



Successful Physician Retention and Recruitment Efforts for Community Health Centers : A Case Study of Missouri and Pennsylvania

Latoya Beatty

Howard University College of Medicine

Introduction

- Community health centers have been around for 50 years and provide a majority of the nation's primary care services.
- The presence of these centers in underserved communities is important due to the growing number of uninsured patients.
- The shortage of healthcare providers has a major impact on the success of community health centers.

Background

- State funding for healthcare workforce initiatives and programs have been one strategy for addressing provider shortage.
- The State Affairs Department of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) works closely with each State/Regional Primary Care Association by providing resources for sustaining their community health centers.
- The goal of this project is to provide case studies of two states (Missouri, Pennsylvania) demonstrating how state funding has been used to assist health centers with their recruitment and retention efforts.

Key Health Center Data

State	# of Grantees	# of Delivery Sites	# of Total Patients	# of Patient Visits per Physician	% Medicaid Coverage	% Uninsured
Missouri	24	200	442,058	527,334	42	34
Pennsylvania	40	257	680,017	971,346	42	26

Methodology

- In June 2014, 45 out of 51 Primary Care Associations (PCAs) completed NACHC's 2014 Primary Care Association Survey which explored state policies and issues affecting health centers.
- We collected qualitative data in March 2015 with the Policy Director at PCAs in two states whom responded that state funding was provided in 2014 for health professions training (Missouri and Pennsylvania).
- These one hour telephone interviews included questions about the state funding policies and priorities, additional workforce programs, and challenges.

Findings-Missouri

- The Missouri Primary Care Association (MCPA) has been working on loan repayment for 3-4 years.
- The funding for the loan repayment is \$250,000 over a time span of 4 to 5 years for full-time healthcare providers. These health professionals are mostly doctors and nurse practitioners.
- The program allocates 4 or 5 awards a year and it has been successful at recruiting. Most of the health professionals stay or move to another federally qualified health center (FQHC).
- Additionally, MCPA has a scholarship program for medical students.
- MCPA also has a dental school partnership that began two years ago.

Findings-Pennsylvania

- Funds from a 2013 grant from their State Department of Health have been used on a career center to recruit and retain clinicians. The main focus of the career center is on recruiting Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants.
- The loan repayment program has grown by increasing to 2 years for \$100,000 for full-time physicians and dentists; and 2 years for \$60,000 for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants.
- The program received 128 applications and allocated 34 awards last year.
- Furthermore, the state has a teaching health center called the Wright center. Training is held at the Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education and includes a number of residents.
- Members from PACHC attend recruitment fairs and educate health professionals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Sustainability of CHC's depends on physician workforce.
- The focus of sustainability of CHC's should include retention and workforce development but state funding cuts is a major issue.
- Future research should explore cheaper alternatives of retention and recruitment methods such as recruitment searches using surveys
- Other states can implement similar recruitment programs as the ones in Missouri and Pennsylvania

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