

# CORPS CONNECTIONS

SITES  
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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:CorpsCommunityDay@hrsa.gov).

Thank you in advance for your participation!

## NHSC Welcomes All Federally Qualified Health Centers to the Corps!

As a result of recent policy changes, the site application requirement has been eliminated for all Federally Qualified Health Centers. The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is pleased to welcome you to the Corps and extend to you the benefits of becoming an NHSC member site! NHSC sites are the foundation of a network of primary health care providers and sites who are dedicated to building healthier communities in areas of need throughout the United States.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1-877-313-1823.

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## NHSC Announces Students to Service Loan Repayment Pilot Program

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Students to Service Loan Repayment Program (S2S LRP) pilot program will provide loan repayment assistance to medical students (MD and DO) while in their last year of school in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in eligible Health Professional Shortage areas (HPSAs) of greatest need. The program is seeking applicants who demonstrate the characteristics for and an interest in serving the nation's medically underserved populations through their service commitment and beyond.

The S2S LRP will provide funds to participants to repay their outstanding qualifying student loans while still completing health professions training. Program options include:

- **Full-Time Clinical Practice** – The NHSC will pay up to \$120,000 for an initial 3 years of full-time clinical service defined as no less than 40 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks a year.
- **Half-Time Clinical Practice** – The NHSC will pay up to \$120,000 for an initial 6 years of half-time clinical service defined as no less than 20 hours per week (not to exceed 39 hours per week), for a minimum of 45 weeks per year.

The NHSC projects that the S2S LRP application cycle will open in November 2011 and close in January 2012. Additional information, including eligibility requirements, can be found at:

<http://NHSC.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/studentstoservice.htm>

## 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 [nhsdenver@hrsa.gov](mailto:nhsdenver@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!**

### New Scholar Orientation Conference

**October 27-29, 2011**

**New Orleans, LA**

### NHSC Awardee Conference

**December 8-10, 2011**

**Los Angeles, CA**

\*Registration coming soon!

## Online Customer Service Portal for Sites Coming in September!

National Health Service Corps (NHSC) loan repayment recipients and scholars can now conduct much of their business with the Corps through the Customer Service Portal. Beginning in September, NHSC sites will have the ability to do the same!

NHSC sites will be able to:

- Post and update job openings
- View clinicians currently under obligation
- Ask a question
- Update their site information through the Portal



Additional functionality will be released in the coming months, including site recertification and submission of six-month verifications. Look for this announcement and activate your Portal account as soon as you receive your login instructions.

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### Site Recertification – New Policies and Upcoming Deadlines

Sites whose NHSC certification is due to expire on September 30 should have received a letter via email in early August discussing changes in timing regarding their recertification. In addition, new policies for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), IHS sites, and federal facilities were also announced.

Please check your records and keep in mind that:

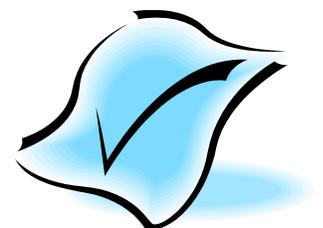
- FQHCs (Community Health Centers, Migrant Health Centers, Public Housing Clinics, and Homeless Clinics) do not need to recertify as long as they remain funded by the Bureau of Primary Health Care as an FQHC parent or satellite site that is within scope of project for the grant and meet the NHSC site requirements.
- IHS and other federal sites such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Bureau of Prisons no longer need to recertify.
- All other health facilities will need to recertify every three years.

If your NHSC site certification was due to expire on September 30 you will be receiving instructions about how and when to begin the recertification process via the online Customer Service Portal. Your status as an approved site is not affected in the interim.

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### 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 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.



## NHSC is Reaching Out to Its Alumni

This fall, the National Health Service Corps will launch its Alumni Initiative in an effort to keep former Loan Repayment Program Awardees 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 Alumni 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 recruitment and retention activities.

More details about the launch 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](mailto:nhscalumni@hrsa.gov) with their current contact information and reconnect with the Corps.

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### Information and Resources for You and Your Patients:

#### 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/>.

## 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](http://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.

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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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