



## Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics: Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act

### BOTTOM LINE



**Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) are improving critical access to high-quality behavioral health care throughout the country. Establishing CCBHCs as an enduring part of the health care landscape ensures their long-term success and supports states establishing the model as an abiding part of their behavioral health systems.**

### THE ASK



**Cosponsor and support passage of the [Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act \(S. 2993\)](#).**

### WHY WE NEED THIS LEGISLATION

Since 2017, the CCBHC model has delivered the resources our nation needs to change the care landscape for people living with mental health and substance use challenges. CCBHCs are clinics that increase access to lifesaving mental health and substance use services in their communities. Thanks to bipartisan recognition of the importance of CCBHCs, Congress has extended and expanded the CCBHC demonstration and grant recipients to support more states and clinics as they integrate the CCBHC model into their care delivery systems.

Today, over 500 CCBHCs provide care to millions of people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges.<sup>1</sup> CCBHCs are proven to reduce unmet need for care, improve access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for substance use, strengthen the quality of mental health care, expand the behavioral health workforce and divert people in crisis from over-burdened and medically inappropriate systems like hospitals and jails. CCBHCs are changing the behavioral health care landscape. The model has proven that evidence-based care supported by site-specific financing dramatically increases access to comprehensive and lifesaving services. The continued success of CCBHCs is paramount to the long-term sustainability of a high-quality behavioral health system that includes a critical safety net for vulnerable, at-risk populations.

The Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act ensures sustainability by building upon the previous bipartisan actions of Congress to expand and enhance the CCBHC model. This legislation takes the next step of supporting the long-term success of the model by formalizing CCBHCs in the health care landscape. This Act defines CCBHCs in federal law and creates an infrastructure to continue their growth and excellence in mental health and substance use care. Taking these steps ensures the continued high-impact outcomes CCBHCs have already demonstrated and drives future improvement in accessibility and delivery of behavioral health care services.

## WHY DOES THE ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH ACT MATTER?

**CCBHCs dramatically increase access to treatment and alleviate the impacts of the behavioral health workforce shortage.** Faced with a dual mental health and substance use crisis nationwide, the U.S. continues to experience increasing demand for high quality mental health and substance use treatment services. CCBHCs are meeting that demand with clinics across the U.S. reporting a 23% increase in clients served after becoming a CCBHC.<sup>1</sup> In addition to dramatically increased access, CCBHCs are serving individuals far more quickly. In contrast to the national average of 48 days to receive services, nearly 90% of surveyed CCBHCs reported seeing clients within 10 days. The CCBHC model also alleviates the impact of the behavioral health workforce shortage by enabling clinics to hire more staff. CCBHCs hired an estimated 11,240 new staff positions across all active CCBHCs. On average, this resulted in 27 new jobs per clinic, including clinical, support and operations roles like psychiatrists, peer and recovery specialists and data analysts.<sup>1</sup>

**The Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act will establish CCBHCs formally in federal law and create the infrastructure needed to build upon the model's success.** The CCBHC model was established by Congress in 2014 and was originally implemented in eight states through a demonstration program in 2017, with two more states added in 2020. Under the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the demonstration will expand to include 10 new states every two years, starting in 2024. As states progress through the demonstration, a sustainable structure is needed to support states establishing CCBHCs as an enduring part of their health care system. This legislation creates the infrastructure to achieve the long-term vision of the CCBHC model in three important ways:

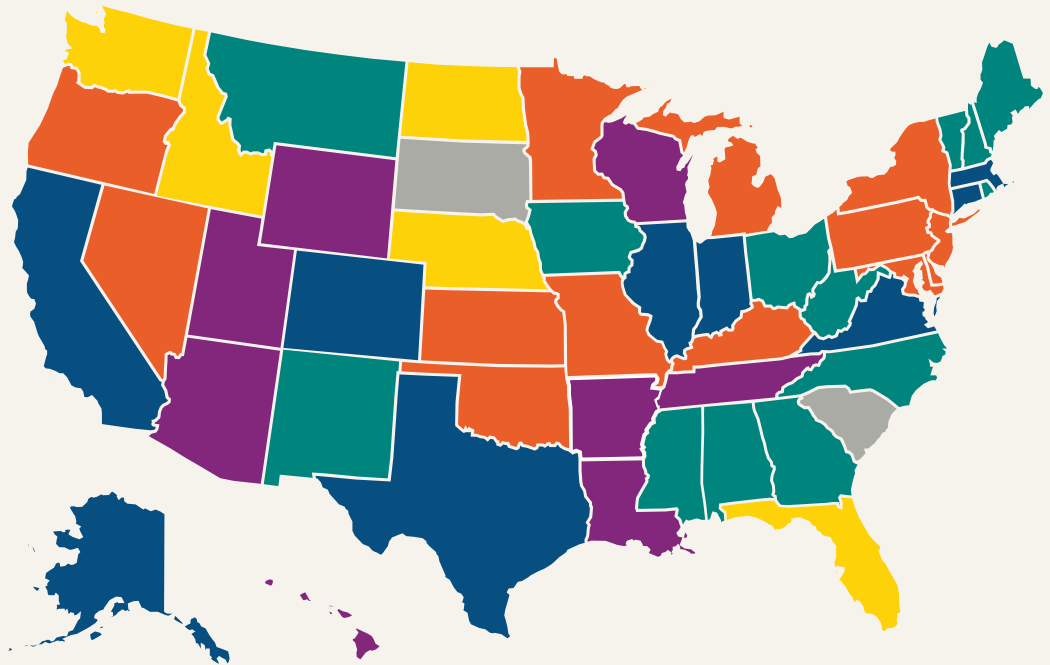
- Defining CCBHCs, their full scope of services as outlined in the SAMHSA criteria and their payment methodology.
- Creating ongoing technical assistance infrastructure to enhance and improve existing CCBHCs and state-based implementation of the CCBHC model.
- Authorizing development, improvement and enhancement grants to support activities like strengthening the CCBHC workforce, building capacity for evidence-based practices and improving partnerships with law enforcement, schools and housing sectors locally.



# STATUS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE CCBHC MODEL

## FEDERAL & STATE ACTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

- Established the CCBHC Model through Medicaid Demonstration
- CCBHC Planning Grant (2016)
- CCBHC Planning Grant (2003)
- No CCBHC Actions
- State Legislation to Pursue the CCBHC Model
- CCBHC Clinic-level SAMHSA Grant



<sup>1</sup> National Council for Mental Wellbeing. (2022 & 2021). CCBHC Impact Reports. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/ccbhc-success-center/ccbhc-overview/ccbhc-data-impact/>