

# CORPS CONNECTIONS

IN-SERVICE  
February 2011

## New NHSC Full to Half Time Status Conversions

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is providing clinicians with more flexible options to complete their service obligation.

For some, this provides the opportunity to spend a greater amount of time teaching, working at a hospital, taking care of family, or serving the community in another way while continuing to fulfill their NHSC service obligation.

The [2011 Application and Program Guidance](#) contains detailed information about full-time and half-time fulfillment of the NHSC service obligation. General guidelines include:

- To be eligible to convert from a full-time service obligation to half-time you must complete the [Full-to-Half-Time Conversion Request Form](#), which includes the following criteria:
  - Your site agrees you may convert.
  - You are a Federal employee or Private Practice Assignee (half-time not available for Private Practice Option practitioners).
  - You agree to complete your remaining service obligation through half-time clinical practice for twice as long as your remaining full-time commitment.
- If approved for half-time, you CANNOT convert back to a full-time commitment under your existing service obligation. Once you convert to half-time status, you must complete your commitment to the Corps through half-time service. Should you apply for and receive a continuation contract, you can request to convert back to full-time status at that time.
- Half-time clinical practice is defined as a minimum of 20 hours per week. All health professionals (with the exception of those outlined in the 2011 Application and Program Guidance and on the conversion request form) must provide direct patient care at their approved site for at least 16 hours per week and an additional 4 hours per week on teaching, providing services in alternative settings or on administrative activities.

### In This Issue...

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- Upcoming Events
- Patient Resources
- NHSC Survey
- SEARCH Program
- Tips for Starting a Support Group
- And more!

For additional information or questions, please contact the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Services, Division of Program Operations at (301) 594-4200 or [gethelp@hrsa.gov](mailto:gethelp@hrsa.gov).

## Learn More about the SEARCH Program

Have you heard about the [Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health \(SEARCH\)](#) program? As a valued clinician, the NHSC wanted to make you aware that there may be an opportunity through your local SEARCH\* program to precept students and residents interested in primary care and community health. With your guidance and mentorship, students and residents will further hone their skills and gain valuable clinical and community health experience. Ideally, this experience will lead them to careers in the most medically underserved communities.

Depending on your site's current needs and capacity, this could be an ideal opportunity for you. Contact [nhscupdate@hrsa.gov](mailto:nhscupdate@hrsa.gov) for additional information!

\*SEARCH is available in the following States/territories: AZ, CA, CT, FL, ID, IL, KS, LA, MA, ME, MI, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PR, SC, TN, TX, UT, VT, WI, WV.

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## NHSC Retention Survey Coming in 2011!

NHSC will be distributing an online and hard copy survey (pending OMB clearance) to NHSC clinicians, alumni, and site administrators later in 2011. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate personal and professional development of NHSC clinicians in an effort to retain the clinicians providing care in underserved communities. The NHSC would appreciate your participation when the survey is released.

True



False



## Congratulations to Two Former NHSC Clinicians!

**Dr. Kurt Zimmer** and **Dr. Maggie Wilson** recently received the Samuel U. Rogers Achievement Award, which recognizes vision and commitment to public service. Named after a pioneer in public health, this award honors those who empower others and improve the health of individuals and local communities. Congratulations to both Dr. Zimmer and Dr. Wilson, both former NHSC clinicians, who have been at their community health centers for over 20 years!



**Dr. Kurt Zimmer and staff**  
*Missouri Highlands Community Health Center of Ellington, MO*



**Dr. Maggie Wilson**  
*Northeast Missouri Community Health Center CHC of Kirksville, MO*

# Starting a Support Group at Your Organization: Helpful Advice from an NHSC Clinician

Andrea Kinlen, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist from Prairie View, Inc. in McPherson, Kansas, recently shared her experiences with starting an autism support group in her community. After working with patients and families to provide testing and therapy services for autism patients, she was quickly labeled as one of the autism experts in her area.

Not only did this help Andrea's individual patients, it also benefited her site by identifying a local champion in the community and the site as a trusted resource. Her referrals began increasing, especially since other facilities were up to three hours away. As Andrea continued to spend time with patients learning about their struggles and telling them they weren't alone, the idea for a local support group evolved.

Encouraged by the support of her supervisor and funding provided by a partial community grant, she engaged the families she worked with on a daily basis, other clinics, and local schools. By coming together, families were able to share stories and found much common ground. Even though the ages of the children and levels of severity varied, the challenges were the same.

As a site, you can help to increase awareness about public health issues by supporting and empowering your clinicians to develop similar programs. Learn from Andrea's experiences and consider creating a support group in your community for autism or another disease or disorder.

## Top 5 Tips for Starting a Support Group

**1) Engage key people to help develop the idea – including administrators, communications experts, grant writers, and other clinicians.**

Tap into the talents of everyone at your organization. For Andrea this was pivotal to getting the support group started. By capitalizing on others' expertise, she was able to not only get help with tasks but also get buy-in from other key stakeholders.

**2) Identify ways to promote the group to others in the community.**

Andrea worked to engage others in the community by distributing flyers, posting information on the community calendar, making announcements on community news radio, and spreading the information by word of mouth.

**3) Think outside the box when looking for financial support.**

Look for alternative funding through community resources like the Lions Club or Kiwanis, community enrichment and mental health resources (like Sunflower Foundation Grants in Kansas), and disease or disorder specific associations and groups. Parents in the group also collaborated to create and sell a cookbook to raise funds.

**4) Identify special needs that are unique to the group.**

One of the unique challenges for the group was providing appropriate child care while parents attended the meetings, so part of the budget was set aside. Another unexpected hurdle was meeting during dinnertime, so they made the meetings potluck. Being able to identify and address these issues helped to increase participation.

**5) Find other unique resources to help the group.**

Andrea sought out help from others in the community to help with the special needs of the group. She had a lobbyist come to talk to parents about how they could get involved on a state level; representatives from the school's autism Intervention team to consult on how to work with kids in the classroom; and an attorney who specializes in setting up trusts for special needs children.

# New Complimentary Patient Education Resources Available!

## Resources Available for Seasonal Flu Guide for Community & Faith-based Organizations & Leaders

According to [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data](#), February has historically been the peak in the flu season. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships has released the *Influenza (Flu) Guide for Community & Faith-based Organizations & Leaders*, which is now available in English and Spanish. The *Seasonal Flu* guide comes in an accessible, easy-to-read format and provides: flu facts; every day prevention steps; and ways that community leaders can contribute to the flu prevention effort. This guide is an important fight the flu resource for the Spanish-speaking community and faith-based partners.

- Download the *Seasonal Flu* guide in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)
- Order printed copies of the *Seasonal Flu* guide (in English or in Spanish) from the HHS Partnership Center by emailing [partnerships@hhs.gov](mailto:partnerships@hhs.gov). Please include the number of copies requested, specify if you want the English or Spanish version, and include your name, address, phone number, and email address.

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## Free Patient Education Resources from AHRQ

The Health Resources and Services Administration's sister agency, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), is pleased to offer NHSC clinicians its free, evidence-based patient education aids in English and Spanish. These publications and videos include guides for screening exams recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and patient guides derived from AHRQ's patient-centered outcomes research on the comparative benefits and risks of drugs and other therapies for selected disorders.

The free patient education resources also include tips on patient safety and improving quality of care. AHRQ can provide clinicians with up to 200 copies of each publication at no cost. AHRQ also has a limited supply of free Spanish-language DVDs for Web site embedding or patient viewing that include six, 1 minute-duration health advice videos.

E-mail [ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov](mailto:ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov) to order the *Consumer/Patient Education Materials- Samples Kit* (AHRQ Pub. No.OM11-0020) and/or the *Patient Advice Videos by "La Doctora Ileana" for Better Health*, (AHRQ Pub. No.11-0019-DVD).

## Upcoming Events



**March 17-19, 2011**

[NHSC Awardee Conference](#)  
Nashville, TN

**April 2011**

[National Minority Health Month](#)

**Tip:** Consider organizing games about healthy eating habits, including those that show the equivalence between what you eat and how much exercise it takes to burn it; a chemistry experiment demonstrating the sugar content of drinks; conducting a health risk assessment or educational theater. For additional ideas, [visit the National Minority Health Month Web page](#).

**May 12-14, 2011**

[NHSC Awardee Conference](#)  
Chicago, IL

**May 18, 2011**

NHSC Community Connection Event – Additional information coming soon!  
San Francisco, CA

## An NHSC Clinician Going the Extra Mile

In December 2010, the NHSC Awardee Conference in San Francisco attracted over 600 clinicians from across the country to learn, network, and share ideas with each other. In order to stay active at the conference, clinicians were encouraged to use a pedometer provided by NHSC to track their daily steps, and top steppers were acknowledged at the end of the conference.

Misty Miller, MS, PA-C from Michigan was inspired. She encouraged clinicians at the conference to donate their pedometers, so they could be used for an obesity program she planned to start at her clinic. She believed that providing patients with pedometers would help them take a step in the right direction toward an active, healthy lifestyle. NHSC plans to follow up with Misty in the coming months to track her program's progress – so stay tuned!

If you've never attended an Awardee Conference, join us! Learn more about upcoming [NHSC Awardee Conferences](#).



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### Questions or Comments?

If you have ideas or suggestions for future issues, please e-mail your ideas to [info@nhscrtsc.net](mailto:info@nhscrtsc.net).



Contact NHSC

Call 1-800-221-9393 or visit [NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov)

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