



## KEEP FAMILIES HEALTHY

The current economic situation has forced more and more families to postpone medical visits or forgo them altogether. Many families must make painful tradeoffs between health and other basic needs, such as food and housing. Lack of healthcare can lead to more serious illness and higher costs in the future. Maintaining family health now reduces costs and suffering later.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** The more than 7200 **community health centers (CHCs)** in the U.S. provide a critical safety net in rural and urban areas where the need is greatest. More than just clinics, CHCs offer comprehensive primary and preventive care regardless of a patient's ability to pay or type of insurance. They also offer such services as translation, home-based programs, and referrals to social services.

**HIGH IMPACT OPPORTUNITY:** CHCs have shown impressive results at an average cost of \$560 per person per year. They improve patient outcomes and save billions of dollars by averting more costly hospital stays and emergency room visits. Studies have shown that communities served by CHCs had fewer low-birth-weight infants and better blood pressure control, compared to national averages, despite higher risk populations.

**TAKE ACTION:** You can play a strategic role in helping CHCs meet heightened demand for healthcare, provide services not covered by insurance, and reach the newly poor and uninsured. Use the mapping tool: [findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov), to find a center near you. Those listed are either Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or centers that have similar essential features needed to produce the impacts we describe above. If there is no nearby CHC on this site, your city, county, or state health departments can direct you to the local health safety-net providers. Or you can contact your local United Way chapter by phone or by searching the 211 system: [www.211.org](http://www.211.org) under "health center" or "medical care."

**TIPS:** The most urgent unmet needs differ greatly depending on the particular community served and state funding levels. Learn how your financial contributions can support local priorities by talking to a center's executive director or medical/nursing director.

For additional tips on how to assess CHCs and questions to ask, see our guide [High Impact Philanthropy in the Downturn](#), pages 23-25.

