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28 Oregon Health Centers Receive \$18 Million as Part of ARPA Funding

Infrastructure Project Funding Aides Access to Care and Modern Equipment, Especially in Rural OR

Portland, OR – It was announced Wednesday that 28 Oregon Community Health Centers (CHCs) were successfully awarded more than \$18 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support capital projects. HHS awarded nearly \$1 billion in American Rescue Plan funding to nearly 1,300 HRSA Health Center Program-funded health centers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories to support major construction and renovation projects. Awards in Oregon range from about \$511,000 to a little over \$1.18 million per health center.

Health centers will use this funding for COVID-19-related capital needs, constructing new facilities, renovating and expanding existing facilities to enhance response to public health emergencies, and purchasing new state-of-the-art equipment, including telehealth technology, mobile medical vans, and freezers to store vaccines, according to a [press release](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health and Human Services (HHS).

“Oregon’s CHCs are grateful for these infrastructure funds which will be used to improve access to health care some of the state’s most vulnerable and underserved populations,” said Joan Watson-Patko, OPCA’s Executive Director. “It is funding like this that helps narrow the gaps in equitable health care delivery to all Oregonians.”

Winding Waters Community Health Center in eastern Oregon, for example, is constructing a new stand-alone integrated primary care facility in the town of Wallowa, Oregon with the help of ARPA infrastructure funding. “This entirely new structure will be the first safety-net integrated (medical, dental, mental health) care clinic in the town of Wallowa, where currently the next nearest community health center, or critical access hospital (CAH) facility is more than 18 miles distant. More than half the residents of this high-poverty community are currently served annually by Winding Waters Community Health Center; however, patients frequently cite lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing care at existing facilities. The proposed project will bring integrated care within one mile of more than 50% of the population of Wallowa, dramatically reducing transportation barriers for at-risk patients,” states CEO, Nic Powers.

In North Bend, OR [Waterfall Community Health Center](#) purchased a building that will allow expansion of services into dental care. “We will be using the ARPA funding to renovate the building and to purchase dental equipment to outfit four operatories (along with the necessary peripheral equipment to launch the practice.)” said, Andrea Trenner, CEO.

About Oregon’s CHCs:

Oregon’s community health centers deliver integrated medical, dental and behavioral health services to many of the state’s most vulnerable communities through over 270 locations statewide. Over 450,000 Oregonians receive their care at a community health center, including one in six people on the Oregon Health Plan. Over 50% of patients live below the poverty line, and 71% live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Over 75% of community health centers have clinic sites serving rural communities, 30% of Oregon’s community health centers are federally recognized as Health Care for the Homeless locations, and 33% are designated as Migrant Health Centers. Find out more about [Oregon’s CHCs here](#).

About OPCA:

OPCA is a non-profit membership association of Oregon's 34 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), including two FQHC Look-Alikes also known as community health centers. The organization's mission is to lead the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all.

OPCA believes all people, in Oregon and beyond, should have the chance to lead their healthiest lives and have access to equitable health care. Oregon Primary Care Association supports a network of community health centers that deliver exceptional health care to people in urban, rural and frontier communities who may otherwise not have access to services. By helping health centers apply innovative approaches to health care delivery and system challenges, OPCA is transforming primary care in Oregon and beyond. Follow us on Twitter: [@OregonPCA](#) or on [Facebook](#).