

Optimizing the Impact of the National Health Service Corps

Client: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration

Overview

This evaluation helped the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) determine how to achieve the best possible outcomes given recent changes in program legislation that included an increase in funding, the ability to include additional provider types, and greater flexibility in dividing awards between scholarships and loan-repayment programs. The study focused on determining the factors related to positive NHSC outcomes, the optimal mix of awardees to achieve those outcomes, and recommendations on how NHSC could improve program performance.

The research involved the analyses of qualitative and quantitative data. Insight—

- Used administrative data to describe the effects NHSC clinicians have on communities and sites including the populations served, types of services provided, and specific contributions
- Used a nationally representative survey of site administrators and NHSC alumni to examine the relationship between clinician characteristics and their outcomes
- Conducted discussion groups with site administrators, NHSC ambassadors, NHSC clinicians, and alumni to examine the factors of clinicians, schools, and sites that are critical to NHSC's success



- Conducted simulations to determine how NHSC outcomes change as the funding allocation between the loan repayment and scholarship program changes

The final report helped NHSC to determine (1) whether the current mix of health professionals deployed was the most effective in meeting community needs and (2) what mix of scholarship and loan-repayment recipients would achieve NHSC program goals most effectively. The report also summarized the characteristics, attitudes, and experiences of NHSC clinicians related to clinician success and satisfaction with the program and provided recommendations to ensure the program meets its goals in the future.

Products

Final report, *Improving the Health of the Nation's Underserved: Future Directions of the National Health Service Corps* (January 2006)