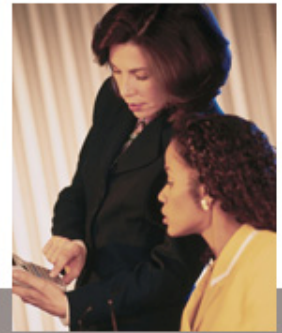




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  

---

Community Health Centers



America's Voice for Community Health Care



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
Community Health Centers

## *America's Voice for Community Health Care*

### **The NACHC Mission**

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) represents Community, Migrant, and Homeless Health Centers, as well as Public Housing Primary Care Programs and other community-based health centers.

Founded in 1970, NACHC is a nonprofit organization providing advocacy, education, training and technical assistance to health centers in support of their mission to provide quality health care to underserved populations.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
Community Health Centers

# Hepatitis Services in Community Health Centers

Linda Norris, Director of State-related  
Assistance and Special Projects,  
Director of the NACHC HCV Initiative

Melissa Callaham, Assistant Director of  
the NACHC HCV Initiative

September 30, 2008

Understanding  
Community Health Centers

# 5 Basic Characteristics of Health Centers

There are more than 1,200 community health centers organizations with 7,000 delivery sites providing vital primary care to 18 million Americans with limited financial resources

- They are located in high need areas.
- They provide comprehensive care, including physical, mental, dental and pharmaceutical services.
- Open to all residents, regardless of ability to pay, with sliding scale payments
- Directed by boards with majority consumer membership, health centers focus on meeting the basic health care needs of their individual communities.
- Held to strict performance, accountability standards for administrative, clinical and financial operations





# Community Health Center Benefits

- Community health centers provide substantial benefits to their communities:
  - They serve 20% of low-income, uninsured people.
  - They save the national health care system between \$9.9 billion and \$17.6 billion a year by helping patients avoid emergency rooms and making better use of preventive services.
  - They serve the homeless, residents of public housing, migrant farm workers and others with emergent and chronic health care needs.



# How Health Centers Make a Difference

- In providing health care to a population that couldn't otherwise afford it, community health centers provide a huge benefit to the greater American society:
  - Highly efficient and cost-effective care, which reduces or eliminates the need for more costly care such as emergency room visits and avoidable hospital stays.
  - Better preventive care, including screening, diagnosis and management of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, heart and lung disease, depression, cancer and HIV/AIDS.
  - Reduced infant mortality by as much as 40 percent in communities served by a health center, and also reduce rates of low birth weight.
  - Save the Medicaid program as much as 30 percent while still delivering high quality care to their low-income patients enrolled in Medicaid.



# Challenges Faced by Community Health Centers

- Fewer physicians are providing primary care services
  - 56 million Americans lack access to a doctor specifically because of local shortages of primary care physicians. Many of them actually have insurance.
- Growing number of uninsured
  - 47 million patients are currently uninsured
  - Projections put the number of uninsured Americans at 60 million by 2010

# ACCESS for All America



***Access for All America*** is a NACHC plan to address access issues by increasing the number of patients served from 18 million patients to 30 million patients by 2015.

<http://www.nachc.com/access-for-america.cfm>



# Hepatitis Services in Community Health Centers

NACHC HCV Initiative

*Keeping HCV Treatment at  
Home*



# Perceived Scope of Hep C Epidemic in Health Center Patient Populations

- Estimate 25% of HIV patients co-infected with HCV
- 60 to 80% of HCV infections stem from IV drug use
- Over 360,000 HIV/AIDS encounters at health centers nationwide in 2005
- Nearly 600,000 drug abuse visits at health centers nationwide in 2005



## NACHC HCV Initiative Goals

- Work with community health centers to successfully begin screening, evaluating and treating Hepatitis C patients
- Raise overall awareness of Hepatitis C within community health centers and their patient populations
- Build an HCV Community within community health centers



## NACHC HCV Initiative Overview

- Each participating community health center agreed to commit a clinical team of three to treating HCV.
- Participating clinicians attended a 2 day HCV educational symposium.
- Clinicians participated in a 1-2 preceptorship with a local HCV expert.
- NACHC HCV team provided continued support through operational assistance, additional education, HCV listserv and an educational newsletter.



## NACHC HCV Initiative Achievements

- 18 community health center sites are now successfully screening, evaluating and treating HCV
- Patients who did not previously have access to Hepatitis C Treatment are now being treated by primary care physicians.
  - Over 200 Patients have been treated
  - Rural California community health center initiated hepatitis C service line and eliminated need to travel 40+ miles to the city.
- Participating health centers are beginning to expand the program to additional sites



# Challenges to Treating Hepatitis C in Community Health Centers

- Given the difficult patient populations community health centers serve, many are not initially eligible for treatment
- General funding for operations of the HCV Initiative (lab costs, liver biopsy)
- High rates of clinician turnover



## Overcoming the Challenges

- Utilizing the integrated mental health and drug rehabilitation services within the community health centers increases patient eligibility rates and assists with monitoring patients on treatment.
- Structuring agreements with suppliers and utilizing existing community resources, such as support groups, can help reduce costs.
- Providing continued educational support for the clinicians and working with a team of physicians helps ensure the continuation of the service line.



# Engaging Your Local Community Health Center

- Work with both the clinicians and administration
- Contact community health center support organizations, such as State and Regional Primary Care Associations and NACHC
- You can locate the health centers in your state by using the following link:

<http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>



# Questions?

## Contact Information:

Linda Norris

Director of State-related Assistance and Special Projects;  
Director, NACHC HCV Initiative

Email: [lnorris@nachc.com](mailto:lnorris@nachc.com)

Phone: (301) 347-0400

Melissa Callaham

Program Assistant; Assistant Project Director, NACHC HCV  
Initiative

Email: [mcallaham@nachc.com](mailto:mcallaham@nachc.com)

Phone: (301) 347-0400