Health Care Safety Net

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www.iowasafetynet.com

Promoting & Protecting the Health of Iowans

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

If you watch a high-wire circus act closely, you'll notice that not only do the performers have a cable attached from the wire to their body, but there's also a safety net below. If the performer falls and the cable malfunctions, the safety net is there to protect the performer. That's a lot like the way the Health Care Safety Net works. It is intended to "catch" Iowans in danger of falling through the cracks in the health care system.

By focusing on community health centers, rural health clinics, small rural hospitals, and free clinics, IDPH Safety Net partners are able to reach over 400,000 Iowans who would otherwise lack access to health care because of where they live, cultural differences, or having little or no health insurance. Iowa has 14 federally qualified community health centers, 144 Certified Rural Health Clinics, 42 free clinics and 98 small rural hospitals across the state.

Good health should not be a tightrope walk for any Iowan. The Health Care Safety Net partners IDPH engages provide the assurance of access to care.

Did you know?

According to the 2010 Census, 40% of Iowans live in rural areas where the ***population to provider ratio*** is twice as high as in urban areas. The disparity in the number of providers makes it difficult to get health care quickly, especially in case of an emergency.

Why is the Health Care Safety Net important to promoting and protecting the health of Iowans?

- All Iowans need to be able to get health care within a reasonable time, using primary care services in a timely fashion to prevent more serious health consequences and reduce unnecessary emergency room visits.
- Safety Net services increase access to qualified health professionals and to quality health services for underserved and uninsured Iowans. Safety Net providers, such as community health centers and free clinics, provide needed comprehensive health care services to all Iowans, regardless of ability to pay.
- In the past, free clinics in Iowa were unable to recruit enough professionals to provide free services due to the lack of professional insurance coverage. The Volunteer Health Care Provider program (VHCPP) offers indemnification to volunteer health care providers serving Iowa's free clinics. VHCPP free clinics have served more than 40,000 Iowans to date.

Which Iowa Public Health Goals are we working to achieve?

Strengthen the public health infrastructure

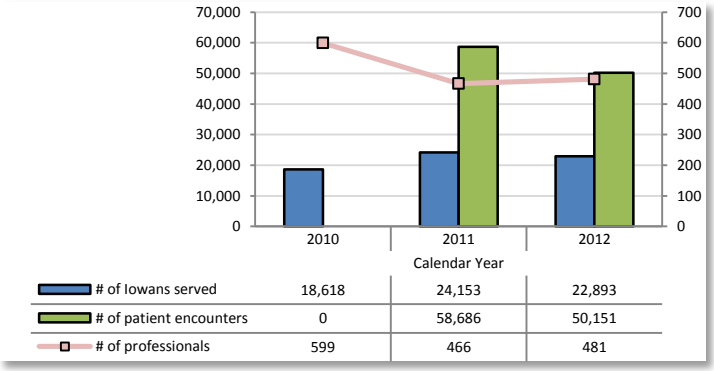
What do we do?

- Provide funding and contract management of the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network.
  - Training support for Sexual Assault Response Teams
  - 3 initiatives to expand access to specialty care.
  - 3 programs expanding access to pharmaceuticals.
  - Direct financial support to Iowa free clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and Rural Health Clinics.
  - 6 Safety Net Medical Home development projects.
- Recruit physician assistants and advanced registered nurse practitioners to participate in a postgraduate medical training program so they can provide services in Iowa's mental health shortage areas.
- Analyze geographic areas of Iowa eligible for CMS-certified Rural Health Clinics.
- Provide indemnification to health care professionals and free clinics through the Volunteer Health Care Provider program. Currently, more than 400 professionals are enrolled.
- Provide loan repayment opportunities to primary care providers working in designated underserved areas.
- Provide funding and contract management to Iowa's critical access and small hospitals for quality improvement.
- Collaborate with Iowa Primary Care Association to identify areas of Iowa in greatest need.
- Analyze and identify areas of Iowa for Health Professional Shortage Areas leading to eligibility for loan repayment and enhanced reimbursement from Medicare.

How do we measure our progress?

❶ **Number of providers enrolled in the Volunteer Health Care Provider Program (VHCPP).**

❷ **Number of Iowans served and encounters by VHCPP professionals.**

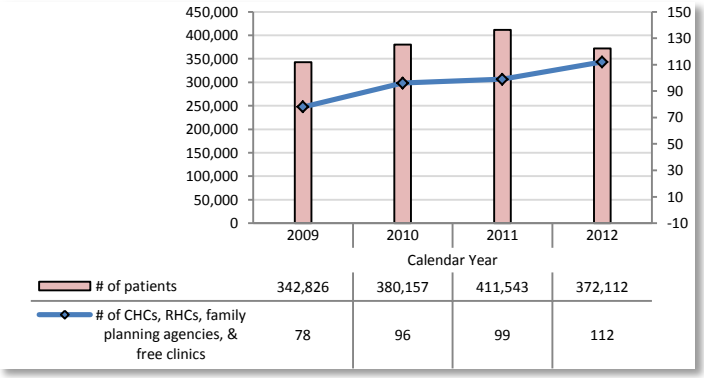


Data Source: Program database & clinic reports. Data are available annually. Number of patient encounters data is unavailable for 2010. VHCPP providers are not mandated to submit data therefor data is not collected from every safety net provider. The full 2012 Network data report is available at: http://iowapca.org/associations/12735/files/CY2012%20Data%20Report%20Final.pdf.

How are we doing? Twenty percent of visits to free clinics are for treatment of chronic illness, 32% are for urgent care, and the remaining visits are for basic preventive and curative care. The numbers have decreased slightly due to fewer free clinics (44 to 42 from 2011 to 2012) and fewer clinics receiving safety net funding and reporting data (42 to 40 from 2011 to 2012).

❸ **Number of clinics and agencies participating in the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network.**

❹ **Number of patients served by clinics and agencies participating in the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network.**



Data Source: Safety Net Provider Network database. Data are available annually.

How are we doing? During 2012, the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network included 14 Community Health Centers serving 181,781 patients; 52 Rural Health Clinics serving 116,199 patients; 6 Family Planning Agencies serving 51,239 patients; and 40 free clinics serving 22,893 patients. The Community Health Centers served slightly more patients than in 2011. Family planning numbers decreased substantially because in 2011, 14 family planning agencies received funding and reported numbers; while none received funding in 2012, 6 reported data. The free clinic numbers have decreased slightly due to fewer free clinics (44 to 42 from 2011 to 2012) and fewer clinics receiving safety net funding and reporting data (42 to 40 from 2011 to 2012).

What can Iowans do to help?

1. If you or someone you know needs health care services, go to http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/ to find the health center nearest you.
2. All Iowans can volunteer to help free clinics with grant-writing, fundraising, and any general tasks needed to run the clinic.
3. Health care professionals wanting to volunteer at free clinics can visit the VHCPP Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/OHDS/IowaHealthWorkforce.aspx?prog=IHW&pg=VHCPP.

Expenditures

General fund: K09-0971/0981/1001/1003/1013/1015

	State Fiscal Year 2012 Actual	State Fiscal Year 2013 Actual	State Fiscal Year 2014 Estimate
State funds	$1,106,651	$824,908	$2,203,999
Total funds	**$1,106,651**	**$824,908**	**$2,203,999**
FTEs	0.60	0.60	0.60

Note: Funding information is intended to provide an overview of funding related to the program area. It does not include all federal and state requirements and/or restrictions for the use of funds. Contact the program area for more detailed budget information.

Iowa Department of Public Health ◆ Division of Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention ◆ Health Care Safety Net

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Volunteer Health Care Provider Program

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