



Veterans and Community Health Centers

WHAT ARE HEALTH CENTERS?

Health Centers are **not-for-profit, community-directed health care providers serving low income and medically underserved communities**. For over 40 years, the national network of Health Centers has provided **high-quality, affordable primary and preventive care**, as well as dental, mental health and substance abuse, and pharmacy services. Also known as Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), they are located in areas where care is needed but scarce, and have as their mission to improve access to care for millions of Americans regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. Health Centers are community-owned businesses that reduce the need for expensive hospital-based and specialty care, and save billions of dollars for taxpayers. Currently, 1,200 Health Center organizations deliver care at over 8,500 locations in every state and territory (see attached map).

HOW DO HEALTH CENTERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Key to Health Centers' accomplishments is patient involvement in service delivery. Governing boards – the majority of which must be patients – oversee Health Center operations. Board members serve as community representatives and make decisions on services provided. Active patient involvement in Health Centers assures that they are responsive to local needs, and helps guarantee that Health Centers improve the quality of life for millions of patients by:

- ★ **Improving Access to Primary and Preventive Care.** Health Centers provide preventive services to vulnerable populations that would otherwise not have access to certain services, such as immunizations, health education, mammograms, pap smears, and other screenings.
- ★ **Providing Cost-Effective & High Quality of Care.** It is the mission of Health Centers to care for millions of Americans regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. Studies have found that the quality of care provided at Health Centers is equal to or greater than the quality of care provided elsewhere. Moreover, 99% of surveyed patients report that they were satisfied with the care they receive at Health Centers.
- ★ **Reducing Health Disparities.** The reduction of such disparities at Health Centers may be related to their culturally sensitive practices and community involvement – features that other primary care settings often lack.
- ★ **Effectively Managing Chronic Illness.** Health Centers meet or exceed nationally accepted practice standards for treatment of some chronic conditions. Health Centers are models for screening, diagnosing, and managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, depression, cancer, and HIV.
- ★ **Improving Birth Outcomes.** Communities served by Health Centers have infant mortality rates at least 10% lower than comparable communities not served by Health Centers.
- ★ **Creating Jobs and Stimulating Economic Growth.** In addition to health care savings, Health Centers also bring much needed economic benefits to the low income communities they serve. Currently, Health Centers employ close to 150,000 people – often in some of our country's most economically deprived communities.

WHAT TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST IN HEALTH CENTERS?

People working in Health Centers perform a myriad of tasks that provide a wide variety of entry-level, mid-level and senior management job opportunities. Examples of employment opportunities include:

- ★ **Management and Operations**—chief executive officers, operations officers, finance directors, personnel officers, information officers, administrative officers, facility managers, etc.
- ★ **Social and Community Services**—patient navigators, community health workers, patient educators, patient translators, etc.
- ★ **Administrative Support**—billing and collections staff, procurement and purchasing staff, data clerks, medical records staff, receptionist/front desk staff, scheduling clerks, security staff, building maintenance staff, etc.
- ★ **Clinical Services**—physicians, dentists, nurses, medical assistants, lab and x-ray technicians, pharmacists and pharmacy support staff, behavioral health staff, etc.



**VETERANS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS
WE ARE WHERE YOU ARE!**



To find the health center(s) nearest you, please visit:
<http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/Search HCC.aspx>.

