



Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network

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History

The Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network was created through legislation in 2005 to bring together Iowa's safety net providers to improve access and quality of care for Iowa's underserved and uninsured population. Annually, the Iowa Legislature reviews and appropriates funding for Network activities including expansion of pharmaceutical care, access to specialty care, initiatives related to medical homes for the underserved, and provider awards to support family planning agencies, free clinics, and rural health clinics. The Iowa Department of Public Health/ Bureau of Health Care Access is the administrator for the contract with the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association to carry out the activities of the Network.

Overview

Almost 700,000 Iowans under age 65, approximately 27% of the total population, do not have health insurance (Families USA, March 2009). Thousands more have insurance that only covers catastrophic illnesses and accidents. For these individuals and families, there are limited options available for affordable health care.

Many of these Iowans turn to Iowa's safety net providers for affordable primary and preventive health care. Through the unique partnership that formed the Collaborative Network, Iowa's health care safety net providers have united to identify common unmet needs to address cooperatively. Access to pharmaceuticals, specialty care referrals, and health professional recruitment were identified as the first three areas for collaboration. Medical home was most recently added as a priority issue area.

In the beginning, the Network was comprised of Community Health Centers, Free Clinics, and Rural Health Clinics, but the Network has grown tremendously in the past few years to include Family Planning Agencies, Local Boards of Health, and Maternal/Child Health Centers. Because the demand for these providers' services greatly outweighs their resources, there is an ongoing need to coordinate efforts. The recession and increases in unemployment have amplified the challenges these clinics face to remain fiscally solvent while providing care for a growing uninsured population.

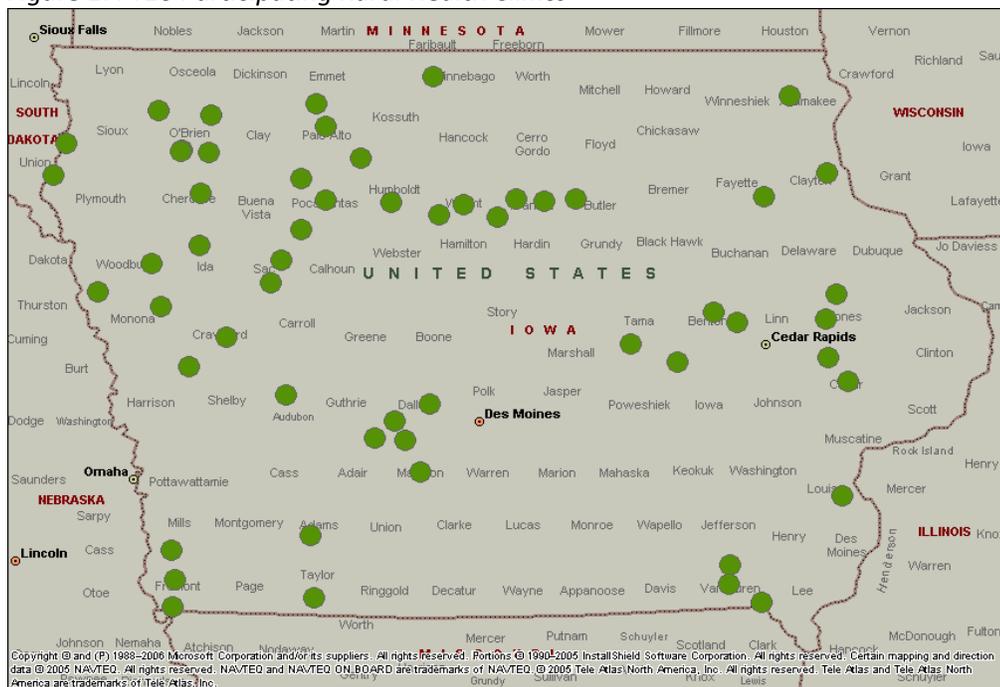
Focus on Rural Health Clinic Network Funding

Funding to support Rural Health Clinics, Free Clinics, and Family Planning Agencies is one component of the Network legislation and the contract with the Iowa Department of Public Health. The funding must be used to expand access to care for patients by supporting necessary infrastructure (e.g., information technology, financial resource development), statewide coordination, provider recruitment, and/or service delivery (e.g. access to pharmaceuticals, a referral system for ambulatory care, a referral system for specialty care), or to assist patients in determining an appropriate medical home.

In FY10, Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) were allocated \$117,473 for necessary infrastructure, statewide coordination, provider recruitment, service delivery, and provision of assistance to patients in determining an appropriate medical home. Sixty-eight of the 140 RHCs in Iowa applied for and received provider awards in the amount of \$1,580 to support the goals stated above. A map of the locations of the RHCs receiving the provider awards can be found in Figure 1. In order for RHCs to receive a direct provider award, they must complete an application for funding as well as agree to provide annual data to the Network, most of which is patient demographic data.

The remaining \$10,000 was allocated to support the development of a website for the Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics as well as increased communication with the RHCs about Network initiatives and opportunities.

Figure 1: FY10 Participating Rural Health Clinics



KEY PARTNERS

In addition to the safety net clinics identified above, many other organizations are key partners in the Network’s efforts. Following is a list of Network member organizations. The Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association coordinates and manages the Network.

- Child Health Specialty Clinics
- Community Health Centers
- Critical Access Hospitals
- Des Moines University

- Family Planning Agencies
- Free Clinics
- IowaCare organizations
- Iowa Academy of Family Practice
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Iowa Farm Bureau
- Iowa Foundation for Medical Care
- Iowa Medical Society
- Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
- Iowa Pharmacy Association
- Local Boards of Health
- Maternal/Child Health Centers
- Polk County Medical Society
- Principal Financial Group
- Project Export Center on Excellence on Health Disparities, University of Northern Iowa
- Rural Health Clinics
- State Board of Health
- The University of Iowa
- Wellmark Blue Cross & Blue Shield

Other Network Initiatives

In addition to the information about the Network and its work with Rural Health Clinics discussed above, following is a list of other Network initiatives, which are categorized into three priorities areas. The Network also monitors health care reform efforts at the state and national levels and will continue to be an information source for safety net providers for issues such as health information technology and meaningful use, medical home development, and improving access to and the quality of primary health care services. Specifically, the Network will be working to promote initiatives of the new Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center, managed by the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care, which is focused on providing technical assistance to safety net clinics about electronic medical record implementation and meaningful use.

Access to Pharmaceuticals

The Network partners with the Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation which administer several programs designed to increase access to affordable medications for the safety net population, those at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or under or uninsured. Additional information about all of these programs can be found at <http://www.iowapdc.org>.

- Drug Donation Repository Program
 - Allows medical facilities and pharmacies to re-dispense pharmaceuticals and supplies that would otherwise be destroyed
 - Donations come mainly from long-term care pharmacies
 - Inspection of donated supplies is completed by licensed pharmacists
- Medication Discount Card
 - Partnership with Iowa-based Pharmaceutical Benefit Manager (PBM), MedOne
- Iowa Medication Voucher Program
 - Funding from Iowa Attorney General's Office PBM settlement
 - Limited selection of generic medications focused on five disease states: diabetes, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, depression, and pregnancy/pre- and post-natal care
 - Pharmacy network made up of local, community-based pharmacies

- Outcomes from Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation Programs
 - IPDC provided 3,280 patients with free medications through the local repository program (July – December 2009)
 - During calendar year 2009, the retail value of the pharmaceuticals disseminated to participating clinics totaled \$1,140,613
 - From April – November 2009, 883 patients used the drug discount card and received an average savings of over 52% on the generic and brand pharmaceuticals available through the program
 - From September through December 2009, 441 prescriptions were filled at 18 pharmacies in 29 counties

Access to Specialty Care

In FY10, the Network provided four grants to local organizations to develop or build capacity for improving access to specialty care for safety net patients, including:

- Polk County Medical Society Volunteer Physician Referral Network
- Healthy Linn Care Volunteer Physician Referral Network
- University of Northern Iowa Volunteer Physician Referral Network (capacity-building)
- Primary Health Care, Inc. Integrated Primary Care/Behavioral Health Initiative

Medical Home Development

In FY10, four grants were also provided to two Local Boards of Health and two Maternal/Child Health centers to work on medical home development in their communities, which are listed below. The Network recently developed an issue brief focused on lessons learned from these projects, which is available at www.iowasafetynet.com.

- Local Boards of Health
 - Calhoun County
 - Dallas County
- Maternal/Child Health Centers
 - Siouxland Community Health Center – Sioux City
 - Visiting Nurse Association – Dubuque

FY10 Outcomes (July – December 2009)

Below are several key Network outcomes based on work completed from July – December 2009. Updates to these important outcomes will be available from the Network at the end of this fiscal year.

- Based on the FY10 Network appropriation and budget, 84% of the funding allocated will support direct services to safety net patients
- Over 6,700 patients have received direct services from the Network’s nine grantees (this does not include direct services provided to underserved patients through the provider awards to RHCs, FPAs, and FCs)
- \$502,534 in discounted care has been provided by one grantee, Siouxland Community Health Center

- Over \$635,500 in free care has been provided by three of the specialty care grantees, Linn County Project Access, Polk County Medical Society, and Primary Health Care, Inc.

FY09 Outcomes

Following are several key outcomes from FY09 based on an independent evaluation conducted by Rural Health Solutions.

- The Network supported 134 grantees totaling \$1,400,000 (87.5% of total Network appropriation)
- 64% of Rural Health Clinics, Free Clinics, Family Planning Agencies, and Community Health Centers provided data to the Network
- Network grantees directly served 6,230 patients
- Patients were mostly female (59%), ages 36 – 64
- Two grantees provided \$1,052,606 in free patient care – Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation and Linn County Project Access
- Competitive grantees made improvements in reporting outcomes to the Network

Questions About the Network

For more information on the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network, visit our website at www.iowasafetynet.com. We can also be contacted at info@iowasafetynet.com or 515-244-9610.