



United Health Foundation
A Legacy of Commitment To Community Health Centers

Mission

Guided by a passion to help people live healthier lives, United Health Foundation supports activities that expand access to health care services for those in challenging circumstances. The Foundation also provides helpful information to support decisions that lead to better health outcomes and partners with others to enhance the well being of communities. We carry out this mission principally through *United for Healthier Communities*, which include our Community Health Centers of Excellence and workforce development initiatives.



The United Health Foundation was established by UnitedHealth Group in 1999 as a not-for-profit, private foundation dedicated to improving health and health care.

Community Health Centers of Excellence

United Health Foundation helps community health centers in four of the poorest communities in the United States increase access to and, most importantly, improve the quality of health care. The *Community Health Centers of Excellence* initiative partners with established community clinics, working to address major health care concerns. To date, United Health Foundation has committed \$23 million to this initiative.

The Foundation selected centers based on the high prevalence of health problems linked to known racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities. The initiative emphasizes preventive care, coordination of care and the use of nationally-recognized standards of treatment, tailored to the unique needs of each community, in collaboration with local academic health centers who best understand these needs. Our partnerships include:

- **Congress Heights/Anacostia, Washington, D.C.** – Partnered with Unity Health Care, Inc., D.C.’s largest non-profit provider of primary care, to launch the Congress Heights center, which serves a predominantly low-income, African-American community. (Since 2003)
- **South Bronx, New York City** – Partnered with The Children’s Health Fund to expand care in the South Bronx, known for a high prevalence of asthma and diabetes. (Since 2004)
- **Overtown, Miami** – Partnered with the University of Miami School of Medicine to support the Jefferson Reaves, Sr. Health Center, which serves a large, multi-cultural, low-income population in the historic black neighborhood of Overtown. The grants enable the center to offer services, such as nutrition, diabetes education and mental health. (Since 2004)
- **New Orleans** – Partnered with EXCELth’s Daughters of Charity – St. Cecilia’s clinic, to provide health services to New Orleans’ Bywater neighborhood in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The clinic, along with other centers in New Orleans, fills the void left by the now defunct, public Charity Hospital, which remains closed since Katrina. (Opened in 2006)

“Right now this is the only clinic that I can afford. I make a decent income but it’s really not enough for me to afford health care... So right now the clinics are a big, positive thing for people who are still struggling and trying to make it.” Patient, St. Cecilia clinic, New Orleans

“It’s been a blessing for the community, to find a doctor who knows you by your name and who actually, genuinely cares. It’s the greatest thing, because you’re not just a number. And that’s hard to find.” Patient, South Bronx health center

Innovation

Our centers are solving problems in their communities through innovative programs.

- **In Overtown**, a doctor has developed a cooking competition with low-income, often Creole-speaking, African-American high school students to teach them healthy ways to cook ethnic meals. A bilingual nutritionist is also offering healthy eating habits to members of the Spanish community.
- **In New Orleans**, our funding makes possible positions like a nurse care manager, patient care coordinator and behavioral health consultant which may not be present in a traditional community clinic.
- **In the South Bronx**, homeless families find care at local shelters through a mobile medical unit, which not only provides care, but also keeps electronic medical records so that families who move from shelter to shelter can receive consistent care.
- **In Anacostia**, the Foundation's funding provides for a community health promoter to visit patients, some of whom are homebound, to check their blood pressure, blood sugar, and other vitals, to ensure the patients are taking their medication properly and to educate patients about health.

Impact

A study of the quality of care at these community health centers released by George Washington University Medical Center found that, based upon national standards, they provided care at or above that available in the private sector. The measures used in the evaluation included screening for cervical cancer and tobacco use; the quality of care furnished to persons with diabetes and asthma; the frequency of prenatal care HIV screening; and patient satisfaction levels.

Workforce Development

In order for community health centers to continue to meet the needs of the communities in which they operate, they require additional support and a robust pipeline of clinical and professional staff. Already the centers face significant challenges in recruiting and maintaining their workforce.

As part of its \$1.5 million ***Health Workforce Development*** initiative, the Foundation is undertaking two programs to enable students to pursue careers in Community Health Centers. First, \$1.125 million is dedicated in 2009 to the Foundation's ***Diverse Scholars program***, the goal of which is to increase the number of qualified, yet underrepresented, college graduates entering the health workforce. For the first time, this year qualifying students must demonstrate a commitment to working in underserved communities, including Community Health Centers. By cultivating health professionals from diverse, multicultural backgrounds, the Foundation hopes to help improve the quality of culturally-competent health care, close the health disparities gap and improve health outcomes long term.

In addition, the Foundation has committed \$100,000 to **A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health** to provide loan repayment for dentists practicing in Community Health Centers. Loan repayment can help to offset the high cost of a medical education and the comparatively low salaries offered by careers in the public health sector, addressing one of the barriers preventing more medical professionals from pursuing careers in Community Health Centers.

PEACE of Heart

Backed by a coalition of concerned partners, the Foundation's PEACE of Heart campaign moves beyond traditional health screening to raise awareness about the importance of heart health, including the need for better preventive care, by connecting people with local physicians and encouraging them to establish a "medical home" at a local community health center or elsewhere. PEACE of Heart stands for Partnership, Evaluation, Action, Community and Education. The Foundation has held heart health screenings and education events in cities across the U.S. including Chicago, Atlanta, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Miami, New York City, Philadelphia and Greensboro, N.C. The campaign also will include outreach to approximately 20,000 physicians in the six screening cities to encourage the use of clinical evidence in detecting, treating and preventing heart-related health issues.

#

For more information about the United Health Foundation, please visit www.unitedhealthfoundation.org.