



Central Valley Health Network

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FRESNO COUNTY FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS PROVIDE A CRITICAL SAFETY NET AND STIMULATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

*But Governor Schwarzenegger's Proposed Budget Will Have a Crippling Impact on the Ability
of the Health Centers and Clinics to Provide Care to the Poor and Uninsured*

FRESNO, CA – A report released today by the Central Valley Health Network finds that Fresno County's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) provide a high volume of cost effective care to the county's most needy residents and generate millions of dollars in economic activity annually and create hundreds of new jobs. However, the report comes at a time when community clinics and health centers face stiff budget cuts to their most essential public programs.

The report, which reviewed data on the FQHCs' patients, medical services, impacts on the health care safety net and economic impact in Fresno County, paints a picture of a clinic system which provides the highest quality of care to the County's most vulnerable populations – farmworkers, the uninsured, the poor, Medi-Cal recipients, pregnant women, homeless persons and public housing residents – all often shunned by the private, for-profit sector.

The report: "Making a Difference: The Federally Qualified Health Centers in Fresno County" also addresses the economic benefits FQHCs provide to the County, health conditions in the County and the causes of poor health in Fresno County.

Key findings of the report include the following:

- FQHCs provided health care services to 92,278 persons—nearly 10% of Fresno County's population
- 45% of all poor Fresno County residents who had a medical visit went to an FQHC
- 27% of all Fresno County lower income persons went to an FQHC
- 38% of Fresno County's uninsured population went to an FQHC
- FQHCs provided services to over 50,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Fresno County
- 46% of the estimated 114,000 farmworkers in Fresno County used an FQHC
- Nearly one in four mothers giving birth in Fresno County received prenatal services at an FQHC
- FQHCs provided 331,871 medical, dental, and optometric visits to patients
- FQHCs generated \$147 million in economic activity annually in Fresno County
- FQHCs created nearly 850 jobs locally

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Fresno County FQHCs

“It has been well documented that Fresno County is an area of immense need with fewer health resources than the rest of the state,” said David Quackenbush, CEO of the Central Valley Health Network. “This report showcases the critical role our FQHCs have played in providing a health care safety net to a very diverse population, including many immigrants with limited English proficiency and a low income population that is higher than the state average.”

In spite of the evidence on the important role Fresno County’s community clinics play medically, economically and socially in serving the areas most vulnerable populations, the report comes at a time when Governor Swarzenegger’s proposed budget cuts will have a crippling impact on ability of FQHCs to continue to provide a health care safety net.

A report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office this last month stated that the Governor’s proposed reductions to the Expanded Access to Primary Care program, Medi-Cal and other key clinic programs will further limit access to primary and preventative health care and create new barriers for the thousands of low-income individuals that count on these programs.

The report also finds that cutting into these programs will lead to a shift in where patients go to receive their health care, most likely to costlier venues such as hospitals. This will result in an additional burden to already overcrowded emergency rooms.

“The Governor is making an already challenging fiscal and health environment even more difficult,” said Carmela Castellano-Garcia, President and CEO of the California Primary Care Association (CPCA), which represents 700 community clinics and health centers in California. “Community clinics in Fresno County, as well as those throughout the rest of the state, already work under difficult financial circumstances, with limited resources, and with a minimal financial commitment from the state.”

“The Central Valley Health Network report shows what a vital role our FQHCs play as part of the healthcare safety net and the potential disaster should these cuts be approved,” she said.

For a complete copy of the report contact the Central Valley Health Network at cvhn@cvhnclinics.org or (916) 552-2846.

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***About the Central Valley Health Network (CVHN).** CVHN is a consortium of 13 Federally Qualified Health Center corporations that provide comprehensive preventive primary care services and advocate on behalf of low-income and medically underserved families throughout the Central Valley of California. CVHN members are the medical home for families with many members providing medical, dental, pharmacy, and mental health services. CVHN has 118 sites in 20 counties that provide 2.3 million encounters to over 560,000 patients annually of whom 77% are at or below 100% of federal poverty level, 49% Medi-Cal, 35% uninsured, 74% Latino, and 40% farmworkers.*