

## COVID-19 Federal Resource Guideline Series: Community Health Centers & Health Care for the Homeless

*What needed activities and services do Community Health Centers and Health Care for the Homeless programs provide or pay for?*

**Community Health Centers (CHC)** are affordable health care options supported by federal funding and administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). They provide access to primary care by reducing obstacles to patients including cost, a lack of insurance, and inaccessibility.

The **Health Care for the Homeless Program (HCH)** is a specific program within a number of those CHCs that provides services specifically to serve individuals experiencing homelessness. HCH programs also link medical care with other critical service providers including case management and housing which move individuals from crisis to stability. In total, the CHC program treated 1.36 million homeless individuals in 2017 (the HCH program served 70% of the total).

HCH programs offer health care services, similar to a CHC, but with additional critical services for the homeless population. Health care is intertwined with housing and combining the two services can improve health and enable people to more successfully remain or become housed. By offering a comprehensive trauma-informed suite of services focused on the whole person listed below, HCH programs offer a more holistic approach to a population that requires coordinated action:

- **Physical and behavioral health care services including** primary medical care, dental care, psychiatric care, one-on-one and group therapy, substance use treatment, and medical respite care to ensure that discharged individuals are able to recover fully from an illness or surgery before being discharged.
- **Supportive services** which can include assistance in obtaining ID, transportation to appointments, help in securing public benefits and assistance, and helping to secure temporary and permanent housing.

*What funds are available?*

In FY20, the total budget for CHCs is \$5.5 billion (a 2.2% decrease from FY19). Funding for the HCH Program is tied by federal statute to 8.7% of the total CHC budget, which will be \$479 million in FY20. As a result of COVID-19 and the CARES Act, there has been a total of \$1.42 billion directly granted to the CHC system for treatment and services related to the virus (more details on the Bureau of Primary Health Care [FAQ](#)). HCH programs will also receive their full FY2020 funding in advance as a result of the CARES Act (these funds are not directly tied to COVID-19).

*How can you find more information?*

Ending homelessness requires a coordinated and sustained effort across multiple systems, sectors, service providers, and more. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council maintains a [HCH Program directory](#) which lists HCH Grantees state by state. A broader registry of CHCs is also [available from HRSA](#).