



## **Leanne Berge, CEO Statement on Passage of the American Rescue Plan.**

On behalf of Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW) and the 20 Community Health Centers represented by the Community Health Network of Washington (CHNW), we applaud Congress for passing the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, which President Biden signed today.

This funding is critical for Washingtonians who have struggled under the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic harm. So many of our members and their communities have experienced the devastation of this pandemic first-hand as it has taken its toll on their health, their livelihoods, and their spirit. This historic Act shores up the much-needed safety net for public health funding to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure all Americans will have access to vaccines. The Act increases funding for the Medicaid program, expands subsidies for low-income enrollees on the Health Care Exchange, extends unemployment insurance benefits, and provides direct \$1,400 stimulus payments to qualifying individuals. Much needed additional funding to cover childcare, transportation, and costs of returning students to in-person learning are covered in this Act. By covering these and other critical social services, this rescue package will directly support our communities' ability recover physically, mentally and economically.

We are committed to the Act's expansion of Medicaid and CHIP to allow women continuous postpartum coverage for 12 months. Ensuring support for mothers and their babies for a full year after delivery recognizes the crisis we face as a nation in postpartum care –particularly for women of color.

Washington's Community Health Centers, who have been on the exhausting front lines of the pandemic serving all patients and families regardless of insurance coverage, welcome the \$7.6 billion in flexible funding to address their ongoing costs created by the pandemic and the threat it posed to their financial security and ability to fully serve their patients' needs. At a time of public health crisis, the importance of community health centers has never been greater, as trusted community partners providing equitable care to all.

CHPW/CHNW stands as a ready partner to our members and our communities as we continue on our road to recovery, building stronger and more equitable foundations for a healthier future for us all.