

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District voted today against House Republicans’ latest attack on health insurance reform. H.R. 1214 reduces access to health care for young people by repealing grants for the construction, renovation, and expansion of School-Based Health Centers (SBHC). These centers improve access to primary care health care services for children and adolescents.

“House Republicans are continuing their assault on access to health care with this latest attempt to cut spending on the backs of New Mexico’s young people,” Congressman Luján said. “School-based health centers provide vital services to children in need who often do not have access to a family doctor. Students need to be healthy to learn and succeed, and these facilities help them stay well and in the classroom. From their plan to end Medicare as we know it to their efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, House Republicans are determined to attack programs that contribute to the health and well being of New Mexicans.”

“The New Mexico Alliance for School-Based Health Care (NMASBHC) appreciates the support for school-based health centers shown by Representative Ben Ray Luján with his vote to oppose H.R. 1214, which does away with federal funding for SBHCs as part of health care reform,” said NMASBCH past president and board member Patsy Nelson. “We are very disappointed that the House of Representatives chose to eliminate this funding. SBHCs were authorized by Congress as a legitimate and important component of the health care delivery system. The action taken by the House will negatively impact access to care for a population that tends not to seek care – adolescents. With SBHCs, children and adolescents can obtain vital physical, behavioral, and, in some cases, oral health care where they are – at school. Congress needs to support programs that keep students healthy and learning.”

School-based health centers are a cost-effective investment that result in improved access to health care, improved academic performance, decreased school absenteeism, and reduced health care costs. As a result of the impact of SBHCs, the number of facilities across the country has doubled in the last 15 years. In New Mexico alone, there are more than 80 centers serving local communities.

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