

Policies to Watch in 2025

A new year means a fresh batch of policies, bills, and legislation to track, and for those of us working to provide equitable healthcare to all, the first few months of 2025 will likely be a critical time. With newly elected congress members and state legislators sworn in on Jan. 3 and 13, respectively, and the beginning of a new presidential administration on Jan. 20, there's a lot to keep us on our toes. So, what should we be watching closely right out of the gate?

At the Federal Level

CHC Funding

Just before we all eased off the brake going into the holiday season, Congress was this close to passing a bill that would have guaranteed ongoing funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and critical educational programs like the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Teaching Health Centers (THCGME). The bill had strong bipartisan support. Unfortunately, due to a variety of disagreements, the bill was not passed. As a result, Section 330/CHC funding, NHSC funding, and THCGME funding was greenlit only through the end of March 2025 with no guaranteed funding after that. So, you can be on the lookout for advocacy efforts to remind the 119th Congress and the incoming administration just how vital these funds are.

First 100 Days

The first 100 days of a new presidency is the political version of a "first date"— a lot of promises, some uncomfortable moments, and a ton of questions. While it's difficult to predict exactly how things will play out, we have already heard discussions around three major issues that will directly affect community health centers and the populations we serve. These include potential changes to the Medicaid program, immigration policies and enforcement activities, and the Make America Healthy Again caucus, which has expressed support for expanding community health centers. Staying informed and engaged during these early weeks will be crucial as these conversations evolve.

At the State Level

In Arizona, the Legislature is expected to revisit familiar priorities. Housing and homelessness will remain high on the agenda, with multiple bills aimed at increasing the availability of affordable housing and addressing homelessness. However, we are also likely to see proposals that could harm those without a place to live and could lead to more challenges for those in need.

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When it comes to healthcare, we anticipate continued attention on workforce funding and licensing. At the time of this publication, five bills have already been introduced related to temporary behavioral health licensure and funding for health boards. One potential bill under consideration may also address the use of artificial intelligence in claims denials.

Hundreds of bills will be submitted this session, including proposals to regulate gender-affirming care, loosen vaccine requirements, and address election-related issues.

Key legislation affecting our work is expected to come before the House and Senate Health and Human Services Committees. We will monitor these discussions closely and stay engaged with the legislative process to ensure our priorities are well-represented. We'll have the opportunity to witness the collaborative efforts, or potentially, the lack thereof — as Governor Hobbs once again navigates the Senate approval committee to secure her agency director nominations. Last year, many of her nominees were denied, resulting in the governor's sidestepping the roadblock by appointing them as deputy directors—essentially the same role as agency heads, but without the official title.

As we venture through the early months of 2025, we will stay locked in on what is most important, advocating for policies that help ensure equitable healthcare access for all. Stay engaged, stay informed, and let's keep making progress.

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