Thanksgiving is right around the corner, which means it’s that time of year when many of us show our gratitude for what we value in our lives, such as family, friends, good health and prosperity. This year, Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCSD) is thankful for our donors whose contributions help fund essential health care services for over 150,000 unique patients each year.

Choosing to give back to the community and to those less fortunate is a wonderful way to express thankfulness this time of year. Every donation, big or small, helps patients access vital health care services, such as diabetes screenings, dental checkups, well-baby visits and more.

This Thanksgiving season, please consider making a tax-deductible donation on our website at https://donation.fhcsd.org to help fund one of the following programs. Or, select “Greatest Need” so your dollars can be allocated to the service or program most in need at the time of the donation.

Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) - Our three fully licensed mobile health centers are staffed by 13 medical professionals and log thousands of miles each year traveling to locations throughout San Diego County, including schools, social service agencies, libraries, parks and shopping centers. These units provided essential services, such as blood pressure checks, immunizations and women’s care, to more than 3,200 unduplicated patients in 2014.

Healthcare for the Homeless - Aimed at removing the hurdles to health care access for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, our Healthcare for the Homeless program provides mental health, vision, dental and other life-changing services. In 2014, the program alone provided care to more than 25,000 unduplicated homeless individuals in San Diego County.

Family Medicine Residency Program - In its second year, the Family Medicine Residency Training Program was designed to address the urgent need for culturally competent providers in the San Diego area while providing a high-quality medical education, including inpatient medicine and surgical experience, in a real-world setting. Students in the three-year residency program have logged more than 16,000 hours and provided assistance to over 1,700 patients. The program includes rotations at all FHCSD primary care clinics, as well as Scripps Mercy Hospital and Rady Children’s Hospital.

From our family to yours, we wish you a peaceful and happy Thanksgiving holiday!
Charitable giving is as defining for Americans as the proverbial “Mom and Apple Pie.” According to the National Philanthropic Trust, 95.4% of all Americans give to charity. Charities play a fundamental role in our nation, as it would be impossible for the government to fully fund all charities across the country. With 1.5 million registered charities, the cost would be too hefty a price to pay. Through the generosity of Americans, charities survive to uplift, heal and manage the many complex needs of our communities.

The government recognizes the important role of charities and helps facilitate public giving through tax incentives. Donations are deductible against the taxes one pays. In fact, the cash donation given to a charity can be offset by as much as 50%, from one’s adjusted gross income (AGI).

This is a fairly sizable government incentive to donate to your favored charity. There is no one way to give. A donor can make a Direct Gift, which can be restricted for a designated purpose, such as, “I want my gift to help fund childhood immunizations.” Or it can be an Unrestricted gift, giving the charity the option to use the gift immediately for the best need or save it in a rainy day fund. Another way to give is by an Outright Bequest. This is done when one names a charity in their will. (When my father passed a couple of years ago, it was interesting to see the charities he named in his will—they had obviously touched his heart at some point in his life and it was a lovely reminder to me of his giving spirit.)

Two other ways to give are through charitable remainder trust (CRT) or a donor-advised fund. The tax benefits of both of these can be enormous. In 2014, Americans gave over $358 billion to their favorite charities, further debunking the myth that only the wealthy can make charitable donations. No matter how we choose to give, it is clear that in our country charitable giving is a part of our American fabric. Whether you write that check for $50 to support something that touches your heart, or you donate through a CRT to eliminate large capital gains, your gift will be appreciated and will help support the work of your favorite charity.

With over 95% of Americans giving to charities, it is clear that America is defined, not just by “Mom and Apple Pie,” but by its tremendous spirit of giving.