



Congresswoman Betty Sutton

Representing Ohio's Thirteenth Congressional District

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Rep. Sutton Honored by the National Association of Community Health Centers With the 'Defender Award'

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. Betty Sutton (D-OH) was honored by the Lorain County Health and Dentistry and the National Association of Community Health Centers with the Defender Award. Rep. Sutton received the Defender Award for her commitment to expanding access to health care and for her strong support of Health Center initiatives during the 111th Congress. Nationwide, health centers deliver preventive and primary care services at more than 7,500 sites regardless of patients' ability to pay, and they serve more than 17 million patients, about 40 percent of whom have no health insurance. Lorain County Health and Dentistry serves 13,000 patients each year, 65 percent of whom live at or below the 100-percent poverty line and qualify for discounted care. In 2009, the agency received \$1.3 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help offset the cost of uninsured (and otherwise uncompensated) care.

“Congresswoman Sutton has been a tremendous asset and advocate on behalf of Community Health Centers, and she has been particularly supportive of Lorain County Health and Dentistry,” said Paul Campagna, Chairman of Lorain County Health and Dentistry.

“Congresswoman Sutton’s unyielding support for our agency was critical in receiving funding from the Recovery Act, which not only guaranteed that we would be able to continue providing existing, high-quality services to our patients, but also provided us with the opportunity to expand and enhance the services we offer. The Recovery Act funding could not have come at a more critical time for our patients, and we are thankful to have a Congresswoman in office that really looks out for all of the people she represents.”

“With Congresswoman Sutton’s leadership, we were able to save health care for more than 13,000 low-income, uninsured persons in Lorain County who otherwise would have gone without the health care services they need,” said Stephanie Wiersma, the Executive Director of Lorain County Health and Dentistry. “When Congresswoman Sutton called us on March 2, 2009, with the unexpected news about the ARRA funding we were to receive, we were elated and Lorain County Health and Dentistry was saved. Without ARRA funding in 2009, Lorain County Health and Dentistry would have ceased operations last year, closing its doors to the community entirely. Thirty-seven percent of our patients were uninsured in 2009, and the ARRA funding allowed us to serve 800 new uninsured patients. The funding we received is being used wisely and efficiently to provide help for the people in our communities who need it the most.”

“I am so honored to receive this award from Lorain County Health and Dentistry and the National Association of Community Health Centers, but even more than that, I am thankful that the Recovery Act funding has preserved much-needed health care services for the 13,000 Lorain County residents that the agency serves,” Rep. Sutton said. “Community Health Centers provide valuable services to workers and families who are struggling to afford and gain access to health care in this country. I remain committed to fighting on behalf of Community Health Centers and the patients that they serve to ensure access to needed, quality and affordable care for all Americans.”

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