Pathways is a division of the Association that provides innovative education and training programs to cultivate a responsive and sustainable community health workforce.

We currently administer a Medical Assistant (MA) Apprenticeship program which has enrolled 267 MAs across 11 community health centers, 18 rural health centers or critical access hospitals, seven large hospital systems, and one private practice facility over the past year. In early 2025, we partnered with the WA Student Achievement Council to offer our apprentices the WA Grant for Apprenticeship – a needs-based grant that can cover any costs incurred from being an apprentice.



Our biggest achievement was launching a brand-new apprenticeship program for Medical Office Specialists in May. The curriculum covers everything from communication and patient reception, to anatomy, medical billing/coding, and HR management. Apprentices participate in two lab days that are led by the course instructor to practice skills with their peers in a simulated environment. At the end of the program, apprentices will take the NHA Certified Medical Administrative Assistant exam.

"What I value most about CBHA's membership with the Washington Association for Community Health (WACH) is the tremendous support and partnership it provides. Through WACH, we've benefited from mentorship and expert guidance on policy and advocacy efforts that strengthen the voice of Washington's FQHCs with both local and state government. The education and leadership support WACH offers I consider invaluable, ensuring we can continue to grow and serve our communities.

Most of all, the collaboration with the phenomenal WACH staff over the past several years has been both inspiring and impactful—they are true partners in advancing community health. The Medical Assistant Training Program has brought CBHA the greatest value through our partnership with WACH. Nearly half—approximately 49%—of our current MA-C level employees have enrolled in and successfully completed the program. This investment has not only strengthened our workforce pipeline but has also ensured that our patients receive high-quality care from well-trained staff. The program has been a game-changer in helping us recruit, retain, and grow talented medical assistants within our own communities."
Nieves Gomez, CEO, Columbia Basin Health Association

Group Purchasing - Shared Services

Shared Services at the Association supports procurement and purchasing staff in Washington, Alaska, Oregon and Idaho, providing an array of resources to help members stay informed and save money. This program began in 1999 and includes over 100 different community health centers. In 2025, we received five new interest forms from vendors to join our network and sent members four newsletters with the latest purchasing updates. Members attended bi-monthly learning network meetings that brought together a regional network of senior purchasing staff to discuss best practices, issues and shortages.





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Participating in the Association's apprenticeship programs for Medical Assistants and Dental Assistants has also been a tremendous asset to our health center. These programs have strengthened our workforce pipeline and helped us address critical staffing needs in these essential roles. We are deeply grateful for the continued collaboration, guidance, and shared commitment that the Association provides, allowing us to focus on what matters most: delivering quality, accessible care to our community."
Angela Gonzalez, CEO, Community Health of Central Washington

Learning and Innovation

In 2025, our Learning and Innovation team celebrated 40 years of delivering learning events and technical assistance that supports health centers in adapting to changes and meeting the needs of your communities. This year, we engaged 547 health center staff in 34 learning events. We convened Learning Networks for dental and medical directors, development professionals, and leaders in finance and emergency preparedness to create learning relationships, troubleshoot with peers, and share best practices.

We published 10 innovation reports, spreading the word about health center excellence in patient experience, workforce development, financial sustainability, community health, and access and affordability.

We also strengthened and expanded our relationships to bring the CHC voice to important conversations and develop new opportunities for our members.

In 2025, we served...

28

Community Health Centers

875

total attendees

328

attendees from organizations across the country



"CHAS Health appreciates the collaborative nature of Community Health Centers across the state, and our involvement with WACH provides the opportunity to deepen those connections. Peer networking, ability to share solutions for common challenges that CHCs face, roundtables, and other educational offerings from WACH provide opportunities to gather and share best practices to best meet the needs of patients and the community."

Aaron Wilson, CEO, Community Health Association of Spokane

SW Washington Area Health Education Center

Our SW AHEC program is part of a network of statewide Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) who are tasked with enhancing access to quality health care by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals.

In 2025, SW AHEC was able to greatly expand our career pathway programming, encouraging youth to focus on allied health careers in medically underserved areas. We provided Relational Leadership workshops to three regional high schools and a community college. In addition, we supported Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and SkillsUSA student leadership chapters, emphasizing low and no-cost health care pathways that highlight rural CHCs as a starting point for entry-level careers.



SW AHEC also sponsored three large regional events: the MultiCare Academy for Students in Healthcare (M.A.S.H) Camp, Sound Careers in Healthcare, and one of the Washington State Indian Education Association events. In all, we reached over 1,000 students with awareness of allied health careers through direct presentations, flyer distribution, and volunteer opportunities.

"From a network level and at its core function, the Association's work on facilitating the collective thought process from the membership to effectively coordinate and execute on collectively determined Legislative Priorities and coordinate the annual Legislative Day in Olympia is of highest priority and most valued. We have seen results become evident in strong correlation to our level of effort and collective effectiveness over the years. On an individual CHC level, I appreciate most all efforts to create cohesiveness and consensus around the many issues that affect our individual and collective impact because unity in how we mobilize gets us closer to our tremendous potential to affect the health of our state, not just our respective service areas."

Jesus Hernandez, CEO, Family Health Center

Washington Association for Community Health

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