



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 14, 2011

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New Analysis Examines Potential Economic Opportunities from Increased Federal Investment into Community Health Centers

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 potential economic benefit, including job creation opportunities, from investments in community health centers.

The brief, titled “Community Health Centers and the Economy: Assessing Centers’ Role in Immediate Job Creation Efforts,” finds that investment in community health centers generates an estimated 8:1 return for medically underserved communities while creating thousands of jobs. The researchers estimate that the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would have provided approximately \$36 billion in new economic benefits and would support 316,000 new jobs.

The report also estimates that the impact of the subsequent \$600 million federal spending reduction in April 2011 translates to an estimated \$1 billion loss in economic stimulus for rural and urban medically-underserved communities and 10,000 fewer job opportunities.

“These findings show that the impact of health centers extends beyond patient care and can be expressed in tangible economic payoffs for the communities most vulnerable to high unemployment,” said Sara Rosenbaum, Harold and Jane Hirsh Professor of Health Law and Policy in the School of Public Health and Health Services, Department of Health Policy.

Additionally, the researchers find that the federal government has been able to fund only 67 out of 800 health center expansion and new access proposals, leaving unfunded more than 733 “shovel ready” applications from the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

“Community health centers not only provide quality health care services, but also create jobs and economic opportunity in the communities they serve,” said Julio Bellber, president and CEO of the RCHN Community Health Foundation. “Continued investment in health centers has a substantial general economic benefit which is especially important to the nation’s underserved.”

To access the policy research brief, click here:

http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/dhp_publications/pub_uploads/dhpPublication_63C7B816-5056-9D20-3D6FC84132695FF2.pdf

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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