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Tom Van Coverden, President and CEO National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), released the [following statement today](#):

The U.S. Supreme Court today announced its decision on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). By upholding the constitutionality of the health reform law, the Court has assured that millions of currently-uninsured Americans will have the opportunity to gain insurance coverage over the next few years and that consumers will have vital protections and benefits under the law.

The overall ruling will allow most of the ACA to proceed to full implementation. We are especially pleased that the Court's decision reaffirms support for expanding access to health care through the nationwide network of Community Health Centers to more people in more communities across America. This means that in the years ahead millions of newly insured people, and communities identified as medical shortage areas, will gain access to doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, and the quality, cost-effective primary and preventive services our health centers provide.

The only disappointment in the ruling for health centers and the patients they serve is the weakening of the Medicaid expansion. This potentially leaves some of the 16 million eligible low-income people with no affordable coverage alternative, and it possibly denies many of these hard-working Americans the security of having insurance for their health care needs, no matter how complex or serious they may be.

Nevertheless, now it is time to prepare for full implementation of the health reform law. Most of the 16 million people who hopefully will gain coverage under Medicaid expansion in 2014, and many of the additional 16 million people who will be able to purchase coverage through the new state Health Insurance Exchanges, live and work in the same communities that health centers serve. As health care advocates, Community Health Centers will have a major role in creating public awareness and understanding of the law's benefits and protections, and in helping community residents who qualify to enroll with their Medicaid agencies or the Exchanges so that they are able to gain access to health care that all people need and deserve.