

ACCESS POINTS



MAY 2012

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In Need of a Doctor

Finding a doctor in rural areas of the Dakotas can be challenging for a patient and for a clinic. Many rural community health centers (CHCs) have been advertising multiple health care provider openings for extended periods of time in hopes of filling their vacancies.

The 61 CHC sites in the Dakotas served over 90,000 patients in 2010 with over 60% being uninsured or on Medicaid. On-going changes in health care including the implementation of the Affordable Care Act will likely lead to greater numbers of Medicaid patients seeking care by 2014.

Increased population in North Dakota due to the oil industry boom has impacted local access to and demand for high-quality health care services.

Northland Community Health Center, rural CHC organization in the oil area, is currently advertising for four positions to serve in clinic sites in McClusky, Rolette, Rolla, and Turtle Lake, ND.

Job listings for medical directors, physicians, dentists, and nurse practitioner or physician assistants are posted on multiple partner and health care job boards across the state and nation in efforts to fill positions.

"With incomes being very small in our rural towns and communities, this is a huge benefit for

our patient population to receive medical and dental care," commented Lori Feller, human resource specialist and recruiter for Horizon Health Care, Inc. (Horizon). "Patients would go without health care because they wouldn't be able to afford it."

CHCs provide access to affordable primary care for the vulnerable populations in high-need rural and urban areas across the Dakotas and nationwide.

Going without primary and preventive services often results in more expensive emergency room visits or treatment options to heal what was originally a minor health concern. Without primary care providers to offer affordable health care services, more and more patients turn to emergency rooms as their first and last resort, especially for dental care.

The Pew Center of the States' research found in 2009 over 830,000 emergency room visits were from preventable dental conditions and more than 16 million Medicaid-enrolled children received no dental care. The full report "A Costly Dental Destination: Hospital Care Means States Pay Dearly" can be found on-line at <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/dental>.

Improving access to primary care requires increasing the number of primary care providers willing to work in rural and high-need areas with provider shortages.

Feller noted the appeal of an organization with a mission can be a strong draw for providers and other staff working at a community health center.

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Current CHC Job Openings

Medical Director:

- Community Health Center of the Black Hills
- Northland Community Health Center

Dentist:

- Northland Community Health Center
- Horizon Health Care, Inc.

Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant:

- 2 positions at Northland Community Health Center

Physician:

- 2 positions at Horizon Health Care, Inc.
- Rural Health Care, Inc.

See job details: <http://www.communityhealthcare.net/KnowCHCs/CHCJobs/chcjobs.html>.



Doctor Continued

Dr. Savage (left) examines a patient at Family HealthCare Center's dental clinic. The new clinic site in downtown Fargo, ND, will have five dental operatories and employ a total of 18 new staff.

"There is satisfaction in knowing you can help no matter what position you hold in the clinic. Patients struggle with cost and transportation issues that limit their access to valuable primary care services. They are always grateful for what we offer at our community health centers."

Tuition reimbursement and loan repayment programs on the state and national level are an additional financial advantage for current or recent graduates interested in CHC sites.

Having a plan for meeting the demand for access to high-quality primary health care is a necessity for clinics trying to recruit.

Family HealthCare Center (FHC) began the process for recruiting 18 new staff months ago in prepa-

ration for a fall opening of their newly renovated clinic site in downtown Fargo, ND.

Horizon adapts to meet demands until their vacancies are filled. "We utilize locum agencies, attend as many recruitment fairs and adventures as possible, and try to use word of mouth," Feller explained.

Externship programs through dental schools in other states have proven to be a valuable recruitment tool for Horizon as well.

Partnerships between CHC sites and higher education programs provide exposure for the CHC model and valuable hands-on training for the students.

North Dakota State University pharmacy students do hands-on training and are a major factor for service sustainability for

the on-site CHC pharmacy operated by FHC.

This pharmacy was recently recognized for the staff's exceptional work in serving eligible patients.

Similarly, Falls Community Health takes advantage of the medical school in Sioux Falls, SD, and residents are an integral part of clinic operations.

"I feel that since we contract with a Family Practice Residency Program, it is very much a teaching facility," commented Judy Kendall, clinical services manager at Falls. "We stay current on national trends and practices; we have a dental clinic; and we work very diligently to measure outcomes and staff satisfaction."

Starting Young for Healthy Teeth

Kindergarten and first graders proudly display toothless grins as they retell the story of the first wiggly tooth to fall out and make way for the adult version underneath. Helping children learn proper oral health habits while they are young will keep them smiling for years to come.

The Pew Center on the States Children's Dental Campaign works to promote policies that will help millions of children maintain healthy teeth, get the care they need, and come to school ready to learn. As part of the campaign, Pew released an issue brief titled "A Costly Dental Destination: Hospital Care Means States Pay Dearly" which is available on-line at <http://www.pewcenteron-thestate.org/dental>.

The report highlights the need for states to save Medicaid dollars and other public funds by ensuring more children have access to basic, preventive services in a variety of settings including community health centers and school-based clinic sites.

Falls Community Health provides dental services at three Sioux Falls locations including two school-based sites in Hawthorne and Terry Redlin Elementary. A third school-based site is scheduled for completion at Hayward Elementary this fall.

"Many low-income working families cannot afford to take time off to



Lonna Jones provides primary and preventive dental services to patients at Falls Community Health's three dental clinic sites.

get their child to the dental clinic. The school-based clinic gives parents a way to get their child seen without losing valuable work time," explained Lonna Jones, clinic services manager and dental hygienist for Falls Community Health. "The services provided at the school also reduce the amount of time the children are out of class and provide a less threatening environment for dental care."

Pew research showed in 2009 more than 16 million Medicaid-enrolled children received no dental care and over 830,000 emergency room visits were for preventable dental health conditions. Emergency rooms have become the last and only resort

for many patients without access to primary and preventive dental care.

Jones added, "Dentistry is very expensive. Community health centers are a safety net and support existing dental providers by offering primary care services to vulnerable populations."

Left untreated, oral conditions can lead to major health complications and expensive treatment. The patient-centered, team approach used in the community health center model increases positive health outcomes and lowers health care costs.

Community health centers provide care at nine clinic sites and three school-based sites across the Dakotas.

Partner Spotlight: Delta Dental Smiles Program

The Dakota Smiles Program is a mobile dental program that provides oral health care for underserved patients via two, 40-foot-long trucks equipped with two full dental operatories.

"We provide access to affordable preventive and restorative care and oral health education," stated Connie Halverson, vice president of public benefit for Delta Dental of South Dakota.

In 2004 Delta Dental of South Dakota, through funding from the Delta Dental Philanthropic Fund, partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities to begin operating the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile to provide restorative and preventive dental care to underserved children across South Dakota.

The strong demand for the Care Mobile prompted the addition of a second truck - the Smile Mobile and both units operate under Delta Dental's Dakota Smiles Mobile Dental Program.

CHAD member Prairie Community Health became involved as one of the program's first partners in September 2004.

Halverson explained, "We help the health centers to fulfill their requirement to have a dental component to their operations. For the people we jointly serve, our partnership

helps provide dental care where there was none. This allows people access to care closer to home and requires fewer missed days of school and work."

Partners for the program include Delta Dental, the South Dakota Department of Health and the John T. Vucurevich Foundation. Delta Dental manages and operates the Smile Mobile and works with local community site partners to target those children most in need of care.

CHCs serve vulnerable populations in high-need areas and the Smile Mobile's services are a valuable asset for on-going dental services.

"Because we've been able to return to several of the community health cen-

ter sites, we've gotten to know many of the patients that we see on a regular basis. We've been able to track their oral health status and see how it has improved," Halverson commented.

"The importance that all of the health center staff now places on oral health has grown dramatically."

The Smile Mobile currently serves patients in 72 communities across South Dakota including these CHC site locations: Alcester, Bison, Eagle Butte, Faith, Fort Pierre, Gettysburg, Highmore, Huron, Isabel, LaPlant, Martin, McIntosh, Mission, Murdo, Onida, Pierre, Plankinton, Presho, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Takini, White River, and Woonsocket.



The Delta Dental Smile Mobile visits community health center sites across South Dakota.

Model for Access: Part 3

The focus of every community health center (CHC) is to provide access to high-quality primary health care services to everyone regardless of insurance coverage or financial status in areas of with provider shortages.

Effectively managing cashflow, budgets, program data, and delivery of services is an expectation of the Health Resources and Services Administration who approves grant funding.

The health center program has a total of 19 requirements the previous 12 were featured in the December¹ and February² issue of Access Points. Requirements 13 through 16 are detailed below.

13. Billing and Collections: **Just like every business, cash flow is essential for operations.**

Health center has systems in place to maximize collections and reimbursement for

costs related to providing health services, including written billing, credit, and collection policies and procedures (Section 330(k)(3)(F) and (G) of the PHS Act).

14. Budget: **There is a plan for spending based on income.**

Health center has developed a budget that reflects the costs of operations, expenses, and revenues (including the Federal grant) necessary to accomplish the service delivery plan, including the number of patients to be served (Section 330(k)(3)(D), Section 330(k)(3)(I)(i), and 45 CFR Part 74.25).

15. Program Data Reporting Systems: **Decisions are made based on facts.**

Health center has systems which accurately collect and organize data for program reporting and which support

management decision making (Section 330(k)(3)(I)(ii) of the PHS Act).

16. Scope of Project: **Services are offered when and where they are supposed to be.**

Health center maintains their funded scope of project (i.e., sites, services, service area, target population and providers), including any increases based on recent grant awards (45 CFR Part 74.25).

The August issue will feature the final three requirements which relate to the governing board of CHCs.

¹ <http://www.communityhealthcare.net/KnowCHCs/AccessPoints/2011/december2011.pdf>

² <http://www.communityhealthcare.net/KnowCHCs/AccessPoints/2012/february2012.pdf>

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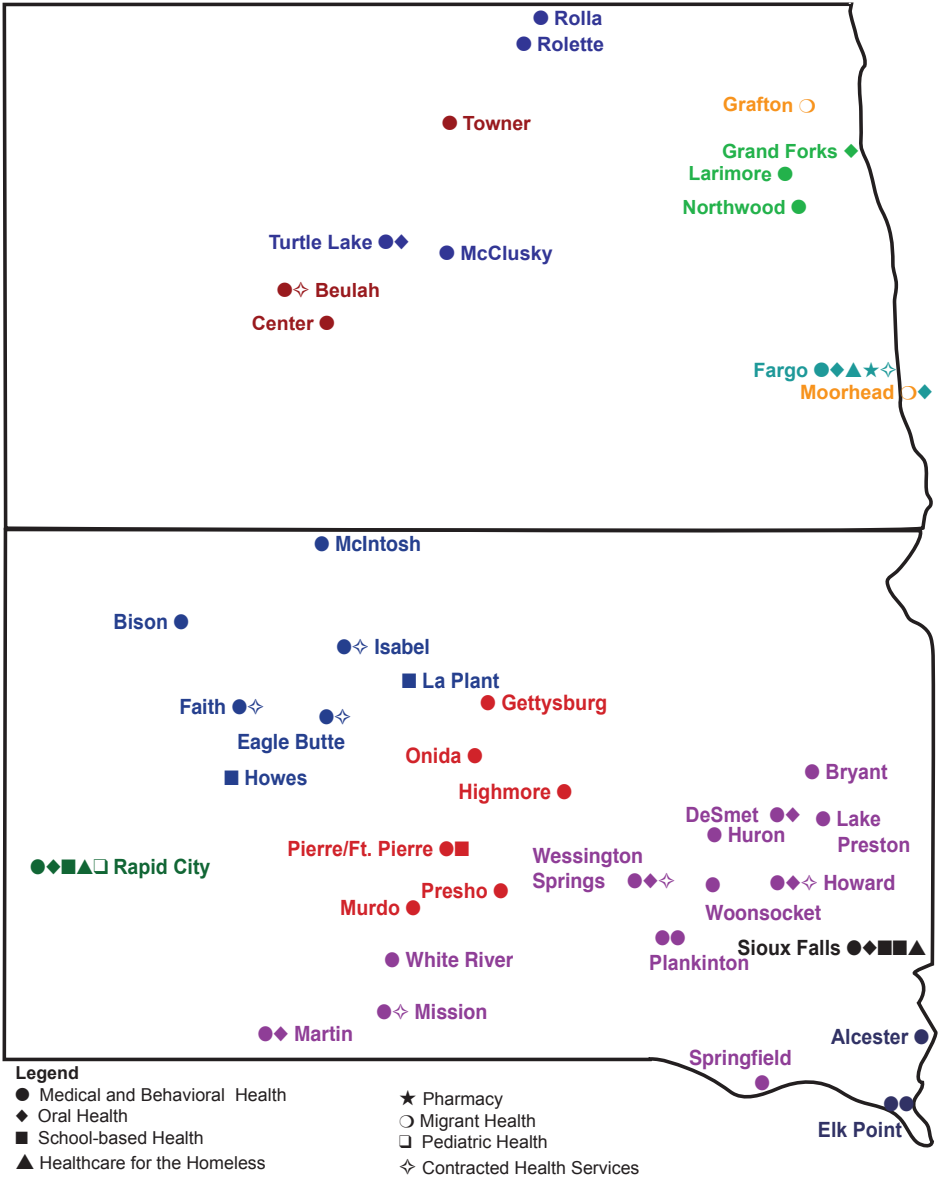
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All articles were written by Stacie Fredenburg, manager of communications and marketing, unless otherwise noted.

Additional information is available by contacting one of the CHAD offices listed to the right or through our web site at <http://www.communityhealthcare.net>.

CHAD Members



North Dakota

Coal Country Community Health Centers
 Family HealthCare Center
 Migrant Health Service, Inc.
 Northland Community Health Center
 Valley Community Health Centers

South Dakota

allPOINTS Health Services
 Community Health Center of the Black Hills
 Falls Community Health
 Horizon Health Care, Inc.
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