

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS & COVID-19: RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC & PROVIDING ACCESS TO CARE

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS (CHCs) have been a critical piece of Oklahoma's COVID-19 response. Since the outbreak of pandemic, CHCs have screened, tested, and treated patients and non-patient members of their communities. CHCs were some of the first organizations to begin vaccinating against COVID-19 and have been highly effective at vaccinating hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations in rural and underserved areas.

100%

Community health centers providing telehealth services

125+

Community health center locations throughout the state

90k+

COVID-19 vaccinations administered by CHCs since February 2021



VACCINATING HARD-TO-REACH OKLAHOMANS:

Community health centers have succeeded at partnering with churches, community centers, and other community partners to address misconceptions about vaccines and protect the state's most vulnerable.

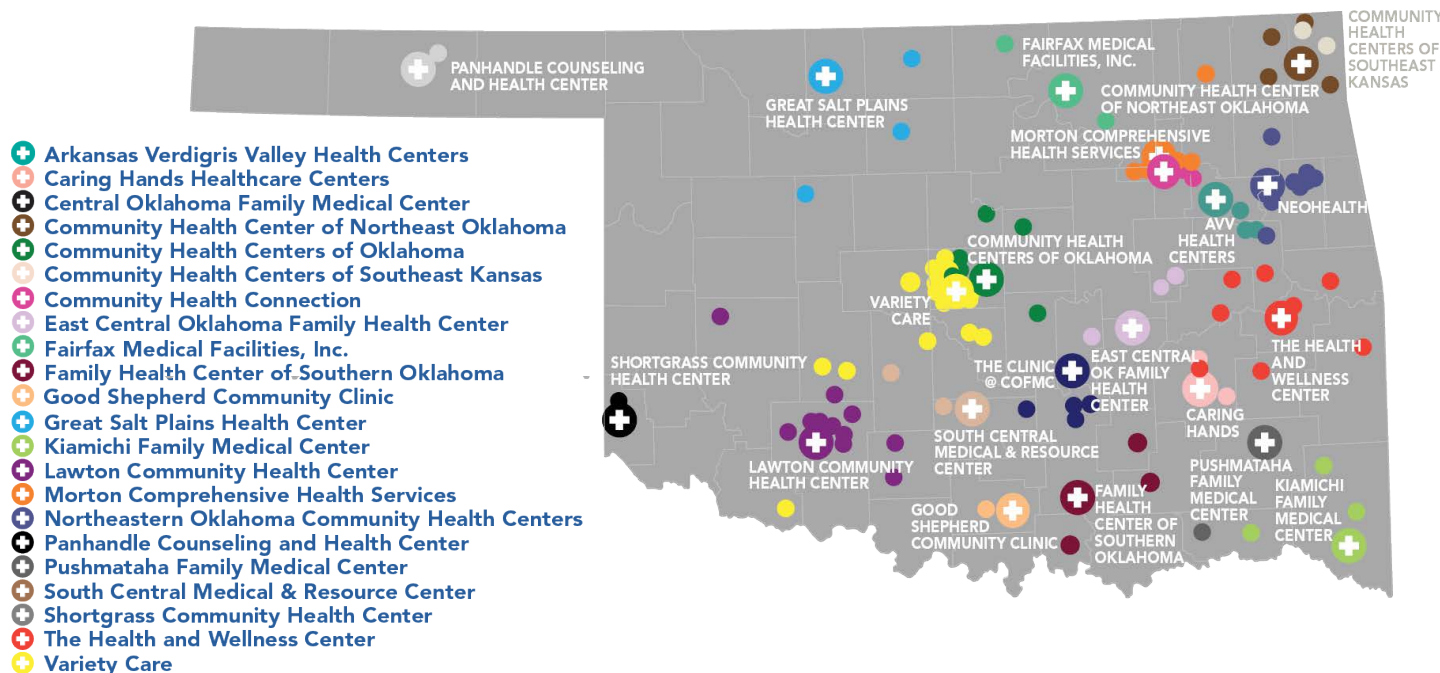
DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS:

- **Telehealth:** Health centers immediately ramped up telehealth and tele-behavioral health services at the start of the pandemic. For patients without reliable internet access, many health centers provided tablets for curbside telehealth visits or dedicated one room in the health center for patients to use for telehealth.
- **Expanded Behavioral Health:** CHCs saw a surge of patients requesting behavioral health treatment during the crisis, including in school-based settings. CHCs also continued to provide medication assisted treatment (MAT) for patients with substance use disorders, many of whom experienced relapses or expressed suicidality throughout the pandemic.
- **Connecting Patients to Community Resources:** As private-public partnerships, CHCs have experience connecting patients to other resources to address their social determinants of health. CHCs provided enabling services like transportation, education, and case management and assisted patients with food insecurity, housing needs, transportation issues, and more.



WHAT ARE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS (CHCs)?

CHCs are nonprofits that serve communities in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in order to provide access to integrated, comprehensive services to families and individuals who may otherwise lack access to care. CHCs treat all patients regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. CHCs use sliding fee scales based on patients' income, have after-hours coverage, meet extensive performance and accountability requirements, and are governed by patient-majority boards that reflect the communities they serve.

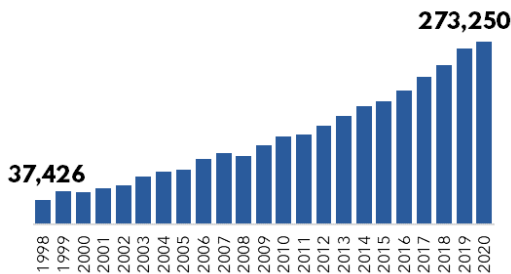


273,250 patients served by community health centers in 2020	2,262 FTEs employed by community health centers in 2020	\$45,436,392 sliding fee discounts provided in 2020 to patients with i ncomes below 200% of the federal poverty level
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DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS SAVING MONEY WHILE IMPROVING OUTCOMES:

Community health centers provide much-needed, cost-effective primary care that saves the health care system money by preventing expensive, avoidable emergency department visits and chronic illnesses. In 2020, CHCs participating in a Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) Accountable Care Organization (ACO) saved Medicare over \$8.3 million by providing high-quality, coordinated care. Since 2018, CHCs in the clinically integrated network have saved Medicare nearly \$20 million. A 2016 study in AJPH that analyzed thirteen states' Medicaid claims data found that, compared to Medicaid patients served by non-CHCs, health center patients cost 24% less overall. This was achieved by decreasing specialty care visits by 22% and achieving 25% fewer inpatient admissions.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER PATIENTS



CHCs have grown to meet the unmet need in Oklahoma for primary medical, dental, behavioral health, optometry, and substance use disorder treatment and recovery services.

In 1998, there were four health center sites in OK serving fewer than 40,000 people. By 2020, community health centers in Oklahoma served over 270,000 patients. Today, CHCs serve 1 in 14 Oklahomans, including 1 in 10 Medicaid patients and 1 in 8 uninsured individuals.