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Governor Proclaims Aug. 9-15 as Health Center Week in Oregon
Health Centers Plan Virtual Events During National Celebration

Portland, OR – The Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) is excited to announce that Gov. Kate Brown has declared Aug. 9-15, 2020, as Health Center Week in Oregon.

The [proclamation](#) recognizes the continued growth and success of the state's 33 Federally Qualified Health Centers, including one Look-Alike, and celebrates their vital role in Oregon's health care system. Oregon's FQHCs, also known as community health centers (CHCs), deliver integrated medical, dental and behavioral health services to communities made vulnerable at over 200 locations statewide.

"Community health centers first opened their doors more than 50 years ago, and are a vital element in our health care system, delivering integrated primary health care to over 433,000 Oregonians living in urban, rural, and frontier communities who may otherwise not have access to care," reads the proclamation. "Community health centers remain an intrinsic partner in transformation health care in Oregon, successfully reducing health care disparities, overcoming barriers to health care access, and addressing the social determinants of health to improve health care outcomes and reduce the total cost of care. During this observance, we celebrate the legacy of Oregon's community health centers, and their vital role in sharing the past, present, and future of our health care system."

This year looks different than National Health Center Week (NHCW) celebrations in the past due to social distancing measures. Oregon CHCs are planning virtual or socially distant events during the week, such as a virtual coloring contest, sending letters to the editor at local publications, and clinic staff celebrations. [See Oregon events here](#). This year, OPCA will be featuring origin stories from members during NHCW on [OPCA's blog](#) and on social media, to honor how CHCs were born out of the civil rights movement.

"This year's NHCW theme of ***Lighting the Way for Healthier Communities Today and in the Future***, is fitting as health centers serve as a beacon of strength, service, and care in their communities," said Joan Watson-Patko, OPCA's executive director. "Over the last four months, OPCA has had the opportunity to see how bright our health center members shine and we continue to be awestruck by their innovative work to meet needs in communities throughout our state."

And while this year is different, it's important to celebrate how Oregon's CHCs have pivoted to meet the needs of their communities during COVID-19, such as quickly transitioning to telehealth care. CHCs have done so while facing huge financial losses that could impact their ability to provide care.

Federal CHC funding is set to expire on Nov. 30 without action by Congress. "Ensuring long-term stable funding for community health centers is critical so Oregon CHCs can continue to provide care now during this pandemic and in the future," said Watson-Patko.

The proclamation was requested by OPCA as part of NHCW, an annual celebration with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's health centers over the past five decades. [Learn more about NHCW here](#).

About Oregon's CHCs

Oregon's CHCs deliver integrated medical, dental and behavioral health services to communities made vulnerable at over 200 locations statewide. Over 433,000 Oregonians receive their care at a community health center, including one in four people on the Oregon Health Plan. Over 73% of patients live below the poverty line, and 94% live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Over 75% of community health centers have clinic sites serving rural communities, 30% of Oregon's CHCs are federally

recognized as Health Care for the Homeless locations, and 33% are designated as Migrant Health Centers. [Find out more about Oregon's CHCs here.](#)

About OPCA:

OPCA is a non-profit membership association of Oregon's 33 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), including one FQHC Look-Alike. The organization's mission is to lead the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all.

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