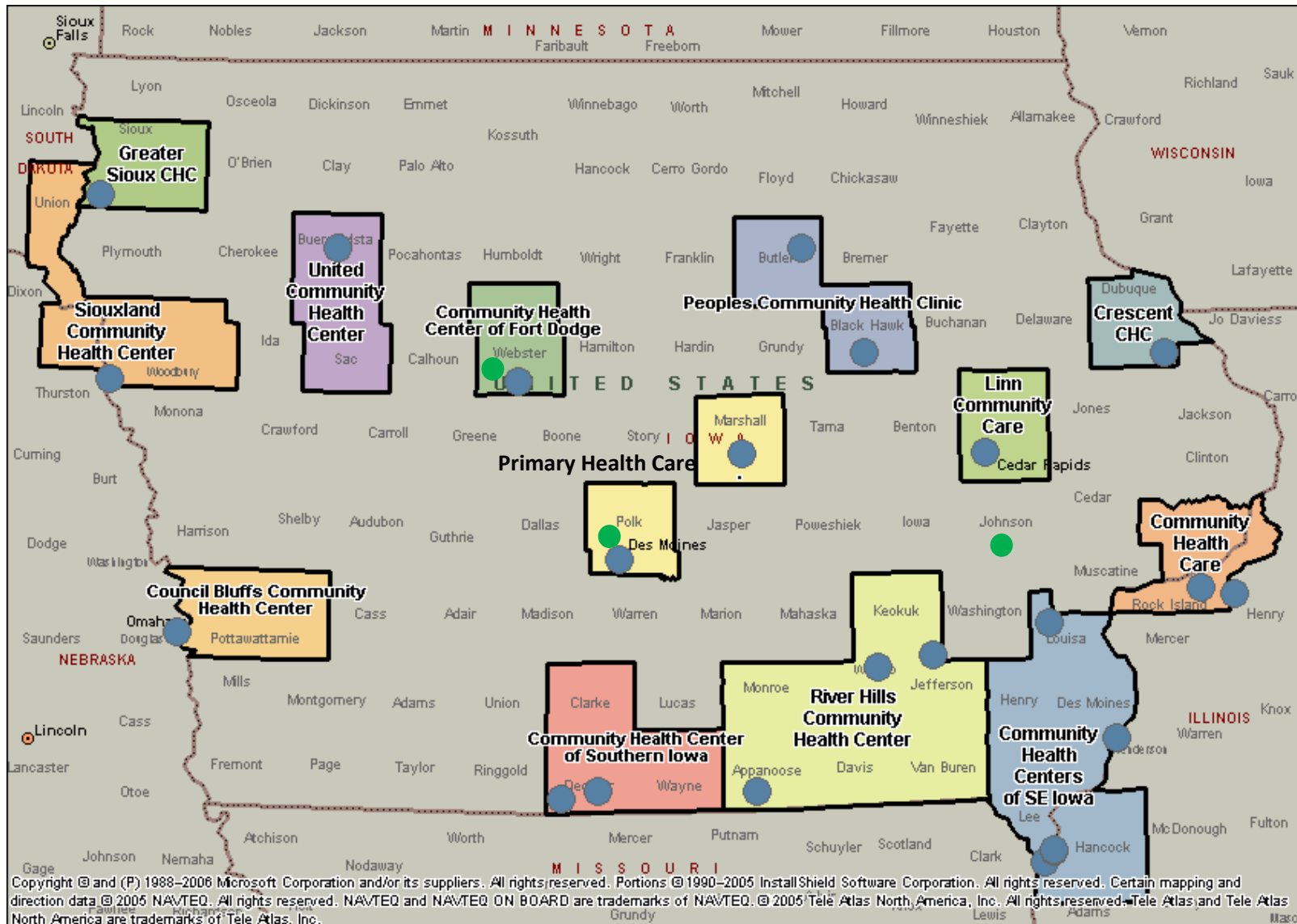


# Iowa's Community Health Centers





# Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association

## *Expanding Health Care Access to the Underserved*

**The Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association** is a bi-state non-profit membership association comprised of community health centers and other safety net providers in Iowa and Nebraska. IA/NEPCA provides leadership by promoting, supporting, and developing quality health care for underserved populations. The organization's mission is carried out through technical assistance, community development, training, education, and advocacy.

### **What are community health centers (CHCs)?**

- **Local, non-profit, community-owned health care providers** serving low income and medically underserved communities.
- CHCs **provide high-quality, affordable, comprehensive primary care and preventive services**, and often provide on-site dental, pharmaceutical, and mental health and substance abuse services. CHCs are also recognized leaders in the **treatment of chronic diseases and reducing health disparities**.

### **Who do community health centers serve?**

- 15 million people across the country, including **more than 154,000 Iowans**.
- Two-thirds of health center patients have family incomes at or below federal poverty level.
- Nearly 40% of patients are uninsured.
- Nearly 30% of patients depend on Medicaid.

### **How do community health centers overcome barriers to care?**

- **Located in high-need areas** identified as having elevated poverty, higher than average infant mortality, and where few physicians practice.
- **Open to all residents**, regardless of insurance status, and provide free or reduced cost care based on ability to pay.
- Services are **tailored to fit the special needs and priorities of their communities**, and provide services in a linguistically and culturally appropriate setting.
- Offer services that **help patients to access health care**, such as transportation, interpretation, case management, health education, and home visitation.

### **How Do Health Centers Make a Difference?**

- **Improve access to primary and preventive care.**
- **Effective management of chronic illness.** Health centers meet or exceed nationally accepted practice standards for treatment of chronic conditions.
  - The Institute of Medicine and the U.S. General Accounting Office have recognized health centers as models for screening, diagnosing, and managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, depression, cancer, and HIV.
- **Reduction of health disparities.** Because of their success in removing barriers to care, the Institute of Medicine and U.S. General Accounting Office recognized health centers for reducing or even eliminating the health gaps for racial and ethnic minorities, as well as for the poor in the U.S.
- **Cost-effective care.** Health centers provide comprehensive health care for about \$1.25 a day per patient served – about 10 times **less** than average per capita spending on personal health care.
  - The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured estimates that **community health centers save the State of Iowa \$5.8 million annually in Medicaid expenditures** through reduced emergency room utilization, specialty care referrals, and fewer hospital admissions.
- **High quality care.** Studies have found that the quality of care provided at health centers is equal to or greater than the quality of care provided elsewhere. Moreover, 99% of surveyed patients report that they were satisfied with the care they receive at health center.