February 5, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We write to express our concern over funding for community health centers, which expired on September 30, 2017. We strongly urge you to reauthorize this funding immediately.

Community health centers serve a vital function, providing affordable health care to our nation’s most vulnerable citizens. They provide quality medical, dental, vision and behavioral health care to more than 27 million patients, including 330,000 of our nation’s veterans and 8 million children, at over 10,000 sites nationwide. By offering preventative care, treating chronic conditions, and working to fight the opioid epidemic, community health centers are not only greatly improving the health and well-being of those they serve, they are also saving significant taxpayer dollars.

Without extension of the Community Health Center Fund (CHCF), community health centers will lose seventy percent of their funding. This will result in an estimated 2,800 site closures, the loss of 50,000 jobs, and approximately 9 million Americans losing access to their health care. Moreover, community health centers operate as small businesses and require a level of predictability to operate and respond to the needs of their communities. Since the expiration of the CHCF, community health centers have not been able to adequately plan for everything from staffing needs to securing loans for capital projects. In addition, the expiration of the National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education program threatens the ability of health centers to meet their workforce needs.

For more than fifty years, community health centers have experienced strong bipartisan support. In fact, twenty bipartisan senators cosponsor legislation which reauthorizes funding not only for community health centers but also for the National Health Service Corps.

We look forward to working with you to reach a bipartisan agreement to fund the community health center program and enable our community health centers to continue providing high quality and affordable care to those in need.

Sincere Regards,

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator
Deb Fischer
United States Senator

Steve Daines
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Thad Cochran
United States Senator

Cory Gardner
United States Senator

John Hoeven
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator
John Boozman
United States Senator

Doug Jones
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Dean Heller
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

John Kennedy
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator
Jerry Moran
United States Senator