

My name is Phil Cole and I am Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, an organization that represents Ohio's fifty-two community action agencies. Our agencies offer a variety of services to meet the needs of low-income people in each of Ohio's eighty-eight counties. In many counties, we provide a range of health care services either in federal qualified health centers or other health care facilities.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes \$2 billion to expand the reach of federally qualified health centers to meet the health care needs of low-income people. This includes funding not only for construction and renovation, but also for Health Information Technology which will lower the costs of health care while improving its efficiency.

This funding is extremely important because these tight economic times are forcing both states and cities to cut support. But, the need for these facilities could not be greater. They are overwhelmed. In 2007, Ohio's 34 federally qualified health centers had over 1.3 million patient visits by 374,000 Ohioans. And, those were the good times.

Expanding access to quality, affordable health care at a time when people are losing their jobs and their health insurance is extremely important. People must have a health care home that is accessible and where insurance status does not matter. Forcing people into bankruptcy because they can not pay their health care

costs is not going to rebuild this economy. Forcing people to choose between a doctor's appointment or buying their groceries does not rebuild this economy.

The Economic Recovery Act helps community health centers play a critical role in improving our nation's health and our economy by creating jobs and economic activity in our most economically deprived neighborhoods. The funding in the legislation will do that while creating cost-savings for the health care system.

Strengthening this system through this legislation makes economic sense. Congress is using tax dollars very wisely by improving health care and creating jobs with the same dollars. Don't let anyone mislead you. When you take a good look at the Economic Recovery legislation, you will see several "two-fer" and "three-fer". Congress did a good job for the Nation's taxpayers.

Much work remains, but the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies is pleased and thankful that Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy recognizes the value of investing in America's economic well-being through accessible, cost-effective, quality health care. Thank you Congresswoman.

Thank you.