

CORPS CONNECTIONS

SITES
February 2011

New NHSC Full to Half Time Status Conversions

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is providing Corps clinicians with more flexible options to complete their service obligation. NHSC clinicians at your site may now convert from full-time to half-time status. The half-time option was created to provide additional flexibility for both Corps clinicians and sites. However, we recognize that a half-time arrangement is not always feasible. We are encouraging any clinician interested in the half-time option to first speak to their site. To be eligible to convert from full-time to half-time a clinician must receive written permission from his or her supervisor.

The [2011 Application and Program Guidance](#) contains detailed information about full-time and half-time fulfillment of the NHSC service obligation. The following are key provisions to note:

- To be eligible to convert from a full-time service obligation to half-time an NHSC clinician must complete the [Full-to-Half-Time Conversion Request Form](#). This form states they meet the following criteria:
 - You, as their site, agree the clinician may convert.
 - The clinician is a Federal employee or Private Practice Assignee (half-time not available for Private Practice Option practitioners).
 - The clinician agrees to complete his or her remaining service obligation through half-time clinical practice for twice as long as his or her remaining full-time commitment.
- If approved for half-time, clinicians CANNOT convert back to a full-time commitment under their existing service obligation. Once they convert to half-time status they must complete their commitment to the Corps through half-time service. Should they apply for and receive a continuation contract, they can request to convert back to full-time status at that time if the site agrees.
- 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.

The half-time option for fulfilling an NHSC clinician's service obligation is voluntary. Please consider any request, however you are under no obligation to approve them. If you have any additional questions, please call 1-800-221-9393.

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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

Learn More about the SEARCH Program

Have you heard about the [Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health \(SEARCH\)](#) program? The NHSC wanted to make you aware that there may be an opportunity through your local SEARCH* program for clinicians at your site to precept students and residents interested in primary care and community health. With guidance and mentorship, students and residents can 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 and possibly a future position at your site or another NHSC site.

Depending on your site's current needs and capacity, this could be an ideal opportunity. Contact 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.

NHSC Retention Survey Coming in 2011!

NHSC will be distributing 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**



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. 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. Not only did the idea for a support group help Andrea's individual patients and their families, it also benefited her site by identifying it as a trusted resource in the community.

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!

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. 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.

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 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 is starting 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. Encourage clinicians at your site to begin new patient initiatives. Even with limited time and resources, creative programs like these have the potential to make a huge impact in patients' lives. NHSC plans to follow up with Misty in the coming months to track her program's progress – so stay tuned!

All NHSC clinicians have the opportunity to attend an Awardee Conference! Many workshops offer free continuing education units (CEUs) and feature nationally recognized speakers and former members of the Corps who will share motivational and inspirational stories about their NHSC experiences. In addition, clinicians can network with others from across the country to learn about new ideas that they can implement at your site!

Learn more about upcoming [NHSC Awardee Conferences](#) and encourage those working at your site to attend.



Question or Comments?

If you have ideas or suggestions for future issues, please e-mail your ideas to info@nhscrtsc.net.



Contact NHSC

Call 1-800-221-9393 or
visit NHSC.hrsa.gov

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