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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Community Health Northwest Florida Receives Emergency Grant from Direct Relief  
to Bolster the Healthcare Safety Net in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties**

Community Health Northwest Florida recently received \$50,000 in emergency grant funding from the medical aid organization Direct Relief, in partnership with the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Community Health Northwest Florida was among 518 federally qualified health centers to receive funding through Direct Relief's \$25 million Covid-19 Fund for Community Health, which recognizes the profound effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the finances, services, staff, and patients of community health centers.

Community Health Northwest Florida will utilize the funds to ensure the continued safety of their healthcare workers through acquisition of additional personal protective equipment for front line clinical teams, physical building modifications and additional training for staff. The funds will also enable the health center to continue to provide walk-up and drive-through Covid-19 testing in addition to Covid-19 health education and outreach to the communities they serve.

"Access to primary care is what keeps people healthy and out of the hospital, and the frontline work of Community Health Northwest Florida and other nonprofit community health centers across the U.S. is more critical than ever with the onset of Covid-19," said Direct Relief President and CEO Thomas Tighe. "Direct Relief is doing everything possible to bolster the work and support the staffs at the safety-net health facilities on which so many patients and their families rely for excellent care and trust for advice in this public health emergency."

Nearly 30 million (1 in 12) of the country's most vulnerable residents -- including 1 in 3 individuals living in poverty, 1 in 5 Medicaid beneficiaries, and 1 in 9 children -- rely on federally qualified health centers like Community Health Northwest Florida for their health care. That number is expected to rise as more people lose employer-sponsored insurance.

"We are grateful for this critical and immediate support as we work to keep our communities safe and healthy during this unprecedented pandemic," said Chandra Smiley, Chief Executive Officer of Community Health Northwest Florida.

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Since 1992, Community Health Northwest Florida has served residents of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and surrounding areas. Since 2007, it has been the area's only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). A Florida Medicaid and Medicaid managed care provider, the organization also accepts Alabama Medicaid at some locations and as well as many private health insurances. A sliding fee scale program for those individuals who do not have insurance coverage is available to eligible patients. For more information, visit Community Health Northwest Florida's web site at [HealthcareWithinReach.org](http://HealthcareWithinReach.org).