

REP. DAVIS STATEMENT BEFORE THE RULES COMMITTEE ON OPPOSITION TO THE REPEAL OF HEALTH CARE

Congressman Danny K. Davis Testimony on January 6, 2011

The Committee on Rules

To Oppose the Repeal of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 and to Propose an Amendment to the Repeal Bill

Mr. Chairman Dreier and Ranking Member Slaughter, I am here today as a cosponsor and supporter of Rep. Thompson amendment on Preservation of Access to Primary Care Services to the majority proposed legislation, To Repeal the Job-Killing Health Care Law. I have been involved with community health centers for over 35 years. I am a former President of the National Association of Community Health Centers before I became a politician. Community health centers are at the forefront in serving our rural and urban areas by strengthening the quality of access for primary care, enhancing and leveraging resources, and building a health care workforce that best serves patients by promoting healthy outcomes. These institutions provide comprehensive services to people regardless of income and social status.

The 7th Congressional District of Illinois includes some of the most medically underserved communities in America. Census data revealed that 24 percent of families and 44 percent of children under 18 live below the poverty line. As a result, many of these individuals are susceptible to an anomaly of diseases and poor health. In fact, some communities on Chicago's west side experience infant mortality rates comparable with third-world countries. By repealing Public Law 111-148, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will take away support for community health centers, which provide critical resources for millions of Americans in every state and territory. In my district, there are many Medicare and Medicaid recipients that have established community health centers as their medical homes. Medicaid beneficiaries that rely on health centers for usual care were 19 percent less likely to use the emergency room at a hospital than other providers for nonemergency and usual care services. Overall, health centers save the health care system between \$9.9 billion and 17.6 billion annually.

Community Health Centers provide high quality health care regardless of the ability to pay, and Health Centers in Illinois have a tremendous impact on our economy and employment. In 2008, 40 Health Centers operated over 350 sites, contributed almost one billion dollars to the Illinois economy, and directly employed almost 6,000 Illinoisans. Indeed, for every 10 people employed by an Illinois Health Center, an additional 4 jobs were created in their surrounding communities. Illinois Health Centers served over 1.1 million patients - nearly 80% of whom fell below the federal poverty level and 30% who had no health insurance, helping them cope with chronic health conditions and general health issues to be able to work and care for their families.

Repeal of the Health Care Law would eliminate \$11 billion in support for Community Health Centers over the next 5 years, funding that will nearly double the number of patients served today and greatly strengthen Illinois's economy. Repealing the Health Care Law would have a dramatically harm to the health of hundreds of thousands of citizens in Chicago and Illinois.

Health Centers in my district serve a tremendous need -

* Erie Family Health Center provides high quality medical, behavioral and dental services for approximately 33,000 uninsured and underinsured Chicagoans each year at nine sites, including three school-based health centers, a teen

health center and two oral health centers.

* Access Community Health Center cares for 215,000 patients at 60 locations in Illinois, providing 68,000 people in my district alone - 50% of whom are uninsured or Medicaid.

The CEO of Erie shared with me stories of so many people who had serious health concerns who have been able to continue working and caring for their families due to their care. Teodora Santana or Juan Lugo who struggled with diabetes, Carolina Gonzalez who fought breast cancer. Then, there are the very hard calls that the CEO of Lawndale Christian shared with me - the calls in which so many people who are unemployed or who lack insurance ask for care, but there is not enough physicians to meet the need.

The Health Care Law is critical to Chicago and Illinois. Community Health Centers are vital partners in the health and economic well-being of Chicago and Illinois. For this reason, I respectfully ask that my amendment be made in order.