

# HB4859



## 102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2021 and 2022

**HB4859**

Introduced 1/27/2022, by Rep. Theresa Mah

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

Provides that the Act may be referred to as the Addressing Health Equity for Uninsured and Underinsured Illinois Residents Through the Support of Free and Charitable Clinics Law. Contains background provisions. Appropriates a total of \$15,000,000 from the State Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency Fund to the Department of Healthcare and Family Services for provision to the Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics for specified grants and expenses. Provides that no less than 70% of the funds shall be used for expenses relating to free and charitable clinics serving minority populations. Effective July 1, 2022.

LRB102 24189 CPF 33417 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning appropriations.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented**  
3 **in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. References to Act. This Act may be referred to  
5 as the Addressing Health Equity for Uninsured and Underinsured  
6 Illinois Residents Through the Support of Free and Charitable  
7 Clinics Law.

8 Section 5. Background.

9 (1) Data released in December 2021 from the U.S. Census  
10 Bureau revealed that the number of residents with health  
11 insurance declined in Illinois.

12 (2) Safety net health care for the uninsured is imminently  
13 needed for the estimated 800,000 Illinois residents who lost  
14 their employer-sponsored health insurance due to the pandemic.

15 (3) Illinois' 52 free and charitable clinics improve access  
16 to quality health care for over 100,000 uninsured and  
17 underinsured individuals, many of whom are uninsured or  
18 underinsured for the first time and in need of immediate health  
19 care and are navigating a new health care system in the midst  
20 of a pandemic.

21 (4) Clinics are the entry point to quality health care  
22 providing a variety of services like primary care, dental care,

1 and behavioral health care, pharmacy services or referrals to  
2 charitable pharmacies, social services, and access to care  
3 accommodations.

4 (5) The patients of free and charitable clinics are those  
5 who have the largest inequities with the most barriers to the  
6 health care system.

7 (6) 38% of patients are below 100% of the federal poverty  
8 level (FPL), 43% of patients are between 100%-200% of the FPL,  
9 and 19% of patients are at least 200% above the FPL.

10 (7) 73% of patients of free and charitable clinics are from  
11 minority communities.

12 (8) In 2019 and 2020, clinic volunteers provided 586,924  
13 hours of medical care with a conservative estimated value of  
14 over \$16,000,000.

15 (9) During the same time frame, Illinois' free and  
16 charitable clinics saved the State over \$36,000,000 in averted  
17 emergency department visits.

18 (10) Clinics are being stretched to the limit as they combat  
19 the current surge in COVID-19.

20 (11) Illinois free and charitable clinics do not receive  
21 State funding and are unable to access federal funding,  
22 including the COVID-19 economic stimulus packages passed by  
23 Congress, because the clinics do not fit the definition of  
24 "Federally Qualified Health Centers."

25 (12) Already understaffed with fewer volunteer providers

1 due to the pandemic, the clinics now must divert existing,  
2 limited staff to perform COVID testing on top of ongoing efforts  
3 to vaccinate vulnerable populations and treat patients  
4 suffering from the longer-term health consequences of the  
5 virus.

6 (13) Free and charitable clinics are needed now more than  
7 ever to care for the uninsured and underinsured as their trusted  
8 medical provider.

9 (14) To continue to meet the rising and urgent health care  
10 needs of vulnerable Illinois residents who are addressing the  
11 largest barriers to care, and collaborate with local health  
12 departments to test and vaccinate the State's most at-risk  
13 communities against the present and future variants of COVID,  
14 clinics are in critical need of additional funding support.

15 (15) Funding is essential if the clinics are to continue  
16 to operate effectively on the frontlines of the pandemic as  
17 trusted entities able to increase vaccine uptake in hard-to-  
18 reach communities while also remaining a vital part of  
19 Illinois' safety net.

20 (16) Funding would also secure and strengthen the capacity  
21 of free clinics to support the State's efforts to transform  
22 public health, strengthen primary care, decrease hospital  
23 burden, advance health equity, and improve population health.

24 Section 10. The sum of \$7,500,000, or so much thereof as

1 may be necessary, is appropriated from the State Coronavirus  
2 Urgent Remediation Emergency Fund to the Department of  
3 Healthcare and Family Services for provision to the Illinois  
4 Association of Free and Charitable Clinics for grants and  
5 administrative expenses associated with the prevention and  
6 treatment of COVID-19 and the ongoing fulfillment of public  
7 health services provided at free or reduced cost allowed by  
8 Section 9901 of the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021  
9 and any associated federal guidance. No less than 70% of all  
10 funds appropriated to the Department of Healthcare and Family  
11 Services under this Section shall be used for expenses pursuant  
12 to free and charitable clinics serving minority populations.

13 Section 15. The sum of \$7,500,000, or so much thereof as  
14 may be necessary, is appropriated to the Department of  
15 Healthcare and Family Services for provision to the Illinois  
16 Association of Free and Charitable Clinics for the following:

17 (1) Grants and other expenses of free and charitable  
18 clinics in Illinois that assist in or make referrals for  
19 prevention, vaccination, and testing of COVID-19.

20 (2) Grants and other expenses of free and charitable  
21 clinics that assist uninsured or underinsured people living  
22 with acute and chronic health issues through outreach, health  
23 education, screening and testing, and behavioral health  
24 services.

1           No less than 70% of all funds appropriated to the Department  
2           of Healthcare and Family Services under this Section shall be  
3           used for expenses relating to free and charitable clinics  
4           serving minority populations.

5           Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,  
6           2022.