

**IAFCC statement about Illinois General Assembly Budget Session
from
Chair Jeffrey Task and Executive Director Melissa Maguire**

The Illinois Association of Free & Charitable Clinics (IAFCC) appreciates the serious deliberation and difficult decisions made by the Illinois General Assembly in crafting a budget that is supportive of the populations our 52 clinics serve. As a critical part of the Illinois health care safety net, the IAFCC clinics are dedicated to providing free, comprehensive, high quality, health care to the uninsured and underinsured through mostly donated resources.

Due to the support provided by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and the members of the General Assembly, the IAFCC was able to distribute nearly \$9 million from a first ever State of Illinois appropriation in the current State Fiscal Year to serve a population of Illinois residents in which 100 percent live below the federal poverty level through an estimated 100,000 patient visits that saved Illinois hospitals more than \$33 million in emergency room visits, over \$20 million in value of donated care for a total of over \$53 million. The small investment in the clinics goes a long way.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the IAFCC asked for continued funding of \$9 million and were appropriated \$4 million. With recognition of the tough decisions that were made to make this budget balanced and compassionate, the IAFCC is grateful for the amount received. Thanks to Governor Pritzker signing off on a new \$4 million IAFCC appropriation for the upcoming State Fiscal Year, the members of the IAFCC will continue to serve traditional patients while continuing to prioritize helping the state in two key areas – migrant health care and Medicaid redetermination.

IAFCC member clinics and the professionals who work with those clinics have been on the front lines in terms of leadership and direct service provision in helping Illinois address what is now a migrant/refugee health care crisis in our state. Because of constraints placed on other members of the Illinois healthcare safety net, the IAFCC clinics are uniquely positioned to provide direct patient care that other institutions cannot.

During the pandemic, we were active in assisting people in accessing the temporarily emergency Medicaid benefits. But with the sunset of those benefits and Medicaid redetermination, we are once again prepared to provide healthcare for those people found not eligible and will be monitoring how we can help them receive benefits from the new Illinois Health Exchange that was approved in this last legislative session.

In closing, the IAFCC expresses deep gratitude to our champions State Senator Karina Villa, Leader Theresa Mah, and Senator Celina Villanueva who continue to be fierce advocates of free and charitable clinics. We also would like to give sincere appreciation to the supporters who co-sponsored our legislation and uplifted the needs of the clinics: (in no particular order) Senator Javier L. Cervantes, Senator Laura Fine, Senator Robert Peters, Senator Mike Simmons, Senator Ram Villivalam, Representative Will Guzzardi, Leader Barbara Hernandez, Representative Lindsey LaPointe, Representative Dagmara Avelar, Representative Matt Hanson, Representative Kevin John Olickal, Representative Kelly M. Cassidy, Representative Diane Blair-Sherlock and Representative Jenn Ladisch Douglass. Without their unwavering support, uninsured and underinsured Illinois residents and migrants to Illinois would suffer.