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## Community health centers deserve broad support

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By **Letters to the Editor/Staten Island Advance**

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PORT RICHMOND

Under the Affordable Care Act, community health centers will receive \$11 billion over five years to build new sites and support existing ones.

The philosophy behind this funding is a sound one. Good primary health care improves lives and reduces health-care costs both immediately and in the long run.

People who have access to affordable, quality primary care are less likely to seek routine care in emergency rooms at greater cost, and they are more likely to manage their chronic conditions, thus avoiding costly hospitalizations and debilitating complications.

Community health centers provide quality primary care to people who otherwise could not afford it, at an estimated savings to the entire system of \$24 billion annually.

At the Community Health Center of Richmond, we are growing with the support of federal grants — \$2.8 million to open a third center in the Stapleton/St. George neighborhood of the North Shore of Staten Island and \$487,500 to support operations of our second center, the CHCR Dental and Medical Specialty Center, opening in early 2013.

As we mark National Health Center Week, we want to thank our elected officials and members of our community for their continued support for affordable, accessible quality health care for all.

*[The writer is Chief Executive Office of the Community Health Center of Richmond, Inc.]*

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