

Community Health Association of Mountain/ Plains States

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Fall 2026 Quarterly Newsletter

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Virtual CHAMPS Awards Ceremony & Annual CHAMPS Board of Directors Meeting

Each year, CHAMPS recognizes and celebrates outstanding health centers, staff, and board members across Region VIII through its annual awards program. These awards honor individuals and organizations whose exceptional leadership, dedication, and contributions advance the health center mission and strengthen the health center community. The virtual ceremony recognizing 2026 CHAMPS Awardees will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2027, beginning at 11:00 AM MT | 12:00 PM CT. Join us to honor and learn more about:

- ★ A board member passionate about amplifying patient voices and advocating for community health centers at the state and national levels.
- ★ A chief executive officer whose steadfast leadership has strengthened health centers nationwide and shaped the future of community health.
- ★ A clinical leader admired for their thoughtful guidance, innovative approach, and unwavering commitment to the mission of community health.
- ★ A community outreach director who champions rural communities by building trusted relationships with policymakers and elevating local perspectives.
- ★ A health center that responded creatively and collaboratively to address the evolving needs of the community it serves.
- ★ An informatics director who combines technical excellence with compassionate leadership to empower teams and advance patient care.
- ★ An operations leader whose strategic vision transformed ideas into impactful services that expanded access to care.
- ★ A retired chief medical officer whose decades of leadership transformed healthcare delivery and left a lasting impact on the patients and communities they served.
- ★ A retired program director recognized for their tireless advocacy and dedication to improving the well-being of underserved communities.

The annual CHAMPS Board of Directors meeting will take place after the ceremony, beginning at 12:00 PM MT | 1:00 PM CT. If you are a board member and unable to attend, please arrange for proxy representation.

Questions about the 2026 CHAMPS Awards Ceremony? Visit the CHAMPS Awards webpage or contact the CHAMPS Workforce Development & Member Services Director.
Questions about the CHAMPS Board of Directors meeting? Contact the CHAMPS Executive Director.

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CHAMPS Member Grant Operating System Preferred Pricing Program

CHAMPS is pleased to offer a new Grant Operating System Preferred Pricing Program (PPP) for CHAMPS Organizational Members in partnership with Instrumentl, a full lifecycle grant operating system that enables nonprofits to secure, manage, and govern funding with greater efficiency and control. Region VIII health centers and Primary Care Associations (PCAs) that are current CHAMPS Organizational Members are eligible to register for discounted access to Instrumentl's intelligent grant operating system by Tuesday, December 15, 2026. Accounts will be activated on Friday, January 1, 2027.

Every CHAMPS Organizational Member will receive a minimum of 10% off Instrumentl's list price, and the discount will increase for all participating members as more organizations join, up to 25% off. Organizations signing up for multiple years will receive an added 5% discount per additional contracted year. To maximize participation and available discounts, this PPP is being offered in partnership with Northwest Regional Primary Care Association (NWRPCA) and the health centers and PCAs of Region X.

On November 17, CHAMPS, NWRPCA, and Instrumentl hosted a free virtual information session introducing attendees to Instrumentl's grant operating system. The session included a live demonstration and an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. A recording of the event is available to view for free on the Online Archived CHAMPS Distance Learning Events webpage.

For more information, visit the CHAMPS Member Preferred Pricing Programs webpage. Questions? Contact the CHAMPS Workforce Development & Member Services Director.

Is Your Health Center Using AI? Participate in Our Survey!

The CHAMPS Health Center AI Tools & Experiences Survey invites health centers to share their insights and perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in their organizations.

CHAMPS will summarize and share the findings to help health centers learn from one another and better understand how AI is being used across the health center community.

Now Available: 2025 Region VIII UDS Summary & Fact Sheet

Region VIII Health Centers Served Nearly 1,100,000 Patients in 2025

Each year, the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) collects data from Health Center Program awardees and Look-Alikes through the Uniform Data System (UDS). State and national figures for 2025 were released in early August 2026. CHAMPS compiles the awardee data from the Region VIII states to create a regional summarized history of UDS information that highlights trends over two, three, and five years, and offers detailed breakdowns of data by state, region, and the nation for the current year.

The 2025 Region VIII BPHC UDS Summary is now available, along with the two-page 2025 Region VIII Health Center Fact Sheet, which highlights key findings from the larger summary.

Visit the CHAMPS Region VIII BPHC UDS Summaries, Fact Sheets, and Infographics webpage to access current and past UDS-related resources for Region VIII.

Stay Up to Date on All Things Region VIII – Sign Up for CHAMPS Communications

Healthy Communities Communiqué Monthly JOB Email MPCN Minute Quarterly Newsletter Workforce Focus

2026 Fall Primary Care Conference Highlights

The 2026 CHAMPS/NWRPCA Fall Primary Care Conference, held October 24-27 in Salt Lake City, UT, brought together more than 300 attendees from across Region 18 (Regions VIII and X) and the nation, including members, partners, presenters, and exhibitors. Featuring a pre-conference workshop, two receptions, three plenaries, six roundtable events, 46 educational sessions in eight tracks, numerous side meetings, and a health center tour, the Fall Conference offered a multitude of opportunities for attendees to gain insights from a variety of colleagues from health centers, Primary Care Associations, and related organizations in Regions VIII and X and beyond.

The **Opening Plenary** on October 24 featured presentations by **Victoria Seaman**, Regional Director, Denver Region, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), **Dr. Luis Padilla**, Chief Health Officer at the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), and **Tonya Bowers**, Associate Administrator of the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC). Following the plenary, attendees connected with colleagues at the Welcome Reception.

During the **Lunch Plenary** on October 26, conference attendees heard from several speakers, including **Darci Granda**, Acting Regional Administrator of HRSA's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs Region VIII, who provided an overview of the agency's efforts to support health centers.

Representatives from the three new **National Technical Assistance Programs (NTAPs)** followed with introductions to their organizations and highlighted the programs and resources they will offer to assist health centers. The plenary concluded with **Amanda Pears Kelly**, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, and **Nick Widmyer**, NACHC's Director of Federal Affairs, providing insights on the current policy and healthcare landscape.

On the final day of the conference, the **Closing Plenary** featured three community health leaders who shared their perspectives on navigating uncertainty, embracing innovation, building partnerships, and finding opportunities amid change. The discussion featured **Dr. Pamela Valenza**, Chief Health Officer at Tepeyac Community Health Center; **Mike Baker**, Chief Executive Officer of Heritage Health; and **Amanda Laramie**, Chief Impact Officer of Coleman Associates.

That afternoon, several attendees toured Community Health Centers, Inc.'s Oquirrh View and Stephen D. Ratcliffe clinics and enjoyed some sightseeing around Salt Lake City along the way.

Overall, the 2026 CHAMPS/NWRPCA Fall Primary Care Conference was a great success. Thank you to all of the participants, presenters, and planning committee members for making this event so special!

To view additional highlights from the 2026 event, please visit the CHAMPS Annual Primary Care Conference webpage. Session recordings and handouts will be available to all 2026 conference registrants in the NWRPCA Learning Vault in the coming months.

The **2027 NWRPCA/CHAMPS Fall Primary Care Conference** will take place October 23-26 in Spokane, WA.

More information will be available on the CHAMPS Annual Primary Care Conference webpage in the spring of 2027.

Save the Dates: CHAMPS 2027 Supervisor/Manager Training

CHAMPS is excited to share the dates for the 2027 CORE Competencies for Health Center Supervisors and Managers Training, developed and conducted by Sogence Training and Consulting. This virtual course will take place over five Wednesday mornings, from April 7 through May 5, 2027. Health center managers and supervisors play a critical role in organizational success by overseeing daily operations, coaching and retaining employees, and consistently delivering results in an often fast-paced environment. This training offers intensive, hands-on skill-building that is designed for immediate application. It is ideal for both first-time managers with 18 months of experience or less as well as experienced managers looking to refresh and hone their skills. Registration is expected to open in January 2027.

Visit the CHAMPS Leadership Learning Opportunities webpage for more information.

Now Available: 2026 Region VIII Health Center Salary & Benefits Survey Report



Every two years, CHAMPS conducts a comprehensive **Salary, Benefits, Turnover, and Vacancy Survey** of health centers within Region VIII. This year, 49 Region VIII health centers, representing 79% of the region, submitted salary and benefits data for 10,470 employees and provided additional data on benefits, vacancies, productivity, and more.

CHAMPS is pleased to announce that the **2026 Region VIII Health Center Salary and Benefits Survey Report** is now available. The report offers valuable insights into health center compensation and benefits, including detailed salary data, budget breakdowns, and year-over-year comparisons. It also includes data on additional pay, benefits packages, anticipated salary increases, and leave options.

In October 2026, an electronic version of the report was made available to all CHAMPS Organizational Members and non-member survey participants. Printed copies of the report will be mailed to the same groups soon. Any nonprofits interested in ordering additional copies can download and complete the 2026 Region VIII Health Center Salary and Benefits Survey Report Order Form.

Additional reports addressing clinical staffing ratios, provider productivity expectations, and workforce metrics will also be released over the next several months. Electronic versions of all this year's published reports will be available in the Members Only section of the CHAMPS website *(Organizational Membership credentials required)*.

CHAMPS hosted two free related webinars this fall. The first, **Region VIII Health Center Compensation Data: Understanding and Utilizing Statistics from the 2026 CHAMPS Salary and Benefits Survey Report**, provided an overview of what is included in the report and highlighted findings related to compensation and benefits.

In November 2026, CHAMPS hosted the second related webinar, **Region VIII Health Center Workforce Data: Recruitment and Retention Highlights from the 2026 CHAMPS Salary Survey Project**. The presentation explored key health center workforce data and trends related to recruitment (e.g., vacancy rates, use of recruitment firms, etc.) and retention (e.g., tenure, average number of direct reports, turnover rates, etc.).

Recordings of both events are available to view for free on the Online Archived CHAMPS Distance Learning Events webpage.

Visit the CHAMPS Publications webpage for more information about the survey.
Questions? Contact the CHAMPS Workforce Development & Member Services Director.

Now Available: 2025 UDS Workforce Metrics Infographic

As part of the Bureau of Primary Health Care's (BPHC) annual Uniform Data System (UDS) reporting, Health Center Program awardees and Look-Alikes submit workforce data on health professions education and training (HP-ET) programs. In September 2026, CHAMPS published the 2025 UDS Workforce Metrics Infographic, which explores HP-ET efforts regionally and nationally.

In 2025, 87.7% of Region VIII health center awardees had HP-ET programs, compared with 85.2% of health centers nationwide. Among Region VIII organizations with HP-ET programs, 32.0% were classified as sponsor sites, meaning they host a comprehensive HP-ET program. The most commonly trained professions within each discipline were registered nurses (medical), dentists (dental), and clinical social workers (mental health and SUD). In Region VIII, 79.9% of individuals received pre-graduate training, while 14.3% completed post-graduate training.

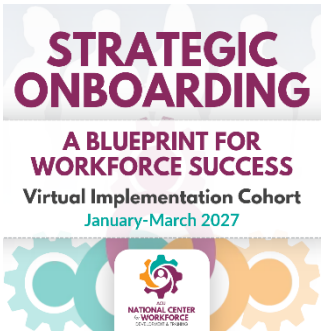
To access current and past UDS-related resources for Region VIII, visit the CHAMPS Region VIII BPHC UDS Summaries, Fact Sheets, and Infographics webpage.

***HP-ET Resource:* The Growing Provider Shortage Revisited — Why You Should Grow Your Own HP-ET Program**

This resource, developed by the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, highlights projected health center workforce needs and provides an overview of options for developing or sustaining HP-ET programs to address those needs.

Enhance Your Onboarding for Day-One Retention with ACU's Virtual Implementation Cohort

Submitted by Rick Brown, Association of Clinicians for the Underserved



Successful onboarding strategies are vital for supporting new hires, integrating them into organizational culture, and retaining them long-term. Organizations seeking to strengthen onboarding practices are invited to join the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved's (ACU) National Center for Workforce Development & Training virtual Implementation Cohort, *Strategic Onboarding: A Blueprint for Workforce Success*. Whether well established in onboarding processes or just starting out, this engaging virtual cohort training, taking place from January through March 2027, will help ensure that short-term onboarding yields long-term success with effective strategies and collaborative learning. Early Bird registration ends Friday, December 4, 2026, and ACU Members receive discounts.

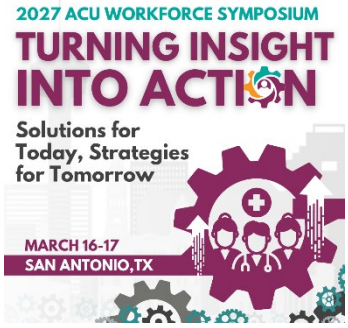
For more information and to register, visit ACU's event webpage.

Is your Region VIII health center or Primary Care Association (PCA) hiring?

Post your open positions on the free CHAMPS Job Opportunities Bank (JOB).
To post an opening or update a current position, please contact the CHAMPS Programs Coordinator, Health Center Workforce.

Learn Innovative Retention & Recruitment Strategies at ACU's 2027 Workforce Symposium

Submitted by Rick Brown, Association of Clinicians for the Underserved



It takes insight, innovation, and initiative to create a thriving healthcare workforce amidst ongoing challenges. The Association of Clinicians for the Underserved's (ACU) National Center for Workforce Development & Training invites you to explore the cutting-edge retention and recruitment strategies necessary to make that a reality at its 2027 Workforce Symposium, *Turning Insight Into Action: Solutions for Today, Strategies for Tomorrow*! Open to all involved in workforce initiatives at community health centers, Primary Care Associations, and beyond, ACU's Symposium will offer interactive workshops, peer discussion, networking, and more. Join ACU on March 16-17, 2027 for two days at the forefront of workforce innovation in the heart of San Antonio, TX.

To learn more and register, visit ACU's event webpage.

MOUNTAIN/PLAINS CLINICAL NETWORK (MPCN) NEWS

Providing professional, administrative, and educational support to all clinicians who practice in Community Health Centers in Region VIII to ensure the delivery of the highest possible quality of care. Learn more here.

CHAMPS MPCN Provider Survey

The Mountain/Plains Clinical Network (MPCN) is a program of CHAMPS that encompasses all healthcare providers working at Region VIII community health centers. Any provider who practices at a Region VIII health center is part of this network. CHAMPS and the MPCN Steering Committee have created a very brief survey to better understand how Region VIII providers engage in the health center mission. The goal is to create connectedness within the network, encourage participation within the health center movement, and enhance connections with CHAMPS. These insights may help to inform future trainings, website resources, and communications.

Providers are encouraged to take just a couple of minutes to complete any of the questions that apply to them. Those who complete the survey will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to receive a $35 gift card to Bookshop.org.

Please take a few minutes to complete the MPCN Provider Survey.

Southwestern Plains Hub for Mental Health Implementation Support

The Southwestern Plains Hub, part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Center for Mental Health Implementation Support (CMHIS), helps health care organizations and systems across the southwestern and plains states (including CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY) prepare for, implement, and sustain effective mental health services. The Southwestern Plains Hub provides implementation support, technical assistance, and learning opportunities focused on community engagement, needs assessment, implementation planning, measurement-based care, continuous quality improvement, program evaluation, strategic communications, and sustainment at no cost to health centers. By partnering with leaders, providers, and communities, it helps build capacity for long-term, meaningful improvements in mental health outcomes.

To learn more and connect with the team, visit the Southwestern Plains Hub website or email Southwesternplains@cmhisupport.org.

Save the Dates: CHAMPS Spanish Language Trainings

CHAMPS invites you to save the dates for five courses offered as part of the CHAMPS Spanish Language Trainings for Healthcare Providers, all to be held online throughout April 2027. Led by Ríos Associates, these intensive and conversational trainings consist of medical vocabulary, mock patient dialogues, cross-cultural discussions, and daily practice. Designed for clinicians and clinical support staff at Region VIII health centers, the courses offer an immersive experience ideal for those with limited time who need to immediately apply their new skills with Spanish-speaking patients.

Classes will be held online in the morning each day with extra practice offered each afternoon. Registration for all five courses will open in January 2027.

The traditional **Medical Spanish Language for Providers** course will take place over four half-days: Thursday, April 8; Friday, April 9; Thursday, April 15; and Friday, April 16, 2027. This course is intended for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other medical personnel. Beginner and intermediate skill levels will be offered, with separate virtual classrooms for each level.

Medical Spanish Language for Medical Assistants will be offered as a one-day course, to be held on Friday, April 23, 2027. This course is designed for medical assistants and other clinical support staff with beginner Spanish language skills. Medical assistants with advanced Spanish language skills are invited to attend the Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers course.

CHAMPS will also host three courses that will be held over two half-days each:

Spanish Language for Oral Health Providers will take place on Monday, April 5 and Tuesday, April 6, 2027. This course is designed for dentists, orthodontists, dental hygienists, and other clinical dental personnel with beginner Spanish language skills.

Spanish Language for Behavioral Health Providers will be offered on Monday, April 12 and Tuesday, April 13, 2027. This course is intended for psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, social workers, addiction counselors, and other behavioral health personnel with intermediate to advanced Spanish language skills. Behavioral health providers with beginner Spanish language skills are invited to attend the traditional four-day course.

Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers will take place on Monday, April 19 and Tuesday, April 20, 2027. This course is geared towards physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other clinical staff with advanced Spanish language skills.

For more details, visit the CHAMPS Spanish Language Trainings for Healthcare Providers webpage.

Nominate a Rising Star in Health Care

Submitted by Claire Seda, Migrant Clinicians Network

Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN), a nonprofit organization working to improve health care access and outcomes for underserved communities, is accepting nominations for the 7th Annual Kugel & Zuroweste Health Justice Award. This national award recognizes emerging health professionals whose work demonstrates an exceptional commitment to health justice and to the communities they serve. The selected recipient will receive a $1,000 cash prize and national recognition through MCN. Know someone whose work deserves to be recognized? Nominations are due Friday, January 8, 2027.

To learn more and submit a nomination, visit MCN's award webpage.

New Resources from Migrant Clinicians Network

Submitted by Claire Seda, Migrant Clinicians Network

Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN) recently developed new resources to help health care providers recognize and address pesticide exposure among children in agricultural communities. Pesticide Exposure Pathways and Pediatric Health in Agricultural Communities is an article in the Summer 2026 issue of MCN's clinical publication, *Streamline,* which examines exposure through pesticide drift, pesticide residues carried home from the fields, household exposure, food, and prenatal pathways. No-cost continuing nursing education or a certificate of completion is available for reading the article and completing a quiz. Clinicians can also access an archived webinar, From the Field to the Clinic: Recognizing Pesticide-Related Illness in Children, a bilingual webinar that reviews common exposure scenarios, signs and symptoms, clinical management, and practical resources for patient education and prevention among pediatric patients. These resources were developed through MCN's Environmental Protection Agency-funded work to strengthen the prevention, recognition, and management of pesticide-related illness.

Visit MCN's Resources webpage to view the full collection of available resources.

***Don't Miss:* CHAMPS Region VIII Maternal Health Summit Session Recordings**

In January 2026, CHAMPS hosted a free virtual Region VIII Maternal Health Summit that brought together health center and maternal health experts to share promising practices and evidence-based models that support improved maternal health outcomes.

Recordings and presentation handouts from the summit's five sessions are available to view for free on the Online Archived CHAMPS Distance Learning Events webpage through January 2027.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES NEWS

Assisting Region VIII health centers and Primary Care Associations in pursuing healthy communities by addressing health-related risk factors and building community partnerships.

New Voluntary Health Center Healthy Lifestyle Commitment

In October 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Administrator Tom Engels launched the Health Center Healthy Lifestyle Commitment, a voluntary initiative that gives health centers the opportunity to commit to prioritizing nutrition, prevention, and healthy living at the center of patient care.

Through this initiative, health centers can choose to sign the commitment and pledge to advance evidence-based best practices that promote healthier lifestyles and help prevent chronic disease.

Areas of focus include encouraging healthy eating and physical activity, connecting patients to community health activities and nutrition resources, strengthening the prevention workforce, and more. As part of the initiative, HHS and HRSA are encouraging participating health centers to display the new food pyramid as an educational resource to help begin conversations with patients about healthy eating.

Health centers are not required to sign the commitment, and choosing not to participate will not affect their eligibility for or receipt of HRSA funding.

To learn more, view HHS' press release.
For a collection of related resources, visit HRSA's Health Centers and Nutrition webpage.

Recordings Available: CHAMPS Healthy Communities Spotlight Series

CHAMPS hosted its 2026 Healthy Communities Spotlight Series throughout the summer. This free webinar series showcased innovative programs from Region VIII health centers that advance healthy communities. The sessions offered practical insights, highlighted promising practices, and shared lessons learned. Recordings and materials from all three sessions are available to view for free.

- **Session One –** Navigating the Aging Journey and Our Healthcare System
- **Session Two –** Integrating Psychiatry into Primary Care
- **Session Three –** The Coffee Break Project: Supporting Mental Health in Ranching and Agricultural Communities

For a collection of related resources, visit the Special Populations section of the CHAMPS website.

***Value-Based Care Resource:* What is Value-Based Care?**

Published by the American Medical Association, this article explores the fundamentals of value-based care models, physicians' roles in these arrangements, and best practices for successful implementation.

2027 Health Insurance Open Enrollment Begins

The Open Enrollment Period for 2027 Marketplace health coverage began on November 1, 2026, and will continue through January 15, 2027. Individuals in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming can use the Federally Facilitated Marketplace to enroll in coverage, while Colorado residents can use the State-Based Marketplace, Connect for Health Colorado. Consumers who experience certain qualifying life events may be able to obtain Marketplace coverage outsides of Open Enrollment through a Special Enrollment Period. Additionally, individuals can apply for free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) at any time throughout the year.

Federal Marketplace Dates (MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)
Federally Facilitated Marketplace

- **November 1:** Open Enrollment begins for health coverage for the next plan year.
- **December 15:** Last day to enroll or change plans for coverage to start January 1, 2027.
- **January 1:** Coverage starts for those who enrolled or changed plans by December 15, 2026 and paid their first premium.
- **January 15:** Open Enrollment ends – last day to enroll or change health plans.
- **February 1:** Coverage starts for those who enrolled or changed plans between December 16, 2026 and January 15, 2027, and paid their first premium.

State-Based Marketplace Dates (CO)
Connect for Health Colorado

Open Enrollment began on **November 1, 2026** and will end on **January 15, 2027**.

Financial assistance for marketplace premiums is available to a wide range of Coloradans, with the amount based on income, household size, and other eligibility criteria.

CHAMPS Health Insurance Outreach & Enrollment Resources

The CHAMPS website offers a range of online resources within its Cross-Disciplinary section, including dedicated webpages on health insurance outreach and enrollment. Explore the following for:

- ★ Health Insurance Literacy: Provides resources designed to improve understanding of health insurance coverage and how to use it effectively, including materials related to health and preventive care literacy, private health insurance, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- ★ Health Insurance Marketplaces: Offers an overview of Colorado's State-Based Marketplace, details about the Federally Facilitated Marketplace, general Marketplace information, and resources to help consumers understand their coverage options.
- ★ Outreach & Enrollment Tips & Tools: Features a variety of materials to strengthen outreach and enrollment efforts, including tools and guidance related to Marketplace and Medicaid enrollment, renewals, tax filing, and post-Open Enrollment strategies.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEWS

Medicaid Work Requirements Update from CMS

On November 13, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) announced an optional hold harmless period, extending through Wednesday, June 30, 2027, for states implementing the new Medicaid work requirements. This period is intended to give states additional time to modernize systems, improve processes, and streamline the experience for Medicaid applicants and beneficiaries.

During this period, states will continue assessing whether individuals meet the work requirements or qualify for an exemption. However, individuals will not be denied Medicaid eligibility or disenrolled solely for failing to meet the work requirements. States must notify CMS by Friday, December 11, 2026 if they intend to adopt the hold harmless period. States may also choose to end the period before Wednesday, June 30, 2027.

The hold harmless period applies only to the Medicaid work requirements. States must continue enforcing all other eligibility requirements and may deny coverage or disenroll individuals who no longer meet requirements related to income, immigration status, or other eligibility criteria.

Health centers should monitor communications from their state Medicaid agency and check the agency's Medicaid work requirements webpage to determine whether their state has elected to participate in the hold harmless period.

View CMS' press release for more information.

HHS Finalizes Changes to HIPAA Privacy Rule

On November 16, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights announced a Final Rule amending the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule to strengthen patient access to health information, support coordinated care, and reduce administrative burden. Key changes under the Final Rule include shortening the timeframe for responding to patient requests for medical records from 30 to 15 calendar days, revising fees for providing medical records, and allowing patients to direct electronic copies of their health information to designated individuals. The Final Rule was published in the Federal Register on November 19, 2026 and will take effect on Tuesday, January 19, 2027. Covered entities must comply by Monday, July 19, 2027.

For more information, view HHS' press release.

HRSA 2027 FTCA Deeming Application Clinic

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) invites health center staff to save the dates for its **2027 FTCA Deeming Application Clinic**. This two-day virtual event is designed to provide comprehensive guidance on completing and submitting the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) deeming application and required supporting documents. Participants will gain a detailed understanding of the application process, submission requirements, and best practices for ensuring timely and complete submissions. The clinic will also include general FTCA technical assistance sessions and opportunities for networking and discussion with other attendees and HRSA staff. This virtual event will take place on March 23-24, 2027, from 12:00-3:00 PM MT | 1:00-4:00 PM CT each day. Registration is expected to open soon.

Visit HRSA's FTCA Technical Assistance Resources webpage for a collection of related resources.

HRSA UDS Manual & Technical Assistance

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recently published the 2026 Uniform Data System (UDS) Manual, which provides detailed reporting instructions and data tables for 2026 UDS reporting.

All HRSA-supported health centers must submit a complete 2026 UDS report in HRSA's Electronic Handbooks (EHBs) by Monday, February 15, 2027.

HRSA is hosting a free series of webinars to support health centers in the reporting process. View the 2026 UDS Webinar Series flyer for the dates, times, topics, and registration links for the entire series.

New National Technical Assistance Programs

In July 2026, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced $24 million in funding through the 2026 National Technical Assistance Programs (NTAPs) opportunity, with awards made across three categories.

- **Clinical and Prevention Excellence:** Cicatelli Associates Inc.
- **Operational Excellence:** National Hub for Community Health Center Excellence, an initiative of the National PCA Hub
- **National Technical Assistance and Coordination Center:** National Association of Community Health Centers

Together, these three NTAPs will provide technical assistance to support existing and potential health centers, with a focus on strengthening the delivery of comprehensive, high-quality primary health care. Their work will assist efforts to improve chronic disease management and preventive services, enhance operational effectiveness, and address emerging public health priorities. The programs will also help health centers meet and exceed Health Center Program and supplemental funding requirements.

Visit the CHAMPS National Technical Assistance Programs webpage for further details.

***Financial Sustainability Resource:* The Board's Role in Financial Oversight**

This microlearning course, developed by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), explores the board's role in providing financial oversight of the health center, including monitoring and approving budgets, reviewing financial statements, and approving policy.

Upcoming Free Learning Opportunities from the Hub NTAP

Submitted by Natalie Jose, National Hub for Community Health Center Excellence

Join the National Hub for Community Health Center Excellence (Hub NTAP), a new Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) National Technical Assistance Program (NTAP) and initiative of the National PCA Hub, for several upcoming cost-free virtual events focused on health center operational success.

- ★ **Operational Strategies for Better Preventive and Chronic Care**
  Community of Practice | Tuesday, December 1
- ★ **Capital Projects Done Right**
  Webinar | Thursday, December 3
- ★ **Ready for Response: National Emergency Preparedness Leadership**
  Community of Practice | Thursday, December 3
- ★ **Operational Strategies for Pediatric Weight Assessment and Counseling**
  Virtual Series | First Session: Monday, December 7
- ★ **Access to Care: Diagnosing Access Challenges and Creating Interventions That Work**
  Webinar | Wednesday, December 9
- ★ **Team-Based Care and Behavioral Health Integration**
  Virtual Series | First Session: Monday, December 14
- ★ **Pharmacy Management Peer Exchange**
  Virtual Series | First Session: Tuesday, December 15

Visit the Hub NTAP's Upcoming Events webpage for more information and to register.
Follow the Hub NTAP on LinkedIn and join the mailing list for news and updates.

***Emergency Preparedness Resource:* Reliable & Free-to-Use Disaster Alert Tools**

Created by the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, this document provides a collection of free online tools and downloadable mobile applications to support emergency monitoring and preparedness.

Help Shape the National Picture of Medical-Legal Partnerships

Submitted by Reha Manikandasamy, National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership (NCMLP) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health invite medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) across the country to participate in the **2026 National Medical-Legal Partnership Survey**. Led by MLP researcher Michelle Bedoya, JD, LLM (PhD candidate), the 2026 survey aims to build a clearer understanding of how MLPs operate, the people and resources supporting their work, and the diverse experiences of partnerships nationwide. Findings will help inform future program planning and conversations about the field's needs. The core survey takes approximately one hour to complete, and respondents can save their progress and return later. MLPs can request a customized survey link. Incentives are available for eligible respondents while funds remain. The survey closes Friday, December 18, 2026. Help ensure that the unique experiences of MLPs involving health centers, Primary Care Associations, and Health Center Controlled Networks are represented.

To learn more and participate, visit NCMLP's webpage.
Questions? Email Michelle Bedoya for technical assistance.

Region VIII in the News

- ★ Carbon Medical Service Association, Inc.: Halloween party raises funds for Carbon Medical Peer Support *(ETV News, November 2026)*
- ★ Peak Vista Community Health Centers: No appointment needed at new Colorado Springs pediatric clinic *(KKTV, October 2026)*
- ★ RiverStone Health: Billings WIC families get more healthy food choices starting this month *(NonStop Local News Billings, October 2026)*
- ★ Two Rivers Community Health: A new health center plans to open in Moab in January *(Moab Sun News, October 2026)*
- ★ Uncompahgre Medical Center: Uncompahgre Medical Center expands access to addiction treatment *(The Norwood Post, November 2026)*

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2026

BPHC Program Updates
December 10

Virtual CCHN Triannual Meeting
December 10

January 2027

Virtual CHAMPS Awards Ceremony
January 14

Virtual CHAMPS Annual Board of Directors Meeting
January 14

February 2027

NACHC Policy & Issues Forum
February 8-11; Washington, D.C.

Please contact Haleigh@CHAMPSonline.org
with questions or comments,
to sign up to receive the newsletter,
change your subscription email,
or submit articles.

Looking Ahead

NCFH Agricultural Worker Health Symposium
March 9-11, 2027; San Antonio, TX

2027 ACU Workforce Symposium
March 16-17, 2027; San Antonio, TX

HRSA 2027 FTCA Deeming Application Clinic
March 23-24, 2027

CHAMPS Two-Day Spanish Language for Oral Health Providers
April 5-6, 2027

CHAMPS CORE Competencies for Health Center Supervisors & Managers Training
April 7, 14, 21, 28 & May 5, 2027

CHAMPS Four-Day Medical Spanish Language for Providers
April 8-9 & 15-16, 2027

CHAMPS Two-Day Spanish Language for Behavioral Health Providers
April 12-13, 2027

CHAMPS Two-Day Medical Spanish Language for Advanced Speakers
April 19-20, 2027

CHAMPS One-Day Medical Spanish Language for Medical Assistants
April 23, 2027

Newsletter Contributors:
Jen Anderson, Rick Brown, Haleigh Donahue,
Julie Hulstein, Natalie Jose, Reha Manikandasamy, Andrea Martin, Claire Seda

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