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Spring Forward & Plan Ahead

Spring is almost here, bringing longer, warmer days, and of course, the start of the Congressional appropriations process. Funding levels for the coming year will soon be debated and now is the time to let your Member of Congress know that housing and health care are your priorities. Starting March 31, **Congress will be on "Spring Break"** and back in their home districts until April 15. **Use this recess to schedule a tour** and show them first-hand how your project is essential to the community.

Fiscal Year 2013

Last summer's agreement to raise the debt ceiling (The Budget Control Act) set FY2013 spending limits, making competition for scarce resources more intense. Beyond these limits, both defense and non-defense programs are facing automatic cuts of 7-10% (known as sequestration) due to the failure of the Super Committee. Some proposals under consideration include:

- Deferring the use of health center funds to later years and issuing fewer new access point grants
- Reducing total FY2013 federal spending by \$20 billion or more
- Eliminating automatic defense cuts by cutting domestic programs by \$55 billion

Are you concerned about these possibilities? These proposed cuts would greatly harm the clients of Health Care for the Homeless and other low-income programs. Together, we must speak up to protect them. You can be sure the defense industry will express its priorities - **balance the scales and tell Congress your priorities. If we are silent, the critical programs we represent will be easy targets for budget cutters.**

TAKE ACTION

Call your Senators' and Representative's offices at **1-877-210-5351**. Let them know where you work/live and that you want the Member to **support health centers and other low-income programs**. Before you get off the phone, ask to speak with the scheduler to invite the official to visit your site during the upcoming recess. Use the talking points below during your call:

- **Support health center expansion:**
 - Report unmet needs in your community, such as HCH waiting lists
 - Indicate if your project has any pending grant applications
 - For House members, request that they sign onto the **Bilirakas/Pallone Dear Colleague Letter** ([view the letter](#)), which expresses support for the Health Center program and the need for expanded capacity
 - For Senate members, request that they sign onto the **Stabenow/Boozman Dear Colleague Letter** ([view the letter](#)), which makes the same request as the letter above
- **Discuss additional programs essential to your project and clients**
- **Schedule a site visit:**
 - Be flexible in your dates.
 - Have a purpose for the site visit in mind, such as showcasing a new or priority program, marking a significant achievement, or speaking at an event. Be sure that consumers participate to speak for themselves.
 - Push for the Member to visit personally, but do not be disappointed if a staff member comes instead. Building your relationship with the Congressional office is a central purpose.
 - Look for opportunities to connect the Member's priorities with your

priorities. Study their websites at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov.

Support The National HCH Council's advocacy work!
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