



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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North Carolina Community Health Center Association Supports Covering the Uninsured Working Poor via HB 662, Carolina Cares.

HB 662, Carolina Cares, is a **common-sense conservative approach to covering the uninsured**. This bill, introduced by Representatives Lambeth, Murphy, Dobson, and White empowers patients to access affordable, high quality, and innovative primary and preventive care.

Carolina Cares (HB 662)

- Would allow 300,000+ working people in the coverage gap to gain affordable coverage.
- Empowers patients by encouraging participation in preventive care and wellness programs.
- Will not cost the state anything, as it will receive funding through (a) federal match, (b) participant contributions, and (c) state assessments, including hospital assessment.
- Encourages strategies developed in the healthy Indiana plan established by Vice President Mike Pence.

Good for a Growing Economy

Though North Carolina's economy is growing, that growth is across many sectors including low-wage service jobs and those in the gig economy. People in these jobs do not have the opportunity for coverage. North Carolina should offer its residents, new and old, affordable, reliable access to regular primary and preventive care, so that we can keep the economy growing sustainably. HB 662's work requirements need to include provisions that do not exclude people in the event of an economic downturn or when employment is scarce.

Community Health Centers are Uniquely positioned to be essential Carolina Cares providers

- **Community Health Centers help with access to high quality care:** NC CHCs already serve people regardless of their insurance status. Currently, we serve approximately 200,000 uninsured patients statewide.
- **CHCs provide stability and continuity of care: patients will have a consistent medical home in the face of federal uncertainty around healthcare.** When currently uninsured CHC patients gain access to coverage, it will enable health centers and other safety net providers to hire new staff, extend hours, offer new services, and utilize care teams to provide cost-effective, quality care.
- **Primary care can decrease costs:** Carolina Cares emphasizes strong preventive and primary care services and reducing the need for urgent and emergency care. Community Health Centers are effective in lowering total patient costs because we provide comprehensive primary care and treat patient needs beyond medical care – including providing dental, pharmacy, transportation, interpretation, and other enabling services.
- **Statewide, locally-governed health centers are ready to serve.** CHC sites are located in 82 North Carolina counties and serve patients from all NC counties.