



Community HealthCorps

2008-2009

Program Year in Review

A program sponsored by



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers



Sponsored by the National Association of Community Health Centers, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and state, regional community partners from throughout the country.



A Note from Our National Director

In 2008-09 **Community HealthCorps** marched forward during a season of change in the national service world and the country. The program continued to serve thousands of medically underserved individuals across our nation—many of which were accessing a community health center for the first time because of the loss of a job, and a downturn in the economy.

In September 2008, Community HealthCorps was part of the **Service Nation** that called for enhanced support for volunteers and national service programs. At the time, the presidential candidates of both parties came together for a bipartisan event in New York City offering their commitment. As 2009 opened, the country saw the inauguration of Barack Obama as President, and celebrated **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** in a Day of Service. One of the very first legislative acts made by the new President and with Congress was to pass the **Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act** into law with large bipartisan support. The passage of this legislation would equip programs like Community HealthCorps with the resources to grow in future years. Later in 2009, the country would lose Senator Edward M. Kennedy. A hero to the community health center and national service communities, he would never be forgotten for his tireless efforts to improve the lives of all Americans. His legacy would continue to live on as our program year ended, and health care reform became the primary focus of the country.

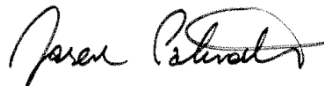
Throughout the past year, Community HealthCorps saw all program sites accomplish great things, entered the world of social media with Facebook and Twitter, launched its own website at www.communityhealthcorps.org, and began planning for the future. The achievements described in this report are based on program year 2008-09 with funding from the following sources:

- AmeriCorps National Direct
- California Volunteers
- Volunteer Florida
- New York Commission on Community and National Service
- OneStar Foundation (Texas)
- New York AmeriCorps*VISTA
- American Legacy Foundation
- Covidien
- National Association of Community Health Centers

Through my many interactions with Community HealthCorps members over the past year, I heard a resounding theme on why they joined the program: “to help my community”.

Community HealthCorps members will continue to “help” medically underserved people through community health centers where they serve, and will continue to develop the health center leaders of tomorrow.

In Service,



Jason Patnosh, National Director
Community HealthCorps
National Association of Community Health Centers

Increasing Access for the Medically Underserved

In 2008-09, **746,803 medically underserved people** who lacked access and inadequately used available health services and programs benefited from the service activity of Community HealthCorps members (AmeriCorps national service volunteers). Of those individuals, **77,472 enrolled in health screenings, health education workshops and classes, health insurance plans**, and other health services and programs. Lastly **75,028 used preventive and primary health care services** and programs two or more times within the program year.

The roles of AmeriCorps members are diverse; complement the communities they serve; and seek to lift barriers that medically underserved people experience in accessing health care. Although AmeriCorps*VISTA members predominantly provide indirect service as ‘capacity builders’, they sometimes perform direct service with patients and other community residents as needed in order to adequately develop a new or expanded health service or program.

Community HealthCorps Member Roles	
<p>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</p> <p>Outreach conducted by members was street-based to homeless populations, school-based, and occurred at residential facilities or in public housing units. Implemented strategies emphasized the needs of farm workers as well. Members expanded beyond the role of staff and community volunteers by identifying new medically underserved populations.</p>	<p>HEALTH EDUCATION</p> <p>Whether members focused on the importance of healthy oral health habits or educated teens recovering from substance abuse about the importance of fitness and nutrition, by design, members assisted certified health educators to deliver health education to health center populations.</p>
<p>HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH PROGRAMS ENROLLMENT</p> <p>Members directly assisted patients with understanding and completing enrollment documentation for health insurance and health center programs. In other instances when staff had roles in patient enrollment, members instead referred people to such staff.</p>	<p>OTHER PATIENT ASSISTANCE</p> <p>Members scheduled appointments, provided translations, and linked patients to transportation assistance for services. Members helped patients participate in depression, dental, diabetes, asthma and cancer screenings. Members often focused on patients who were non-compliant with past directions from clinicians.</p>

Voices of Community HealthCorps

“I am helping a patient with M.S. find low-cost catheters (she uses four daily). These types of seemingly “minor” items can really cost a lot to a disabled patient struggling to deal with increasing loss of independence. (This) situation is more complicated than typical prescription assistance efforts...but I have already found some options ...and I hope to find enough resources for them that they don't have to stretch their already tight budgets further and can instead have some peace of mind that these daily basics will be covered.” - Anonymous

Mobilizing Community Volunteers

Community HealthCorps members built the capacity of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), health center networks and other organizations to recruit and utilize community volunteers. They mobilized and supported volunteerism in one-time and ongoing activities that primarily met community and health center needs, such as:

In Nashville, TN a member served as a volunteer management specialist - identifying needs within FQHCs; recruiting & supporting volunteers for long-term relationships. An e-newsletter produced by the member became an important tool to communicate with volunteers.

- Improving health center and other community-based facilities
- Implementing satisfaction surveys
- Distributing health promotion materials (i.e. healthy eating)
- Organizing health fairs
- Promoting utilization of primary health care and health promotion programs
- Conducting service projects
- Reading to children in waiting rooms (Reach Out and Read)

Members worked with staff to recruit, screen, train, manage and publically acknowledge the contributions of community volunteers for an average of five hours/week. For example, members developed position descriptions, culturally competent and linguistically appropriate marketing materials, and provided volunteer orientation. Volunteers and their contributions were celebrated through publically visible postings through the web, press releases, and special events such as recognition luncheons.

Across all sites, **Community HealthCorps recruited and coordinated 5,880 volunteers from all walks of life who served 33,595 hours.**

Building Capacity – AmeriCorps*VISTA Continues to Make an Impact

Community HealthCorps VISTA members combated poverty through several functional and programmatic activities in local communities designed to improve access to quality preventive and primary health care. Some examples of functional roles were as follows:

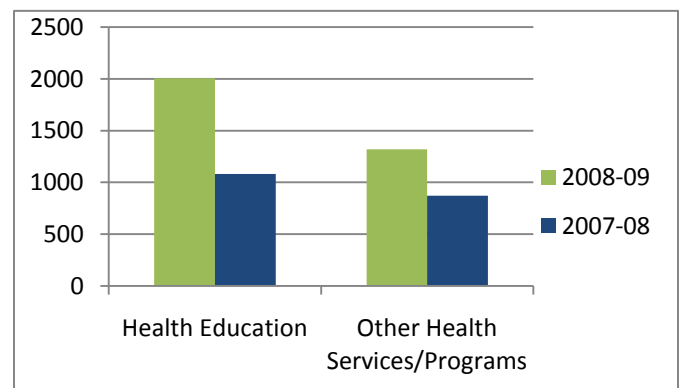
- Developing & nurturing community partnerships
- Strengthening volunteer management systems
- Assisting with the launch of new health centers/service sites
- Improving program performance measurement & evaluation
- Strengthening health communications

Projections for New York HealthCorps*VISTA	Percentage of Target Met/ Exceeded
Build collaboration with 10 organizations	300%
Increase marketing of accomplishments for 10 programs	300%
Develop or improve 2 volunteer recruitment and/or management systems	100%
Improve 6 health communications materials	116%
Solicit 15 funding and in-kind ¹ donations	366%
\$ Grant Funds Solicited	\$3,598,000
\$ Value of In-Kind Donations Obtained	\$7,400
Develop or strengthen 3 interventions that promote self-care among patients	200%
Improve performance measurement ² for 4 programs	100%
Increase community participation in 3 events or campaigns	100%

- 1- In-Kind donations are donations of goods & services. This type of charitable donation can be made by individuals or organizations and ranges anywhere from an automobile, to food, printer paper, silent auction items, meeting spaces, or consulting services.
- 2- Performance Measurement is the process of regularly measuring what you get done, how much, and the impact of what you did on the people you are trying to help.

VISTA activity also focused on problematic areas such as living conditions (i.e. housing and homelessness), a social determinant of health; chronic disease management (i.e. diabetes); cancer detection; substance abuse cessation and pregnancy.

Members increased their professional development skills and understanding of health disparities by participating in a service and learning development training trip to New Orleans. The New Orleans service and learning trip gave members an unprecedented look at distinctive forms of health care systems addressing health care disparities (poverty) and organizational strategies employed to address these disparities.



New York VISTAs increased the number of people served by sponsoring organizations' services/programs by 25%, approximately 15% greater than the percent projected (10%).

Voices of Community HealthCorps

"I had the privilege of implementing and hosting a Bronx Emergency Asthma Management (BEAM) dinner for families of children with asthma. The mission of this program is to recruit patients from the South Bronx community who have been to the emergency room because of asthma. We work to educate these families on proper asthma management skills and ways to relieve anxiety and stress related to these visits. This past month we logged over 100 patients...and were able to recruit 10 families to come to our BEAM educational dinner. The event was a success as we were able to educate the parents of these children as well as entertain the children. By organizing this event I felt that I was really giving back to the community and reaching out to families who need help controlling their child's asthma."

-Alex Meis, NY VISTA Member
Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center

Voices of Community HealthCorps

"I served two years in AmeriCorps which I don't regret and I enjoyed every minute of it. It has been a really good experience, I learned a lot about the community health services we have in the (Yakima) Valley that I never knew existed. And I also got to work with some great people which I thank for always being there when I needed help. Overall, I am glad I took this opportunity. Thank you!"

- Rosalba Rodriguez
Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

Building the Next Generation of Health Center Leaders

Community HealthCorps members received comprehensive training that enhanced their ability to provide effective services. All members participated in pre-service orientation (PSO), on-site orientation, CPR and received the foundational program-specific training, "The Prescriptions for Success" for topics like patient relations, primary health care, health education and cultural sensitivity. NY VISTAs received NACHC-organized, special training in a variety of leadership skills using the LeadershipPlenty® curriculum, grant proposal writing and other resource development.

As true for the beginning of past program years, each team of members participated in a one to two week PSO that included an overview of national service, and an introduction to AmeriCorps, FQHCs and Community HealthCorps. Following the PSOs, members received ongoing training from their assigned supervisor(s) for day-to-day service skill development. The localized training helped members build upon successful Community HealthCorps program activities, while addressing the specific needs of the communities they serve.

Program coordinators provided support to members and are their primary national service resource. On a monthly basis, members worked together on planning and coordinating team and individual projects. At monthly or bimonthly team meetings, members received continuing education, opportunity for peer support; and were encouraged to reflect on their service experience – the impact on them and the people being served. NACHC was the primary national service resource to VISTAs, providing all of the previously mentioned support directly.

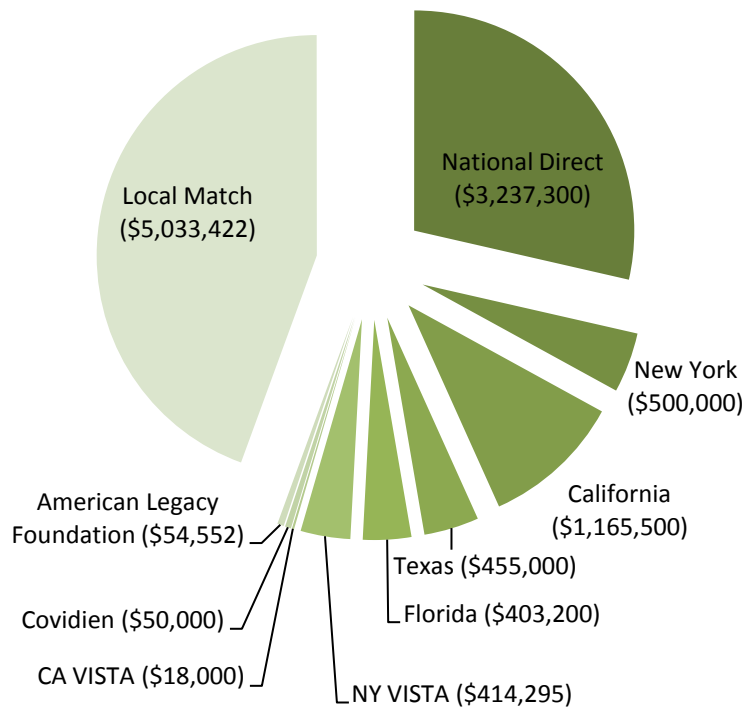
Each member is assigned a day-to-day site supervisor who takes great pride in serving as both a mentor and instructor to the member. Supervisors directed each of the following:

- Member service
- Ongoing training
- Conducted performance evaluations
- Offered constructive feedback to the members
- Provided other professional development.

Program-wide, members were provided 674 career and other mentoring sessions designed to prepare them for life after AmeriCorps. Supervisors were trained either by NACHC or program coordinators about regulations, policy and how to be an effective supervisor for topics such as prohibited activities, how to avoid duplication or displacement of employees, and proactive communication and support for members.

Community HealthCorps Funding Sources

In program year 2008-09, Community HealthCorps and its partners leveraged over \$11.3 million dollars in resources to coordinate the program. Also, AmeriCorps members were eligible to receive over \$2.4 million dollars in education awards upon successful completion of their service year.



Managing For Success

In 2008-09 NACHC continued to enhance the monitoring, policy development and technical assistance support for Community HealthCorps programs. Several examples include:

- An online help-desk system was created to assist programs better request technical assistance and/or get answers to questions
- All programs were provided with additional training on data collection and performance measure accountability
- The program's new website was established, providing a home for resources, best practices, and other information.

Embarking on the Social Networking Adventure

Community HealthCorps jumped into social networking this year by launching our presence at:



Facebook: www.facebook.com/communityhealthcorps



Twitter: www.twitter.com/commhealthcorps



YouTube: www.youtube.com/communityhealthcorps

Background

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act, which established the Corporation for National and Community Service and brought the full range of domestic community service programs under the umbrella of one central organization. This legislation built on the first National Service Act signed by President H.W. Bush in 1990. It also formally launched AmeriCorps, a network of national service programs that engage Americans in intensive service to meet the nation's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

The Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program is considered a cornerstone of the national service movement, launched during the War on Poverty in the 1960s at the same time as community health centers. Community HealthCorps has operated VISTA programs in New York for the past seven years, and operated a VISTA program in California which ceased halfway through the program year due to funding shortages.

The medically underserved began receiving health care from federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) 45 years ago. Federally qualified health centers are community owned, neighborhood-based and federally funded nonprofit organizations that serve millions of patients annually. FQHCs and communities they serve need support from AmeriCorps programs like Community HealthCorps now more than ever.

Founded in 1995 by the **National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC)**, **Community HealthCorps** is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes health care for America's medically underserved, while developing tomorrow's health care workforce. The mission is to improve health care access and enhance workforce development through community health center based national service programs. In program year 2008-09 Community HealthCorps placed nearly 600 AmeriCorps members in 19 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico.

To learn more about the National Association of Community Health Centers visit: www.nachc.com

To learn more about the Community HealthCorps and find out where Community HealthCorps programs are located visit: www.communityhealthcorps.org

To learn more about AmeriCorps visit: www.nationalservice.gov

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Cover Picture Acknowledgements: (source, flickr) Top, Left to Right

1. Community HealthCorps Members - Waco, TX: Back row: Ashley Brown, CraShanta Evans, Tami Gillum, Chelsea Ferguson, Sarah Wilcoxson, Wendy Ramos & Jennie Macias; and Front row: Nikki Wolf, Josie Baze & Dede Slaughter
2. Community HealthCorps VISTA - New York, NY: VISTA Members promoting Pediatric Reach Out and Read, posing with Lance Goller of the Children's Aid Society
3. Community HealthCorps Member - unknown
4. Community HealthCorps Member leading physical activity with children in East Boston, MA
5. Community HealthCorps Members - Louisiana: Left to right: Tessa Wheelock, Jordan Woody, & Danae Vachata preparing food for the G.U.M.B.O. Homeless Help Fair