



Statewide Survey of Community Clinic Workers

Conducted September-October 2025

Executive Summary

Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted an independent statewide survey of employees working in Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHC), community-based clinics that provide health services to California's most vulnerable populations regardless of ability to pay. The research was funded through a grant from the California Workforce Development Board's High Road Training Partnership (H RTP) initiative to ascertain worker's views, concerns, and potential solutions for challenges facing California's community clinics, a key segment of the state's health care delivery system. It is a component of the [H RTP Resilient Workforce](#) grant awarded to the Shirley Ware Education Center to solicit worker voice regarding the ability of FQHCs to sustain high road wages and benefits.

The survey was conducted in September/October 2025 with findings based on responses from 303 employees who work in non-profit community health centers across the state, including unionized and non-unionized health centers, and representing a range of healthcare occupations and tenure in their jobs, and demographic and geographic diversity. This summary provides key findings, with more detail on responses and methodology in the full report.

Key Findings

QUALITY OF CARE PROVIDED

In general, community clinic workers feel positively about the care they provide; the vast majority (89%) believe the patients they serve receive culturally competent care – such as in patients' preferred language or from a provider from the same cultural community – yet the vast majority feel their clinics are short-staffed and 85% report working more than 40 hours/week.

- More than four in ten (42%) feel their clinic does not have enough resources, with limited funding, low reimbursement rates from government sources and high spending on non-patient care items identified as the primary reasons. The majority of Bay Area and Behavioral Health workers, in particular, feel their clinics are under-resourced.

CUTS IN FUNDING / TO MEDI-CAL & ELIGIBILITY

The vast majority of community clinic workers are very concerned about the impact of recently passed federal and state funding cuts to Medi-Cal and eligibility coverage for patients they serve:

- More than three-fourths are especially concerned for their clinic's ability to care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations (78%) and to maintain adequate staffing levels (77%).
- Concerns about the impact of Medi-Cal cuts on their clinic's ability to care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations are particularly prevalent among workers in the Central Valley, who are Hispanic or who were born outside the United States.
- A large majority - more than 7 in 10 workers – also expressed concerns about the impact of funding cuts to their clinic's ability to provide quality care (73%), to their job security (73%) and to their clinic's ability to remain in business (71%).

EARNINGS / INABILITY TO COVER BASIC LIVING EXPENSES

The majority earn less than \$30/hour and feel they earn less than their peers in hospitals and private practice clinics. The vast majority (88%) say they earn just barely enough or not enough to cover their basic living expenses – a response consistent across the Central Valley, Bay Area and LA regions.

- Only a small minority (15%) of community clinic workers say their wages increase regularly to keep up with the cost of living.
- Nearly 40% report that they rely upon government assistance - like Medi-Cal, CalFresh, local food banks and other safety-net programs – to support their families.

LEAVING THEIR COMMUNITY CLINIC JOB / HEALTH CARE ALTOGETHER

Over half say they've considered leaving their clinic in the last year, and 40% have considered leaving health care altogether, with low pay and burn-out the major drivers.

- The majority of those who speak Spanish for their work (56%), and those who work in the Bay Area (50%) have considered leaving health care altogether, with low pay the top reason.

CAREER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A slight majority say they are satisfied with career training opportunities at work, but that decreases for those with longer tenure. Satisfaction with career opportunities is lower among Behavioral Health and administrative staff, with Medical Assistants most likely to say career growth opportunities are a main reason to stay with their employer. Workers in the Central Valley (38%) are less likely than workers in the LA (60%) or Bay Area (50%) regions to be satisfied with career training opportunities.

SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES THAT COMMUNITY CLINICS FACE

When provided a slate of options to address the challenges facing their clinics, the overwhelming majority (86%) of clinic workers ranked encouraging community health centers and unions to work together when advocating for the government to ensure clinics get what they need to provide quality care as the highest solution of those offered.

- This strong support for health center and union collaboration exists across the board, among white and Hispanic workers, those who earned less than \$50,000 per year as well as those who earned more than \$150,000 per year, among those who are represented by a union and those who are not, and is especially high among women.

The vast majority also prioritized the following as helpful solutions to challenges that clinics face:

- Require community health centers to direct more of their government funding to needs related to their workers, such as higher salaries and better benefits (82%)
- Require community health centers to direct more of government funding to patient care (81%)
- Increasing reimbursements from Medicaid or Medi-Cal (76%)

For More Information:

- Contact John Whaley, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research: johnw@goodwinsimon.com
- For a copy of the full report, <https://theedfund.org/new-statewide-survey-of-community-clinic-workers-released/>
- For more information about the California Workforce Development Board's High Road Initiative, see: <https://cwdb.ca.gov/initiatives/high-road-training-partnerships/>