

CORPS CONNECTIONS

IN-SERVICE
August 2011

Join Us for Corps Community Day: October 13, 2011 *United to Increase Access to Health Care*

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is uniting to increase understanding of the importance of access to primary health care and the role of NHSC providers and sites by holding the first **Corps Community Day** on **October 13, 2011** during National Primary Care Week. We encourage you to participate by conducting an activity in your community. Be creative or try:



- Presenting at a local high school, college and/or health professional school about the NHSC and why you should become a primary care provider
- Participating in the “*What the Corps means in your community*” video contest on www.Challenge.gov
- Hosting a “Meet your Providers” open house at your site
- Coordinating a family health walk in your community

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Here’s how to get involved:

- ✓ Visit <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov> for event and activity ideas, background information on the Corps and the state of primary care, an interactive U.S. map with state-by-state details on local Corps Community Day activities, customizable flyers, and other tools and resources.
- ✓ Email us at CorpsCommunityDay@hrsa.gov with details about your Corps Community Day event or activity to have it added to the interactive map.
- ✓ Share your plans and connect with fellow members, alumni and partners by joining the discussion on the NHSC Facebook page’s [Corps Community Day discussion thread](#).
- ✓ Feel free to email any questions to CorpsCommunityDay@hrsa.gov.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Event Calendar



Region VIII Community Connection (CO-MT-ND-SD-UT-WY)

September 7, 2011

6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Sheraton Denver Downtown
1550 Court Place
Denver, CO 80202

*Please contact nhsctdenver@hrsa.gov
for more information or to RSVP by
August 31.

NHSC Awardee Conference

September 8-10, 2011

Denver, CO

Corps Community Day

October 13, 2011

Locations across the country!

NHSC Awardee Conference

December 8-10, 2011

Los Angeles, CA

*Registration coming soon!

NHSC Hosts Over 70 Providers, Scholars, and Alumni at the Boston Community Connection Event

On July 14, the NHSC hosted over 70 providers, scholars, alumni, and partners at the Boston Community Connection event, which was held at Massachusetts General Hospital. Community Connection events are designed to bring together NHSC participants, stakeholders, and community resources at the local and state level.

During the event, special guest speakers shared their experiences with attendees, including Jim O'Connell, MD, who serves as President of the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program. Dr. O'Connell spoke to the captivated audience about his experiences during the 25 years he has spent caring for Boston's homeless population in one of the program's hospital-based clinics. A special panel of current and former NHSC providers also discussed *Life in the NHSC & Primary Health Care Perspectives*. Panelists included: Warren Ferguson, MD; Greg Hood, PA; Lacy Clayton, NP; and moderator, Eric Weil, MD. Several local organizations that support the primary care providers also participated in the event, including the Primary Care Office, Primary Care Association, Office of Rural Health, universities, and state colleges.

NHSC would like to thank Partners Healthcare System, The Stoeckle Center for Primary Care Innovation at Massachusetts General Hospital, the Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care, and the Massachusetts Area Health Education Center for supporting this event!

This was the third NHSC Community Connection event this year. Be on the lookout for upcoming events, dates, and locations in your area! These informal gatherings offer a unique opportunity to network and share ideas and experiences with other NHSC providers, scholars, and alumni in your community.



National Health Service Corps – Stories from the Field

Everol M. Ennis, MEd, APRN-BC
Nurse Practitioner
Community Health Services, Inc.
Hartford, CT



Be a partner in your own health – that’s Everol Ennis’s simple message to his patients. Everol is a Nurse Practitioner and Loan Repayment Program Awardee and works in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Hartford, CT. Many of his patients are homeless and/or haven’t seen a health care provider in years, meaning they have no one to partner with when it comes to health care. How can a provider schedule a follow-up appointment or maintain a continuum of care when the patient can’t provide an address on a medical form? To answer that question, Everol got creative.

He would frequently get patient transfers or referrals from fellow providers who thought that male patients may be better suited seeing a male provider for specific health concerns. In February 2010, Everol established the first Men’s Health Clinic. It’s open every Friday and serves many in the community who are homeless, living in shelters, or receiving help from the Salvation Army. According to Everol, the providers wear many hats at the clinic. “We serve as health care providers, lawyers, social workers, and couples counselors,” says Everol with a chuckle. “Often the clinic is one of the few places where people come, and they are actually treated well, respected, and guaranteed to be greeted with a smile.”

His straightforward approach to patient care, willingness to go above and beyond what’s needed, and unique rapport with patients were just a few of the reasons that he was named 2011 Clinician of the Year at Community Health Services, Inc.

But the accolades embarrass more than drive him. “Working at this clinic humbles me. It makes me grateful for everything I have – especially when I see patients struggling to make ends meet. There is so much angst about things I take for granted like paying a utility bill or steady employment. I see their struggles, and I try to meet my patients where they are – not where I want them to be.” Recently, Everol worked with a patient to figure out how to address his knee pain, since his job depended on him being on his feet. Everol knew the patient needed a solution to comfortably manage the pain – not an operation that would lay him up for weeks. He also works with other clinic staff to go the extra mile and identify new resources or insurance options for patients. “My job tests my resolve and presents me with new challenges every single day. But, these challenges make me a better health care provider,” says Everol, who continues to be energized by his patients. “You wouldn’t believe the overwhelming gratitude that they express on a daily basis – sometimes they shake my hand until they’re about to pull my arm out of its socket or hug me until I almost can’t breathe. Ultimately, though, I take the most pride in seeing patients looking and feeling better based on the treatment plan that we’ve developed together and seeing more pep in their step.”

Everol not only teaches his patients to be a partner in their own health care – he gives them someone to partner with. Continue to check out the [NHSC Facebook page](#) for more inspiring stories.

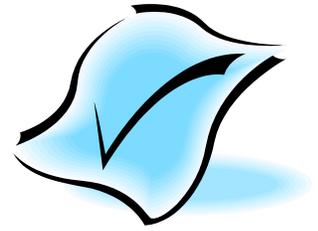
Do you want to be featured in Stories from the Field?

[Email us](#) and tell us your story. Do you know an outstanding NHSC member who should be profiled here? [Email us](#) and nominate them! Be sure to tell us why you think their contributions to their community and the NHSC make them an exceptional member!



Please Plan to Complete the NHSC Survey

The NHSC is distributing an online and hard copy survey to a sample of NHSC providers, alumni, and site administrators in late August and early September. The survey is gathering information regarding the Corps members' experiences in an effort to identify ways to retain clinicians providing care in underserved communities. If you receive the survey, the NHSC would greatly appreciate your participation and candid feedback. Your comments will be combined with all responses and will remain anonymous.



NHSC is Reaching Out to Its Alumni

This fall, the National Health Service Corps will launch its Alumni Network in an effort to keep former Loan Repayment Program participants and Scholars connected to the Corps after their service commitment has ended.

More than 37,000 providers have been a part of the Corps throughout its nearly 40-year history. The initiative will offer alumni exclusive content on the NHSC Web site, create opportunities for alumni to stay in touch with the Corps (through alumni email updates and events), and engage them in other Corps activities.

More details about the Alumni Network will be included in the November issue of Corps Connections. In the meantime, if you know of any NHSC alumni who've lost touch with us, please encourage them to email nhscalumni@hrsa.gov with their current contact information and reconnect with the Corps.

Have You Activated Your Customer Service Portal Account?

Earlier this summer, you should have received an email with instructions on how to activate your NHSC Customer Service Portal account. The Customer Service Portal is your online tool for conducting business with the Corps. It provides Corps members a convenient way to access information related to their awards.

You can use the portal to:

- Update your personal information
- Ask the NHSC a question
- Submit customer service requests (i.e., site transfers, suspensions)

If you have not done so already, please activate your portal account and review your personal information. To login, visit <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov> and click on the yellow "Customer Service Portal" button.

If you experience any issues accessing your account, contact the Call Center at: 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910).

Information and Resources for You and Your Patients

Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan — New Coverage Option for the Uninsured

Patients who have had a hard time finding health insurance because of a pre-existing condition or who have been turned down for insurance coverage may now be eligible for a new program created by the Affordable Care Act -- the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan.

This transitional program is available for children and adults in all 50 states and the District of Columbia who have been locked out of the health insurance market because of a pre-existing condition. In 2014, Americans—regardless of their health status—will have access to affordable health insurance when the nation transitions to a new marketplace.

Under this new program, patients will receive health coverage for a wide range of medical benefits including physician's services, hospital care, and prescription drugs. All covered benefits are available—even to treat a pre-existing condition. Patients won't be charged a higher premium because of a medical condition and eligibility is not based on income. Like standard health insurance plans, patients will be required to pay a monthly premium, a deductible, and some cost-sharing expenses. Premiums may vary depending on where patients live, their age, and which health plan they choose.

To qualify, a patient must:

- Be a citizen of the United States or residing here legally
- Have been uninsured for at least 6 months before applying
- Have a pre-existing condition or have been denied insurance coverage because of a health condition

Each state may use different methods to determine whether patients have pre-existing conditions and whether they have been denied health coverage. To find out more about the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), including eligibility, plan benefits and rates and how patients can apply, visit www.pcip.gov or click on "Find Your State" and select a state from a map of the United States or from a drop-down menu for details.

Contact the PCIP Call Center toll free at 1-866-717-5826 (TTY 1-866-561-1604) for more information. The Call Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET.

HHS to Launch Campaign Touting Free Services Under Medicare

A government effort to motivate Medicare patients to seek preventive medicine by offering such services for free, has only slightly increased the number of older Americans getting cancer tests, key vaccines and other preventive care.

About 5.5 million Medicare patients have used at least one preventive benefit since Medicare eliminated the charges in January, according to figures released by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). And as of early June, nearly 780,000 Medicare patients had an annual checkup, while 16,000 got counseling to quit smoking — two benefits added to the program for the first time. But HHS wants to increase those numbers.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that the agency was launching a campaign, known as “Share the News, Share the Health” to alert Medicare patients, their doctors and their relatives that the services are available at no charge. “Our job is to make sure every single Medicare beneficiary in the country knows,” Sebelius said.

Alert your patients about the preventive benefits available to them through Medicare. For additional information about what’s covered visit <http://www.medicare.gov/share-the-health/>.

Questions or Comments?

If you have ideas or suggestions for future issues, please send them to info@nhscrtsc.net.



The footer banner contains the following elements from left to right:

- The official seal of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, featuring an eagle with wings spread.
- The HRSA logo, which includes the text "U.S. Department of Health and Human Services" above "HRSA" and "Health Resources and Services Administration" below it.
- The National Health Service Corps logo, a blue banner with the text "NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS" and a white heart icon.
- Contact information: "Contact NHSC" followed by "Call 1-800-221-9393 or visit NHSC.hrsa.gov".
- Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, with the heading "Share and Follow" above them.

This publication lists non-federal resources in order to provide additional information to consumers. The views and content in these resources have not been formally approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Listing these resources is not an endorsement by HHS or HRSA.