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**SCR-164 National Health Center Week.** (2023-2024)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 164**

**CHAPTER 172**

Relative to National Health Center Week.

[ Filed with Secretary of State August 21, 2024. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 164, Durazo. National Health Center Week.

This measure would proclaim the week of August 4, 2024, to August 10, 2024, inclusive, as National Health Center Week and would encourage Californians to take part in this week by visiting their local community health center and celebrating the important partnership between California's community health centers and the communities they serve.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, For over 50 years, community health centers have provided high-quality, affordable, and comprehensive primary and preventive health care in California's medically underserved communities, delivering value to, and having a significant impact on, California's health care system; and

WHEREAS, California's community health centers provide high-quality comprehensive care to 7.7 million people, which is more than one in five Californians. Over 1,270 community health centers in California provide the full spectrum of care to everyone who walks through their doors, regardless of their ability to pay, immigration status, or individual circumstances; and

WHEREAS, As the country's largest primary care network, community health centers are the health care home for over 30 million Americans in over 14,000 communities across the nation. One in 11 people in the United States gets their care at a community health center; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers are a critical element of the health system, serving rural, suburban, and urban populations and often providing the only accessible and dependable source of primary care in their communities. Nationwide, community health centers serve one in every five residents of rural areas; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers serve as beacons of essential resources and support in the face of disasters and pandemics and will continue to respond quickly to care for America's most vulnerable and underserved communities. Community health centers have administered over 22 million COVID-19 tests and over 24 million vaccines nationally to date; and

WHEREAS, Every day, community health centers develop new approaches to integrating a wide range of services beyond primary care, including oral health, vision, behavioral health, and pharmacy services, to meet the needs and challenges of their communities. Community health centers have more than doubled their behavioral health workforce in the last decade to meet Californians' and Americans' growing need for behavioral health services; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers are governed by patient-majority boards, ensuring patients get to make their own health care decisions; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers are on the front lines of emerging health care crises, providing access to care for our nation's veterans, addressing the opioid epidemic, and responding to public health threats in the wake of natural disasters. Community health centers operate close to 1,000 mobile units, providing accessible health services in hundreds of rural and urban communities; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers are rooted in the history of the civil rights movement. A group of activists, among them medical students and doctors from the Medical Committee for Human Rights, descended upon rural Mississippi during what became known as Freedom Summer. In early 1965, freedom marchers were brutally attacked on what became known as "Bloody Sunday" as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the road from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Those marchers would later become the cofounders of the health center movement, provided lifesaving medical treatment to several of the marchers who had been beaten with bull whips and billy clubs. Among the wounded was the young civil rights leader, John Lewis, who would survive the skull fracture he sustained that day and spend a lifetime fighting for social justice and as a champion of community health centers; and

WHEREAS, These civil rights activists witnessed the success of the community health center model in apartheid South Africa to address the stark health care disparities Black people experienced because of the structural racism in accessing quality health care. They brought the vision of community health centers to America and launched the first center in Mississippi that was focused on community-oriented primary care; and

WHEREAS, The community health center model continues to prove an effective means of overcoming barriers to health care access, including geography, income, and insurance status, improving health outcomes, and reducing health care system costs; and

WHEREAS, Community health centers reduce overall costs of care by helping manage patients' chronic conditions, which keeps patients out of more expensive health care settings like hospital emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, National Health Center Week offers the opportunity to celebrate America's more than 14,000 community health center sites, including over 3,000 school-based health centers. We honor their dedicated staff, board members, patients, and all those responsible for their continued success and growth since the first community health centers opened their doors more than 50 years ago; and

WHEREAS, During National Health Center Week, we celebrate the legacy of community health centers and their vital role in shaping the past, present, and future of our health care system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the week of August 4, 2024, to August 10, 2024, inclusive, as National Health Center Week and encourages all Californians to take part in this week by visiting their local community health center and celebrating the important partnership between California's community health centers and the communities they serve; and be it further,

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.