

WHAT IS TENNESSEE'S STATE-FUNDED PRIMARY CARE SAFETY NET?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Tennessee's state-funded primary care safety net focuses on services that help uninsured adults age 19-64 avoid more costly hospitalizations.
- Each type of primary care safety net provider – local health departments, community health centers, and community- and faith-based clinics – have unique missions, revenue sources, and service capacities.

Definitions of the “health care safety net” vary according to the state, community, or context in question. (1) (2) Depending on the definition, it can include everything from state Medicaid programs to a narrow set of providers offering charity care.

This report focuses on Tennessee's state-funded primary care safety net, a subset of the broader safety net comprised of state-funded entities that provide primary care services to uninsured adults ages 19-64.¹ In 2016, about 13% of Tennesseans ages 18-64 (or 535,000) were uninsured. (3) The state-funded safety net includes select community health centers, certain community- and faith-based clinics, and local health departments in 50 of the state's 95 counties. (4)

OVERVIEW OF TENNESSEE'S STATE-FUNDED PRIMARY CARE SAFETY NET

BACKGROUND

Tennessee's state-funded primary care safety net focuses on services that help uninsured patients avoid more costly hospitalizations. Services include preventive care, chronic disease management, and limited dental care. Research shows that access to and use of primary care services improves patient outcomes, reduces health disparities, and decreases hospitalization and emergency department visits. (5) (6) State funding also supports 4 regional “Project Access” programs that help coordinate specialty or diagnostic care through, for example, charitable or volunteer care resources and partnerships. (4)

Over 500,000 patient encounters were provided by Tennessee's state-funded primary care safety net providers in FY 2016-2017. Of these, 48% occurred in federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), 34% in community- and faith-based clinics (CFBCs), and 18% in local health departments (LHDs). (4) The number of total patient encounters has ranged from 360,000 in FY 2005-2006 to 657,000 in FY 2013-2014. (**Figure 1**)

17. **National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)**. 2016 National Profile of Local Health Departments. [Online] August 2017. http://nacchoprofilestudy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ProfileReport_Aug2017_final.pdf.
18. **Tennessee Department of Health**. Services Offered by Local Health Departments. [Online] April 2, 2018. <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/localdepartments/lrhd/local-services.html>.
19. **National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)**. 2005 National Profile of Local Health Departments. [Online] July 2006. [Accessed on December 5, 2017.] http://archived.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/profile/upload/NACCHO_report_final_000.pdf.
20. **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. FY 2016 Grants Summary Profile Report for Tennessee. [Online] 2017. https://www.cdc.gov/FundingProfilesApp/Report_Docs/PDFDocs/Rpt2016/Tennessee-2016-CDC-Grants-Profile-Report.pdf.
21. -. Public Health Financing. [Online] June 2013. [Accessed on December 4, 2017.] https://www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/docs/finance/Public_Health_Financing-6-17-13.pdf via <https://www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/grantsfunding/index.html#phsf>.
22. **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**. What is a Health Center? *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)*. [Online] [Accessed on December 1, 2017.] <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/what-is-a-health-center/index.html>.
23. -. National Health Center Data (2008-2016). [Online] [Accessed on November 3, 2017.] Accessed via <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/datacenter.aspx>.
24. **National Association of Community Health Centers**. Key Health Center Data by State, 2016. [Online] November 2, 2017. <http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Key-HC-Data-by-State-2016-11.2.17.pdf>.
25. **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**. Congressional Budget Justifications for FFYs 2014-2018. [Online] 2013-2017. [Accessed on December 5, 2017.] Accessed via <https://www.hrsa.gov/about/budget/index.html>.
26. **National Association of Community Health Centers**. The Health Center Funding Cliff and Its Impact. [Online] September 2017. https://d3n8a8pro7v7hmx.cloudfront.net/nachc/pages/297/attachments/original/1506523575/The_Health_Center_Funding_Clipf_and_Its_Impact_September_2017.pdf?1506523575.
27. **Tennessee Charitable Care Network**. Member Charitable Clinic Organizations. [Online] 2017. [Accessed on January 18, 2018.] <http://www.tccnetwork.org/find-a-clinic.html>.
28. **The National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics**. Getting To Know America's Free & Charitable Clinics. [Online] June 2016. http://www.tccnetwork.org/uploads/8/0/4/9/80493622/clinic_talking_points_jun_2016_final.pdf.
29. **Tennessee Primary Care Association / Tennessee Charitable Care Network**. Health Care Safety Net Fact Sheet. [Online] December 2017. Obtained from the Tennessee Charitable Care Network.
30. **Switzer-Nadasdi, Rhonda**. Letter to Governor Bill Haslam. *Tennessee Charitable Care Network*. [Online] November 2, 2017. Obtained from the Tennessee Charitable Care Network.
31. **State of Tennessee**. TN Code § 68-1-123 (2016). [Online] <https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/2016/title-68/health/chapter-1/part-1/section-68-1-123/>.
32. **Tennessee Department of Health**. 2014 Joint Annual Report of Hospitals Summary Report. [Online] September 26, 2015. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/Annual_Report_on_Hospital_Statistics_2015.pdf.

¹ In 2016, 96.5% of Tennessee children under 18 and 99.6% of Tennessee adults 65 and older were insured. (3)