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All In Chicago: Raising Awareness for #ILFreeClinicsMonth

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While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has increased healthcare access, gaps still remain due to affordability, transition between jobs, immigration status and enrollment period cut-offs—in addition to a shortage of Medicaid providers outside major metropolitan areas. Following the passing of the ACA in 2009, patient demand across the sector remained the same, illustrating the challenges some face in obtaining and maintaining health care coverage. Clinics like CommunityHealth have responded to the need by maintaining or even increasing hours, services, specialty care referrals and volunteer staff.

This August, [The Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics \(IAFCC\)](#) has launched [Free and Charitable Clinics Awareness Month](#) in Illinois. Clinics are hosting special events, providing additional outreach to their communities and continuing to expand their clinic resources to provide coverage for those who need it most.

An estimated 896,000 Illinois residents were uninsured in 2016. There are more than 40+ free clinics throughout Illinois that provided care to over 100,000 patients, with an estimated 20,000 new patients receiving comprehensive primary care and chronic disease management. Over 150,000 hours of medical care is provided each year by volunteers alone. In addition, more than two thirds of all free and charitable clinics provide hands-on training for future health care professionals: many of Illinois' free and charitable clinics are a resource for



medical, nursing and social work schools to provide enriching opportunities for supervised students to practice.

There is still a need for free and charitable clinics nationwide. Throughout the state of Illinois this August, we want to raise awareness about how free and charitable clinics are “all in” every day, providing access to care for our most vulnerable residents by serving in both rural and urban communities throughout Illinois as the “safety net under the safety net.” The need for quality care continues, and in order for us to reach those who are still in need, every member clinic has a role to play. Learn more about free clinics throughout Illinois at www.illinoisfreeclinics.org and explore the events happening near you.

CommunityHealth is the proud recipient of a grant from the IAFCC to support our healthy cooking classes. [Check out our Facebook page, too,](#) to see what we’re cooking up during #ILFreeClinicsMonth!