



# Community HealthCorps

[www.communityhealthcorps.org](http://www.communityhealthcorps.org)



## *Promoting Health Care for America's Underserved Developing Tomorrow's Health Care Workforce*



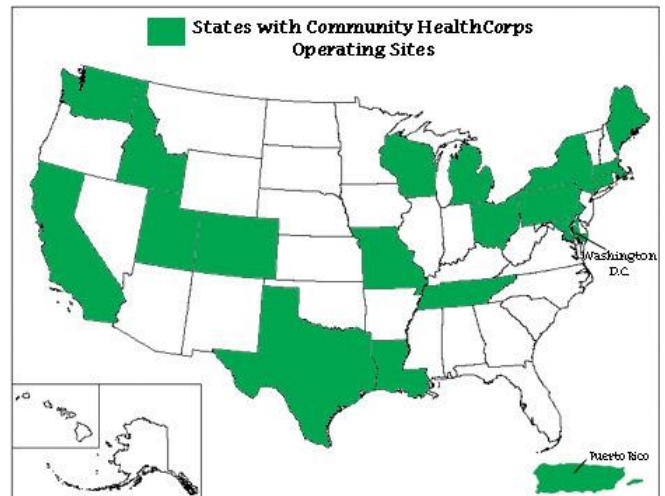
### What is Community HealthCorps?

Founded in 1995 by the National Association of Community Health Centers, Community HealthCorps is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes health care for America's underserved, while developing tomorrow's health care workforce. The mission is to improve health care access and enhance workforce development through community health center sponsored AmeriCorps including VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and related programs.

Overarching goals to address the needs of medically underserved and other vulnerable populations served by community health centers are as follows:

- Increase access to and utilization of primary and preventive health care.
- Improve the capacity of health centers to provide quality and preventive primary health care services.
- Foster collaborative partnerships that ensure continuity and sustainability of programs and services.
- Encourage Community HealthCorps Members to pursue further education and careers in community health through mentorship and experiential learning.
- Create a culture of civic engagement and volunteerism to strengthen preventive and primary health care.

Community HealthCorps program sponsors are primarily community health centers (CHCs) and primary care associations (PCAs) that host one or more teams of HealthCorps Members. Operating since 2001, Community HealthCorps\*VISTA is comprised of project stations (sponsors) - predominantly CHCs, PCAs and hospitals that typically host one or two VISTA Members. Most Members enroll for a full year of service, and many serve for two terms of service. Nearly 500 Community HealthCorps Members currently serve through 35 main health center sites (which include over 350 individual member placement sites) and three affiliate organizations in 18 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.



### Members Reflect and Work in Underserved Communities

Members serve rural and racially/culturally diverse urban communities and suburban, as well as migrant farm worker, homeless and public housing populations. Members are as racially, ethnically and economically diverse as the communities they serve. Educational attainment varies from high school and some college to graduate degrees. In addition, some Members are active or retired health and social service professionals. No matter their background, Members become part of a community's struggle for better health and economic independence.

## Members are Highly Trained



Members acquire new skills and knowledge that enhance their effectiveness and value to patients and other individuals through pre-service orientation, in-service and advanced trainings conducted by health center staff, national program staff, and others with subject matter expertise. VISTAs receive NACHC-organized, special training in grant proposal writing, other resource development and a variety of leadership skills using the LeadershipPlenty® curriculum.

## An Effective Model for Health Care Delivery and Capacity Building

Referred to by many names, employed and volunteer community health workers (CHWs) have various long-standing roles in the United States and worldwide, but all strive to positively impact the health and well-being of communities they serve. Research indicates that community health workers are particularly effective at:

- Increasing access to health services;
- Increasing knowledge about a variety of health issues;
- Facilitating behavior change; and
- Providing social support and culturally competent, cost-effective care for medically underserved populations.



## Key Program Accomplishments for 2010-11 (Data representing August 1, 2010 – October 17, 2011)

Community HealthCorps Members **assisted 592,875 medically underserved people** who lacked access and inadequately used preventive and primary health care services and programs. Of this group of people served:



- **62,263** were enrolled in health insurance plans, and other health services and programs;
- **143,162** case management services of referrals, assessments and facilitations provided; and,
- **112,654** people were provided with health education and supportive counseling.

Other areas of services member provided include health center outreach, interpretation/translation assistance, financial counseling/eligibility assistance, physical education, parenting education, transportation assistance, housing assistance, and many more. Community HealthCorps members also focused on a diverse group of health issues among the services described above (*refer to the chart on the right to see how many patients were served among the different health issues*).

Also over the course of the year, **members recruited and coordinated 8,442 non-AmeriCorps volunteers** (1,998 volunteered more than once) that served 35,026 hours to assist health centers and other community-based organizations with addressing health and human needs. Of these volunteers:

- 1,199 were **baby boomers** (born on or before 1945),
- 1,943 were **disadvantaged children/youth**; and,
- 1,459 were **college students**.

## Members focused on many different health issues during 2010-11:

