



# 2021 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE **AGENDA**



UnityPoint Health



## COVID-19 Pandemic Resources

Over the last year, the pandemic has challenged UnityPoint Health to deliver care in a new and innovative way. As an integrated health care system, UnityPoint Health has been well equipped to meet patients where they are – safely and timely. While ambulatory teams pivoted to provide care virtually, inpatient units transformed overnight to accommodate critical care needs. UnityPoint Health expanded lab platforms to increase testing capabilities, sourced PPE to keep patients and providers safe, and created an inhouse labor pool to mobilize health care professionals when and where they were needed most.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support efficient and equitable distribution of vaccines, treatment, testing supplies, PPE and other COVID-19 pandemic related equipment and items
- Support streamlined COVID-19 pandemic data reporting to enable resources to focus on direct care
- Support permanent status for care delivery flexibilities and waivers demonstrated to be effective during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Workforce Resiliency

As a large nonprofit, integrated health care system in the Midwest, UnityPoint Health employs over 33,000 team members. Our team members are the compassionate core of who we are and how we serve. UnityPoint Health is only as strong as each team member from providers to instructors to greeters to maintenance to dietary to clerks. UnityPoint Health values the contribution of each health care hero and strives to ensure their well-being and success.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support initiatives for health care workers that reduce and prevent suicide, burnout and behavioral health disorders and support personal growth, inclusion and belonging as a path of recovery from the mental and physical trauma inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Support legislation to permit the recapture and redistribution of unused visas to strengthen our essential immigrant health care workforce
- Support licensure flexibilities to allow multistate licensure and encourage top of licensure practice
- Support loan forgiveness and grant programs that provide education assistance to health care professionals

## Affordable and Sustainable Health Care

UnityPoint Health focuses on providing affordable and sustainable health care through critical federal resources, like the 340B Drug Pricing Program which allows us to meet the needs of low-income and rural patients. UnityPoint Health builds a sustainable workforce through our four nursing colleges and shares a long history of providing exceptional quality graduate medical education to physicians in training with over 100 resident physicians each academic year. Collectively, UnityPoint Health's foundations raise \$24 million annually in support of various programs, patient assistance, and capital needs. These charitable donations are utilized for the sustainability and advancement of health care.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support the 340B program that ensures vulnerable populations have access to more affordable drug therapies as well as strengthening manufacturer and covered-entity transparency
- Support reauthorizing workforce development programs to support nurse and physician shortages and increase Medicare funding for direct and indirect graduate medical education
- Support legislation that provides incentives that encourage charitable donations and governmental financial support of health care







## Transforming Care Delivery

As a national leader in innovation and value-based arrangements, UnityPoint Health is transforming how care is delivered. UnityPoint Accountable Care is one of the largest Next Generation ACOs with nearly 5,000 providers and more than 100,000 attributed beneficiaries in Iowa and Illinois. UnityPoint Hospice is in its fifth year of demonstrating the benefits of providing concurrent curative treatment and supportive hospice services to Medicare beneficiaries. Also in its fifth year, UnityPoint at Home participates in the Home Health Value-Based Purchasing Model. With the waivers of telehealth geographic and originating site restrictions in 2020, UnityPoint Health increased its virtual services by 2499% over nine months with an average patient satisfaction score of 96%. In November 2020, UnityPoint Health was one of six initial health systems with extensive experience providing acute hospital care at home approved by CMS to participate in these program waivers.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support provider-driven payment reform models that transition providers to value, including accountable care organization models that encourage two-sided risk and contain increased programmatic flexibilities
- Make permanent the Medicare Care Choices Models as a stand-alone program or as a benefit enhancement for providers taking heightened two-sided risk in Medicare value-based arrangements
- Support continuation of an Acute Care Hospital at Home demonstration program beyond the COVID-19 pandemic emergency
- Support telehealth service by eliminating the geographic and originating site restrictions and encouraging permanent regulatory flexibilities
- Support Medicaid value-based arrangements

## Health Care Coverage

Consumers should not delay or avoid health care services due to lack of coverage. Establishing patient-doctor relationships is an important piece to a patient's wellness journey. To advance this, UnityPoint Health offers a Medicare Advantage plan, has piloted a direct primary care arrangement, and since 2008 has provided Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) services.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

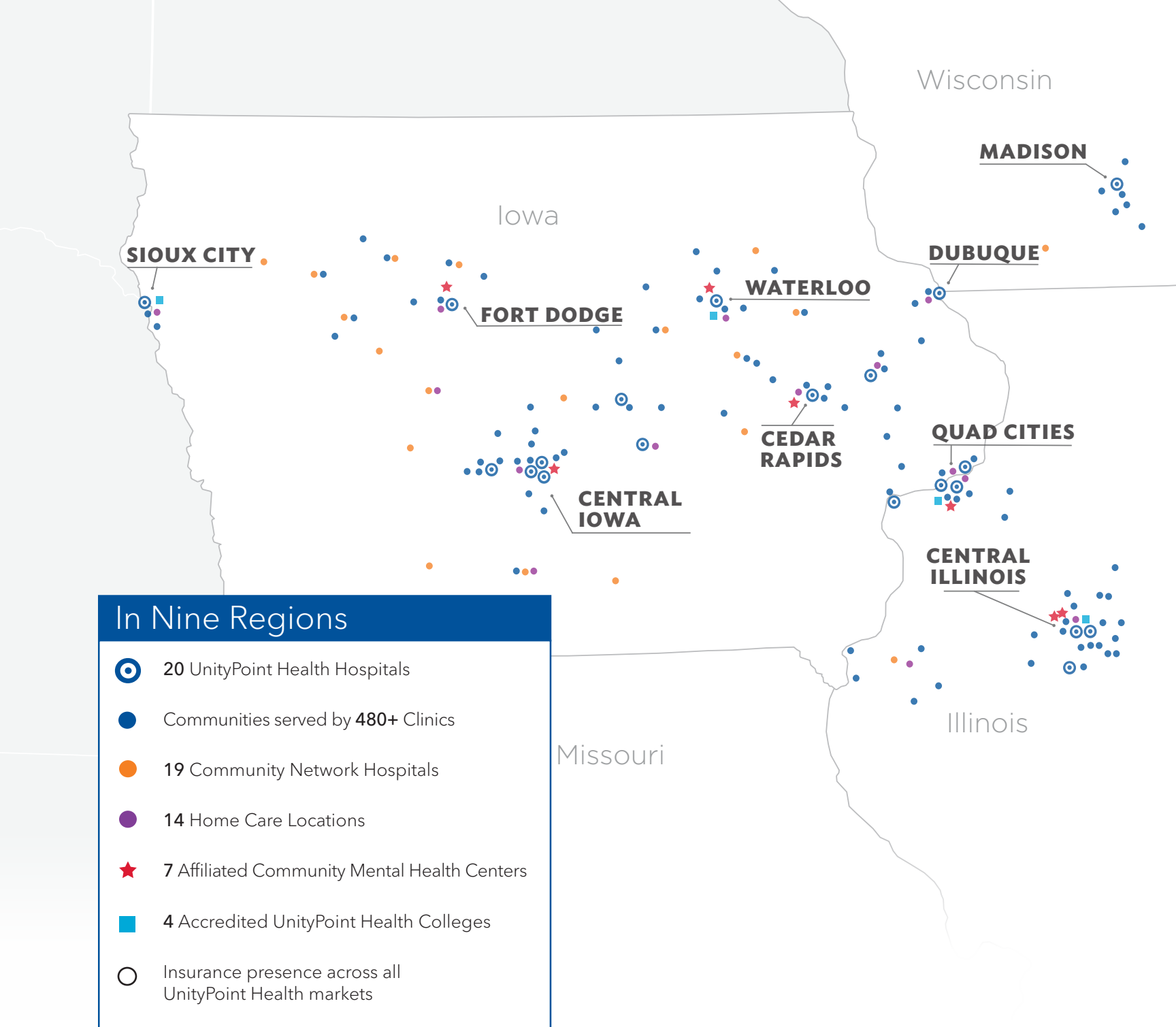
- Support revisiting Medicare Advantage network adequacy requirements to increase access in rural areas, including via Centers of Excellence designations and expanded use of telehealth
- Support the use of Health Savings Accounts for direct primary care arrangements
- Encourage coverage options to preserve and improve access to Medicaid and the Marketplace
- Encourage access to PACE within current service areas by permitting mid-month enrollment and in new communities by removing application restrictions

## Rural Health Access

With a large rural footprint, UnityPoint Health delivers high-quality care through 20 critical access hospitals, four small community hospitals and 81 rural health clinics. UnityPoint Health supports broadband innovation to address access gaps and support health equity. Many rural communities experience maternal deserts and often face shortages in obstetric and gynecological professionals, resulting in extensive travel time to access maternal care.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support continued development of the Rural Emergency Hospital Designation program, extending the Rural Community Hospital Demonstration and reopening of the 'Necessary Provider' Designation program
- Support legislation that addresses health equity and social determinants in maternal health such as extending postpartum Medicaid coverage and expanding access to home visits and prenatal support programs
- Support legislation that creates broadband infrastructure investment, deployment and innovation to close the gap that disproportionately impacts low-income families and rural residents



**For more information, contact:**

**Cathy Simmons, JD, MPP**  
*Executive Director of Government & External Affairs*  
 (319) 361-2336  
 Cathy.Simmons@unitypoint.org

**Stephanie Collingwood, CA**  
*Government & External Affairs Specialist*  
 (319) 538-8652  
 Stephanie.Collingwood2@unitypoint.org



**UnityPoint Health**

1776 West Lakes Parkway, Suite 400  
 West Des Moines, IA 50266

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