

Non Profits-Major Economic Engines

Harbor Health Services Inc., a nonprofit public health agency that provides quality, comprehensive health care to communities in Boston, the South Shore, and Cape Cod, is in danger of losing funding due to proposed budget cuts. Harbor Health owns and operates three community health centers, including Geiger Gibson Community Health Center, Mid Upper Cape Community Health Center, and Neponset Health Center. Community health centers, like the ones run by Harbor Health, serve as the family doctor for thousands of people in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Recent studies reveal that on a national level, the number of patients served by community health centers will rise from currently 23 million to 40 million by 2015. Combined, Harbor Health's community health centers are the medical home for more than 26,000 patients and the "family dentist" to an additional 10,000 patients. Harbor Health's Elder Service Plan cares for more than 300 members and the Women Infant Children Nutrition Program serves more than 3,000 women and their children.

In addition to Harbor Health's role as a primary care provider, it is also a major economic engine for the communities it serves. It employs over 450 people and contributes millions every year to the state's economy. It also attracts well-trained physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, and allied health professionals while being the training ground for critical entry level professionals.

In response to the well documented shortage in primary care providers, the health centers under Harbor Health have instituted a number of "thinking outside box" measures to ensure that no one will be denied care due to a lack of primary care providers. The centers have implemented extended hours of operation in the evening and during the weekends. These changes were made possible because of previous funding increases.

Without access to community health centers, state residents would seek care in emergency departments or delay care until hospitalization is the only option. This ends up costing more in the long run.

Decades of research have shown that health centers RETURN money to the health care system, including the nation's entitlement programs. In fact each year, on just a \$2 billion investment, health centers generate \$24 billion in savings to the health care system. This makes health centers a very worthwhile investment.

Harbor Health is just one example of a nonprofit organization that strengthens the community by being effective, efficient, and essential. When government programs are cut, the burden shifts to nonprofit organizations. Programs and funding may be eliminated, but the need is not.

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, a statewide organization whose mission is to strengthen nonprofit organizations through advocacy, public awareness, and capacity

building services, is working to help nonprofits like Harbor Health Services, Inc. continue to carry out their missions to strengthen the community during a time of diminished resources and increased demand.

You can help too. We encourage you to contact your legislators to ask them not to cut funding for vital nonprofits. You can also make a donation to a nonprofit agency. If you would like to donate to Harbor Health, just visit <http://www.hhsi.us/ways-to-give>. By working together, we can all help make our communities stronger.

Respectfully Submitted,
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