Health Policy for the Medically Underserved
Megan Chung ’19, Chemistry
National Association of Community Health Centers

Mission
The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) is the national advocacy group for federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) across the United States and territories. The Public Policy branch is centered on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. and coordinates support to health centers on the state and national levels.

Policy Internship Program
The internship gives students hands-on experience with health policy through various lenses. I interned with two different teams in the office.

Federal Affairs
- Track legislation that affects health care for the medically underserved
- Meet with legislators and discuss how proposed laws could impact their constituents

Research
- Use data to advocate for health policies and awareness of FQHCs

Work Profile
- State-specific data analysis on the impact of health centers to disseminate to legislators and FQHCs
- Lobby on behalf of health centers to the staff of Members of Congress
- Track legislation on Public Charge, the opioid crisis, and the Labor-HHS appropriations bill
- Attend policy briefings on health care costs, public housing, and medical workforce programs
- Attend Senate HELP committee hearings
- Write blog posts and news briefs to disseminate to health centers

Experiences
- State-specific data analysis on the impact of health centers to disseminate to legislators and FQHCs
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Projects
Immigrant Health
Within the Federal Affairs team, I chose to explore the role of health centers in providing care to immigrants and how legislation can impact the quality of care they receive. Some projects I contributed to involved:
- A proposed rule expanding the definition of who is considered a Public Charge, which has already impacted Medicaid enrollment in many states.
- Connecting immigrant detention centers with nearby health centers to ensure children and families received proper health care
- A partnership with the Association of American and Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

Opioid Crisis
This summer, Capitol Hill was buzzing over the opioid crisis throughout the United States. Health centers play a huge role in the movement as hotspots for substance use disorder treatment, as they are uniquely positioned to treat the populations most ravaged by the crisis. This summer, I:
- Tracked the several dozen bills on opioids that reached the House
- Highlighted the aspects that could affect health centers the most and synthesized it into a blog post for FQHCs to follow and understand
- Attended Senate HELP committee hearings on prescription drugs and how they affect opioid legislation

Experiences on Capitol Hill:
- Lobbying to save the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to Senators
- Attending Senate HELP committee hearings on the 340B Drug Pricing Program
- Coffee chats with legislative assistants for the office of Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ)

D.C. Health Center Visits:
- Mary's Center, a clinic initially for maternal health that expanded its services to all
- Whitman-Walker, an innovative clinic with roots in LGBT health during the HIV-AIDS epidemic

Health Policy Briefings:
- Sec. Ben Carson discussing how public housing interacts with public health
- AAMC briefing on how minority pipeline programs benefit the health care system, communities, and the medical professions

Future Questions
- If the Public Charge proposed rule drops, what will the impact be on public health insurance programs? How will this translate to the health of our communities?
- Medicaid expansion: of the states that have expanded, how is it working out? How will this impact other states who are deciding on expanding? Will the Kentucky work requirement decision impact other states?

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