



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Carolina's Community Health Centers Reduce Medical Costs Annual Savings per Health Center User Average \$3,758

WASHINGTON and NEW YORK – A new policy research brief released today by the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services examines the financial impact of community health centers in North Carolina, a state known for its primary care innovation.

The brief, titled “Bending the Health Care Cost Curve in North Carolina: The Experience of Community Health Centers,” examines whether health centers in North Carolina, which has a well-developed primary health care system reaching medically underserved communities, are more cost effective than other primary health care providers. The researchers found that on average, health center patients cost 62% less annually than comparable patients who received care in other ambulatory care settings.

"The results of this study continue to show health centers are a very cost-effective option for states that are seeking to stem rising health care costs," said lead author Peter Shin, PhD, associate professor of Health Policy and Geiger Gibson Program Director. "Because they serve as advanced, community-based medical homes for high-risk individuals living in isolated and poor neighborhoods and are highly focused on prevention, they help states save money," Professor Shin said.

The researchers combined national and state data from two sources, the national Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and the state's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to create two different models, each of which showed significant cost savings in ambulatory care expenses for North Carolina health center patients as compared to those who rely on other sources of primary health care.

“This state- level analysis supports national findings, showing that community health centers provide cost effective, high quality care,” said Julio Bellber, president and CEO of the RCHN Community Health Foundation. “Investing in community health centers makes sense for North Carolina, and the nation as whole.”

To access the policy research brief, click here:

http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/dhp_publications/pub_uploads/dhpPublication_AA446764-5056-9D20-3DAB7377845C070F.pdf

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About the Geiger Gibson / RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative

The Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy, established in 2003 and named after human rights and health center pioneers Drs. H. Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, is part of the School of Public Health and Health Services at The George Washington University. It focuses on the history and contributions of health centers and the major policy issues that affect health centers, their communities, and the patients that they serve. Additional information about the Research Collaborative can be found online at www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/ggprogram or at rchnfoundation.org.

About the RCHN Community Health Foundation

The RCHN Community Health Foundation, founded in October 2005, is a not-for-profit foundation whose mission is to support community health centers through strategic investment, outreach, education, and cutting-edge health policy research. The only foundation in the country dedicated to community health centers, the Foundation builds on health centers' 40-year commitment to the provision of accessible, high quality, community-based healthcare services for underserved and medically vulnerable populations. The Foundation's gift to the Geiger Gibson program supports health center research and scholarship. For more information on RCHN CHF, visit www.rchnfoundation.org

About the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services:

Established in July 1997, the School of Public Health and Health Services brought together three longstanding university programs in the schools of medicine, business, and education that we have since expanded substantially. Today, more than 1,100 students from nearly every U.S. state and more than 40 nations pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral-level degrees in public health. Our student body is one of the most ethnically diverse among the nation's private schools of public health. <http://sphhs.gwumc.edu/>

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