

# Reasons to rely on Community Health Centers for Help



**It isn't always easy to find the right place to fill your health needs. Often, we're forced to choose between big hospitals or urgent care centers.** But there are better alternatives for everyday medical treatment. Local health centers have provided affordable, comprehensive health services since 1965.

## What is a Community Health Center?

Community health centers are the primary medical service provider for **more than 30 million Americans**. They are community-based and patient-directed non-profit organizations that serve people in the community who have limited access to health care. Today, there are more than 1,400 of these **government-funded health centers** nationwide.

## What makes a Community Health Centers different?

### 1. Affordable Services

Community health centers offer a wide range of medical services at a rate that is more affordable than most other options.

For example, the average cost of a health center visit is less than one-sixth of the average cost of a trip to the emergency room. Like all of these facilities, many offer a **sliding fee scale** to local residents who do not have the ability to pay.

### 2. Comprehensive Health Care

Another reason millions rely on local health centers is that they offer comprehensive medical care that can treat the whole person





rather than just one ailment. From initial screenings to managing chronic illnesses, community health centers give you a wide range of treatment options.

For example, many centers specialize in different areas like **primary/preventive care services**, **dental care**, **mental/behavioral health** and **heart health care** to both children and adults. Patients may choose one or all of these services, depending on their needs.

### 3. Improved Access

Government-funded community health centers offer many empowering services, such as transportation, translation, case management and health education. A commitment to improved access ensures that patients are not denied health care services they require.

A community health center is a welcoming place anyone can turn to for help. Whether you need a simple check-up or something more serious.

## Community Health Centers that have Heart Health Programs

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC), heart disease remains the number one killer of men and women in the U.S. For many, however, the risk of heart disease can be lessened by following a healthier lifestyle. That's why many Community Health Centers offer a variety of heart health programs designed to help you learn more about healthy diets, regular exercise, stress management, medications and more. Patients who are recovering from a heart attack can also benefit from cardiac rehabilitation services.

### Prevention and Wellness Classes

Choosing a healthy lifestyle can help you reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, or minimize its damage.

Healthy lifestyles include maintaining a healthy weight, regular exercise, controlling your cholesterol, knowing your cardiac medications, eating a heart healthy diet, and minimizing stress. You can learn more about each of the factors that affect your lifestyle by attending Healthy Lifestyle classes.

### Cardiac Rehabilitation

People who are recovering from a heart attack, coronary bypass surgery, angioplasty or other heart conditions can benefit from a cardiac rehabilitation program. Research has shown that exercise improves cardiac patients' quality of life, both mentally and physically.

A monitored exercise program should begin four to six weeks after you leave the hospital. This consists of a registered nurse watching what your heart is doing on a monitor and checking your blood pressure while you exercise. Many Community Health Centers offer these kinds of programs.

### Conclusion

Community Health Centers serve a large and diverse population. Access to preventative services, including annual physicals and flu shots... continues to improve patient health. However, patients continue to face barriers to care, particularly uninsured patients and underserved and rural communities. Increasing access to Community Health Care Centers remains and will continue to be a key focus for health care providers. To find funding will continue to be a challenge for health care centers so they can sustain their level of operations.

