

A Community Health Center Will Bring Economic and Social Benefits to Thomaston

Community Health Centers are a nationally recognized, sustainable, equitable source of care for millions of Americans¹

- Community Health Centers have been providing affordable quality medical, dental, and mental health care since the 1960s, and now serve over 30 million people nationally. ¹ In Maine, community health centers care for about 210,000 patients each year, or 16% of Maine's total population. ²
- Community Health Centers are patient centered and offer comprehensive care to treat the whole person under one roof. They focus on wellness, and breaking down barriers to care, like lack of transportation, income, or insurance status.
- Every county in Maine has a Community Health Center, however Knox County's is on Vinalhaven. The nearest mainland community health centers are in Belfast and Coopers Mills, near Whitefield.

Community Health Centers Bring and Keep People in Rural Towns³

- A consistent tax base and thriving downtown community depends on year round residents.
- Remote work and web-based employment is more popular and common now. Access to healthcare is an important consideration for workers, and their families, to continue to live in, or relocate to, rural areas. ³
- Retirees are more likely to move to or stay in communities with quality healthcare centers, and data demonstrates that in rural areas for every 100 new retirees, as many as 55 local jobs are generated. ^{3,4}

Community Health Centers Bring and Keep Business in Rural Towns⁵

- Employers value access to care to keep their employees healthy and working
- Health Centers bring patients and staff from surrounding communities into town, who then frequent the local shopping opportunities and restaurants.
- Health Centers are also important employers in rural towns providing high wage jobs, and creating paths for local residents to develop skilled and professional careers in healthcare, administration, finances, human resources, community engagement and more.

Maine Community Health Centers Economic Impact

Health Centers in Maine **created 3,592 jobs** and **generated \$575,074,816** in total economic activity in 2021⁵

Robust communities and effective economic recovery and development require infrastructure. That infrastructure is often perceived as roads, bridges, and businesses. In reality, healthcare, education, and broadband are essential as well.

Affordable and local health care is necessary for strong communities. Communities dependent on tourism, farmers, and fishermen all need affordable health care services readily available. Maine's network of Community Health Centers is not only the safety net but also the fabric connecting people, communities, and the economy.

- *Maine Primary Care Association*⁶

Community Health Centers Benefit Everyone, Improve Health and Access to Care⁷

- Many studies show that community based care is effective and cost efficient, which is why it continues to have strong bi-partisan support.
- Community health centers focus on healthy living and preventive care. They assist residents with accessing resources, and enrolling in health insurance, which reduces the need for expensive emergency care.
- Community health centers work closely with local nonprofits to address food insecurity, homelessness, transportation, and more, which greatly improves the health of the whole community.

Community Health Centers Put the Patient First.⁷

- Health center patients serve on governing boards and patient advisory committees for their local centers, which gives them a say in the health care that is provided to the community.
- Community Health Centers are large enough to serve our community's health needs, and small enough to care!

Further Reading:

- <https://www.nachc.org/about/about-our-health-centers/>
- https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CHC-Economic-Impact-Report_Maine.pdf
- <https://mepca.org/community-health-centers/>
- <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/aug/changes-at-community-health-centers-how-patients-are-benefiting>

References:

1. <https://www.nachc.org/about/about-our-health-centers/what-is-a-health-center/>
2. <https://mepca.org/community-health-centers/>
3. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/community-vitality-and-rural-healthcare#community-resilience>
4. https://www.terry.uga.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Golden_Rules.pdf
5. <https://www.nachc.org/research-and-data/research-fact-sheets-and-infographics/>
6. <https://mepca.org/policy-advocacy/advocacy-resources-2/>
7. <https://www.nachc.org/about/about-our-health-centers/>