



## Obamacare gives \$54 million to community health centers for mental health, Alabama gets \$250,000

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on July 31, 2014 at 12:48 PM, updated July 31, 2014 at 4:26 PM



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Sylvia Mathews Burwell speaks after President Barack Obama announced her appointment as head of HHS. (Associated Press)

One Alabama community health center will be getting \$250,000 of the \$54 million announced today going to support 221 health centers in 47 states and Puerto Rico.

The money is to establish or expand mental health services for over 450,000 people nationwide, according to the announcement made by Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell.

In Alabama the \$250,000 will go to Health Services Inc. in Montgomery. Most of the 200-plus awards were for \$250,000 per clinic. No other clinic in Alabama received an award.

For a complete list of awards, go [here](#).

"These awards will further reduce the barriers that too often prevent Alabamians from getting the help they need for mental health problems," said Burwell, in the prepared statement. "Health centers in Alabama with these awards are on the front lines of better integrating mental health into primary care and improving access to care through the Affordable Care Act."

The announcement said that the Affordable Care Act expanded mental health and substance use disorder benefits for approximately 60 million Americans nationwide, including 897,390 Alabamians.

The Affordable Care Act has in effect designated community health centers its primary care safety net, promising \$11 billion to the 1,300 centers over five years.

The Obama administration announced earlier this month that there would be \$100 million under the Affordable Care Act to add more sites to the nation's 1,300 community health centers.

In June the administration announced \$300 million to add services, hire medical workers and increase availability of medical services.

The community health center program in Alabama has come under scrutiny of federal authorities as reported in May by AL.com

**Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) officials confirmed to AL.com an investigation by**

**the FBI** and the HHS Inspector General of two Alabama community health centers.

The federal investigators are probing reports of fiscal and medical mismanagement at Central Alabama Comprehensive Health (CACH) in Tuskegee and Birmingham Health Care (BHC), which is one of the nation's original community health centers in this program dating back to the early 1980s.

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*Updated 4:34 p.m., July 31, to correct AL.com reported investigation in May not last month (June).*

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