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Extension of Remarks

The Honorable Mike Doyle

National Health Center Week

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Health Center Week and commend Community Health Centers for their important role in America's health care system.

For over 50 years, Community Health Centers have provided high-quality, affordable, comprehensive primary and preventive health care in our nation's underserved communities, delivering value to, and having a significant impact on, our health care system.

Today, Community Health Centers serve as primary care for more than 27 million Americans in rural and urban areas. Often, these Health Centers are the only accessible and dependable source of primary care in their communities. In Pennsylvania, Community Health Centers serve more than 800,000 patients at more than 300 sites every year. In Pittsburgh alone, there are seven different Health Center organizations that serve over 44,000 patients at 33 delivery sites, including mobile health clinics. These Health Centers provide access to a variety of primary care services such as vision, oral, and behavioral health, as well as preventative care services for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, heart and lung disease, cancer, and HIV/AIDS.

Community Health Centers also help the American economy by generating \$24 billion in savings for our health care system annually. Their facilities offer care for patients outside of the emergency rooms and hospitals which place a

greater financial burden on our health care system. Health Centers also generate \$45.6 billion in economic impact in areas with slower economic growth and employ more than 200,000 physicians, nurses, and staff across the country.

Congress has spent a great part of the past year debating the future of our nation's health care system. Despite uncertainty about the Affordable Care Act and instability surrounding our health care markets, Community Health Centers have remained a core source of care for low-income Americans and underserved populations. It is with their help that we can make affordable, high-quality healthcare accessible for all Americans regardless of geography, income, and insurance status. It is also with their help that we will overcome our nation's most pressing health crises such as the opioid epidemic, public health threats, and care for veterans.

I encourage all Americans to observe National Health Center Week by visiting their local Health Centers, learning about their services, and thanking the Health Center staff in their communities.

I believe the best way to recognize National Health Center Week is to support full funding for Community Health Centers and to advocate for programs which help patients to access their services. I will continue to support Community Health Centers and I hope my colleagues will join me.