

# Enabling Services: Gateways to Better Care

Health and health behaviors are influenced by more than just genetics and clinical care. They are largely influenced by social, economic, and environmental factors. While many providers view such factors as outside their control, Community, Migrant, Homeless, and Public Housing Health Centers—non-profit, community-directed healthcare providers serving low-income and medically underserved populations—have always taken a broader view of health and provide comprehensive services to care for the clinical and non-clinical needs of their patients and their communities. A unique quality of the federal health center program is the emphasis placed on both primary care services and enabling services—non-clinical services that help remove geographic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic barriers to care, such as transportation, interpretation, case management, and health education, among others.

To care for the diverse non-clinical needs of their patients, health centers have increased their enabling services staff by **40%** since 2010.<sup>1</sup>

Health Centers Employed **17,250** Enabling Services Staff in 2014<sup>1</sup>

## Eligibility Assistance

4,587 FTEs\*

115% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)



## Case Management

5,703 FTEs

40% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)



## Outreach

2,655 FTEs

28% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)

## Health Education

2,382 FTEs

13% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)



## Interpretation

(excluding bilingual staff)

929 FTEs

16% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)



## Transportation

539 FTEs

23% Increase  
(2010 - 2014)

\* FTEs stands for full time equivalent staff.



# Why Are Enabling Services Important?

The push towards value-based payment will increasingly hold providers accountable for reaching quality targets and lowering costs of care. Yet, to ultimately improve outcomes and reduce spending, it is important to treat the whole person, not merely the medical manifestations. Enabling services as part of a care delivery model can help achieve population health goals by ensuring that anyone, regardless of his/her background or socioeconomic situation, can have access to quality care.

**Research has demonstrated that enabling services lead to positive impacts on outcomes, costs, access, and patient satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>**

Health centers recognized as surpassing national quality benchmarks set by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) or ranked in the top 30% of all health centers nationally on these benchmarks have twice as many patients receiving enabling services and employ more enabling services staff than all other health centers.<sup>3</sup>

Research also documents the importance of specific enabling services provided by health centers, including



## Interpretation

Interpretation services are associated with reduced emergency room visits, thereby reducing costs, and increased satisfaction among Spanish-speaking patients.<sup>4</sup>



## Health Education

Health education improves health knowledge and behaviors<sup>5</sup> and also improves diabetes outcomes among African-American and Latino patients<sup>6</sup> and cardiovascular disease outcomes for high-risk Latino patients.<sup>7</sup>



## Case Management

Case management services removes cultural barriers to care and improves outcomes and treatment satisfaction for patients with diabetes.<sup>8</sup>

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