

# Health Care for the Homeless Mobilizer

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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## Cosponsors Needed for Health Center Reauthorization

### Call Your Representative This Week

Representatives Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) and Gene Green (D-TX) soon will introduce legislation to reauthorize the Consolidated Health Centers program, which includes the federal Health Care for the Homeless, Community and Migrant Health Centers, and Public Housing Primary Care Programs.

The bill – a “straight reauthorization” with no changes to the programs– would maintain all of the strengths in Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA) that have enabled Health Centers to successfully provide care to underserved populations. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council fully supports this legislation and calls upon *Mobilizer* readers to urge your Representatives to sign on as original cosponsors.

### Sticking with what works

Section 330 of the PHSA outlines a comprehensive set of mandatory primary health services and other allowable services (dental, respite, mental health, substance abuse, housing, etc.) for health centers, giving them both valuable guidance and proper flexibility to meet the needs of the people they serve.

The statute requires that patients be seen regardless of their ability to pay and that grantees be governed by a board with a consumer/patient majority; HCH projects are eligible for waivers of this requirement if they can demonstrate other effective methods of consumer involvement. The legislation provides an appropriate, inclusive definition of homelessness, focusing on the lack of housing without excluding members of families, people who are doubled up, or those not meeting the more restrictive definition of chronic homelessness. The definition has worked well for the HCH program, and its reaffirmation will be significant during the current federal debate about the definition of homelessness.

A straight reauthorization would maintain the proportional distribution of annual Health Center appropriations, which provides an 8.7% share for Health Care for the Homeless.

### ACTION

Legislation to reauthorize Section 330 of the PHSA will be introduced by Reps. Bilirakis and Green during the week of April 24. All supporters of “straight reauthorization” should immediately urge their Representatives to sign on as original cosponsors of the bill.

- **Call your Representative today!** Find out who represents you by entering your ZIP code at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). Call his or her office, ask for the health staffer, and express your support for the “Health Centers Renewal Act of 2006.” Explain that the bill will be introduced next week, and ask that your Representative sign on as an original cosponsor by contacting Jerry White with Rep. Bilirakis (202/225-5755) or Laurie Ferguson Slenzak with Rep. Green (202/225-1688).

For more information, please contact the National Council’s Health Policy Specialist at 410/837-5533 or [djohnson@hchmd.org](mailto:djohnson@hchmd.org).

- Read the current legislation at <http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/REAUTHORIZATION.pdf>
- Learn more about Consumer Governance Requirements in Health Care for the Homeless, at <http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/ConsumerGovernSumm.pdf>
- Learn more about the definition of homelessness, at <http://www.nhchc.org/definitions.html>

### **Current Co-Sponsors of the “Health Centers Renewal Act of 2006” (partial list)**

Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL)  
Rep. Gene Green (D-TX)

Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA)  
Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA)  
Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA)  
Rep. Charlie Norwood (R-GA)  
Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL)  
Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL)  
Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL)  
Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI)  
Rep. Albert Wynn (D-MD)  
Rep. Thomas Allen (D-ME)  
Rep. Chip Pickering (R-MS)  
Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ)  
Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY)  
Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)  
Rep. Ted Strickland (D-OH)  
Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN)  
Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

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