

Major Federal Health Programs Renewed After FP Advocacy

As part of the federal budget fight, CAFP, AAFP and family physicians from across the country [called on Congress](#) to ensure the continuation of several crucially important health programs, and that advocacy has paid off in a remarkable way. Early this morning, the President signed a spending measure that extends funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program for four additional years (on top of the previous six year extension) and includes the extension of [several other high-priority health programs](#), including:



- Community Health Centers (CHCs): CHCs serve more than 24 million people, most of them low-income, and about half of them in rural areas where options for care are limited. Today, more than 1,300 CHCs provide comprehensive, high-quality care to 6.5 million people in California. In many rural communities, CHCs serve as the only source of medical and wellness care for middle- and working-class families. The new spending agreement extends and increases funding for CHCs from \$3.6 billion per year to \$3.8 billion for 2018 and \$4 billion for 2019.
- Teaching Health Centers (THCs): THCs are primary care residency programs located in community clinics in underserved areas. Created and funded through the Affordable Care Act, they have shown tremendous promise in improving care in underserved regions while growing the primary care physician workforce. The new spending agreement extends and increases funding for the THC program from \$60 million per year to \$126.5 million per year for 2018 and 2019. This desperately needed money will ensure that THCs in California and across the country will not close
- National Health Service Corps (NHSC): The NHSC sends physicians to medically underserved areas in exchange for medical school debt repayment. The program places physicians and other health professionals in areas in which they are otherwise unlikely to work. More than 50,000 health professionals have served in the NHSC since its inception in 1972, and today 10,000 NHSC members provide care to more than 11 million patients at more than 5,000 locations. The new spending agreement extends NHSC's current funding level of \$310 million annually for 2018 and 2019.

Unfortunately, the bill includes a \$1.35 billion cut over 10 years to the Prevention and Public Health Fund, reduces the 2019 positive update to Medicare physician payment conversion factor from 0.5 percent to 0.25 percent and continues to ignore needed action and protection for participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. One in four DACA participants lives in California, some of whom are medical students and residents. [Please call your Representatives](#) and thank them for protecting these vital programs and urge them to address these remaining issues.