



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Senator Debbie Stabenow Earns National Award for Community Health Care**

***Top Award Honors Lawmaker Who Championed Investment in Primary Care,  
Community Health Centers***

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) will present U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow with the 2010 "Distinguished Community Health Champion" award for her leadership on behalf of those who rely on America's Health Centers for their health care. The top award is given only to select Members of Congress who have gone above and beyond in championing wider access to primary care and strengthening America's investment in Community Health Centers. Senator Stabenow has worked tirelessly as a member of the Senate Finance Committee throughout health reform to ensure that low-income communities are guaranteed access to primary care and a Health Center home.

"We deeply appreciate the extraordinary work of Senator Debbie Stabenow in advancing health care reform and in strengthening our nation's investment in Health Centers and our patients, both as a leader on annual appropriations expansions and the health reform process," said Tom Van Coverden, President and CEO of NACHC. "We look forward to continuing to work with Senator Stabenow to ensure expanded access to high quality health care and improved health for the millions of Americans who rely on Health Centers for their care and the 60 million Americans who currently have no access to care."

The national award will be presented to Senator Stabenow in Washington, DC, this week when Community Health Center professionals, board members, advocates, volunteers and patients from across the country convene for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual NACHC Policy and Issues Forum to chart a new course of Health Center expansion to meet the demand for care. Senator Stabenow will be recognized by Health Centers in Michigan and nationwide for her efforts to ensure Health Centers and other safety net providers are included in any health insurance provider network under health reform, and for her ongoing work to strengthen and grow the Health Centers program.

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“We’ve truly counted on Senator Stabenow as an important voice on behalf of Health Centers in our state and across the country,” said Kim Sibilsky, Executive Director of the Michigan Primary Care Association. “As economic conditions remain challenging across our state, she understands that Health Centers play a key role in providing access to affordable care and stand ready to grow and meet the challenges and demands of the future.”

Health Centers serve as the health care home for 20 million people in more than 7,500 U.S. communities, including nearly 600,000 Michigan residents at over 160 delivery sites across the state. Yet demand for their comprehensive, affordable, quality services continues to grow, particularly as millions of people have lost their health insurance along with their jobs during the economic recession. The landmark health care reform efforts in Congress provide direct investment to Health Centers that will allow them to care for 45 million people and help keep down health costs. Health Centers save the health care system \$9.9 billion to \$17.6 billion a year by keeping people healthy and out of hospital emergency rooms. Those savings are projected to grow through a direct investment in Health Centers to expand their health care home model of care to more people in need.

“I am honored to be recognized by Michigan’s Community Health Centers. As our nation’s economic crisis continues, too many American families are faced with the prospect of losing their health insurance, their paycheck, or both,” said Stabenow. “My work has focused on helping existing centers cope with the increase in demand for their services, while allowing for the establishment of new centers in communities that so desperately need them. I am proud to be recognized for this work, and will continue to work with groups like the Michigan Primary Care Association and NACHC to advocate for the needs of this vital safety net.”

**About Michigan Primary Care Association**

Michigan Primary Care Association has been the voice for Community Health Centers and other community-based providers in Michigan since 1980. It is a leader in building a healthy society in which all residents have convenient and affordable access to quality health care. MPCA’s mission is to promote, support, and develop comprehensive, accessible, and affordable quality community-based primary care services to everyone in Michigan. For more information, please visit [www.mpca.net](http://www.mpca.net) or call 517.381.8000.

**About NACHC**

Founded in 1971, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance and expand access to quality, community-responsive health care for America’s medically underserved and uninsured. NACHC represents the nation’s network of more than 1,250 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) which serve more than 20 million people through 7,500 sites located in all of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. Learn more about NACHC at [www.nachc.com](http://www.nachc.com).

