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AAPCHO Responds to Short-term Agreement to End Government Shutdown

Supports extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program, Continues to push for Health Center Program funding and support for Dreamers

WASHINGTON – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) today released the following statement in response to Congress passing a short-term spending bill to end the federal government shutdown. The spending bill would fund the government through February 8 and extends the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for six years, but fell short of providing long-term solutions to fund community health centers and protections for Dreamers.

"We are glad that Congress has reinstated funding for CHIP, a long overdue vote to renew funding for an essential health care program that provides relief to the families of nearly nine million children," said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director of AAPCHO. "All children and families have the right to health care regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic background, and should not be used as political bargaining chips."

While the spending bill reauthorizes CHIP, it failed to renew funding for the country's over 10,000 community health center sites that provide care for 27 million people living in or near poverty, and in many cases without health insurance. The bill also fell short of taking action on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protects 800,000 young undocumented immigrants known as "Dreamers" from deportation.

"We continue to urge Congress to take immediate steps to reinstate funding for community health centers and to pass legislation to protect Dreamers," Caballero added. "These programs are vital to millions of Americans including underserved Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and are crucial to the country's overall public health. Every minute Congress delays to provide long-term solutions to fund health centers and protect Dreamers, they risk the health and safety of millions."

The delayed action on these programs has already started to take its toll. Some health center sites have started to lay off staff and cut key health programs, and have also seen an increase in canceled appointments due to the climate of fear and uncertainty surrounding immigrant patients and their families. AAPCHO continues to urge Congress to find bipartisan solutions, without threatening access to key services essential to these vulnerable communities and without breaking families apart.

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

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