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Health Care for the Homeless Action Bulletin

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A Good Day to End Homelessness

Advocacy Opportunities on HCH Day



Every year, **Health Center Week** and **HCH Day** recognize the important work of HCH projects, staff, clients, and others who contribute to our mission of improving the health of people without homes. This is also one of the best opportunities to strengthen relationships with elected officials and advance our policy goals.



Use Health Center Week (August 10-16, 2014) and HCH Day (Wednesday, August 13, 2014) as opportunities to advocate for policies that will strengthen the HCH community, help those we serve, and ultimately reduce the burdens and incidence of homelessness.

- **Plan an event** highlighting the importance of Medicaid expansion
- **Hold a rally** in support of Medicaid expansion if your state is currently not participating
- **Join the Got Medicaid?** campaign
- **Invite your elected officials** for a tour
- **Solicit public support** from elected officials

There's a lot happening—from new health center funding opportunities and Medicaid expansion in many states to a potential health center funding cliff and continued obstruction of Medicaid expansion in other states. Use Health Center Week (August 10-16, 2014) and HCH Day (Wednesday, August 13, 2014) as opportunities to advocate for policies that will strengthen the HCH community, help those we serve, and ultimately reduce the burdens and incidence of homelessness.

- **Submit a letter** to the editor in your local paper
- **Get involved and starting planning NOW!**

Planning Advocacy Events on HCH Day

There are a number of different advocacy activities you can plan for HCH Day but it is crucial that you start planning now. Here are some ideas:

Plan a Medicaid expansion event: Both Medicaid expansion states and non-expansion states have plenty to talk about.

- **Expansion states:** Consider having an event highlighting the gains you have made at your project thanks to Medicaid expansion. Check out our [event guide](#) for ideas.
- **Non-expansion states:** Hold a rally for Medicaid expansion. Invite supportive local officials, community partners, and the media. Check out our [Medicaid Expansion Advocacy Guide](#) for ideas.
- **Got Medicaid?** We kicked off our 'Got Medicaid?' campaign in support of Medicaid expansion at our National Conference in New Orleans. We encourage local projects to join us and use similar messaging. Check out our [campaign page](#) for more information . This is a great way to unite staff and clients toward a common goal, and it's easy to do!

Invite your elected officials for a tour: Members of Congress are back in their home districts/states during the month of August. They are looking for opportunities to meet with constituents – and a good photo op does not hurt either.

- Contact their Office and ask to speak to the scheduler. **You can call their DC Office toll-free at (877) 210-5351.**
- Explain where you work and that you would like to invite the member of Congress to tour your project for HCH Day. Ask how you can arrange the tour (you may be referred to the district office).
- Invite the official through their scheduler but also follow-up with a formal letter from your CEO and/or Board Chair.
- It is an election year, so make it very clear that **this is an educational tour and not a campaign event.** (Don't shy away from engaging your elected officials—hosting tours and discussions are not lobbying activities!)
- Once a tour is scheduled, prepare an itinerary that will allow the official to learn about the work you do, meet staff and consumers, and hear about

your policy priorities. A tour, touching on some new/impressive programs and followed by a brief meeting is a good structure.

Solicit public support from elected officials: If an elected official cannot make it to your project (or even if they can), obtaining a proclamation, letter, or video of support is a great alternative.

- Request a proclamation from your Mayor's Office, City Council, or other governing body. Check out the National Health Center Week [public support page](#) for a sample proclamation.
- Keep collecting letters of support for the [Access is the Answer](#) campaign. If you haven't collected many yet, use HCH Day as an opportunity to solicit such letters.
- Members of Congress have access to a video recording studio in DC. If they cannot make your event, see if they would be willing to record a message.

Work with your local media: HCH Day is a great time to reach out to the media to talk about the important work of HCH and the public programs that support it. Use these letter-to-the-editor templates and submit a piece to your local paper on [health center funding](#) and/or [Medicaid expansion](#).

More on National Health Center Week

Our partners at the National Association of Community Health Centers have developed many resources to aid in the planning of Health Center Week events, both advocacy-related and other types of events. Please visit the [National Health Center Week website](#) for ideas, templates, and more.

It is also very helpful if you share information about your event with both NACHC and the Council. This helps us know about the great work being done in communities and highlight great ideas to others in the health center community. Consider entering the NACHC photo/video contest on their site.

For more information on HCH Day, please check out this recent [Council webinar](#).

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