Primary Care Workforce for the future of Healthcare

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NC AHEC Program
The Mission of NC AHEC

The mission of the North Carolina AHEC Program is to meet the state’s health and health workforce needs by providing educational programs in partnership with academic institutions, health care agencies, and other organizations committed to improving the health of the people of North Carolina.
NC AHEC’s Core Services

1. **Community-Based Student Training.**
   - Each year over 10,000 student months of student training

2. **Primary Care Residency Programs.**
   - Over 2,000 physicians in NC graduated from an AHEC residency program.

3. **Continuing Education.**
   - Serve nearly 200,000 health professionals annually

4. **Library Services.**
   - Last year over 7,000 individual health professionals used the AHEC Digital Library

5. **Health Careers and Workforce Diversity.**
   - Over 35,000 young people were served by health careers programs in 2009
Supporting Practice Transformation

• Started in 2006 with a RWJ Grant through the American Board of Medical Specialties to focus on improving Diabetes and/or Asthma care in primary care practices.

Questions:
• Do we know the changes needed to make an improvement in health outcomes?
• Would private practices allow us to come into their practices and guide change?
• What is the skill set required of this person who will go into these practices to guide change?
Expansion:

• In 2008 increased our funding to support primary care across the state. Hired and trained 7 additional facilitators to cover state.

• In 2009 became the Regional Extension Center for Health Information Technology. Expanded our services and hired and trained 41 additional facilitators and support staff.
Services Provided by AHEC’s Practice Support Program

- **Paper Charts**
  - Assess systems and ready for an EHR

- **Electronic Health Records**
  - Select an EHR and automate physician practice

- **Meaningful use**
  - Achieve the federal standards for Meaningful use of the EHR

- **Improved Clinical Outcomes**
  - Learn how to use proven methods to improve care

- **Patient Centered Medical Home**
  - Transform delivery systems to function as a medical home
Currently: Nine Teams of Experts to Serve NC

Working with 1138 primary care practices
Helping over 4,000 providers
Serving over 4 million patients
Key Considerations for future workforce:

- **Practice Facilitators or coaches:**
  - Need to be able to think on their feet
  - Skilled in change management, QI methodologies, technical training in data and EHRs and all incentive programs. (PCMH, PQRS, MU, BQPP, ACO, etc)
  - Communications skills and organizational skills are paramount!
  - On the job training is requirement and continuous
  - No educational curriculum meets all of these needs
Skills Needed in the Facilitators:

- At least one person on the team needs to have some clinical experience (nurse or other training).
- At least one person on the team needs to have experience with pulling data from EHR systems.
- All team members need to be “process thinkers”.
- All team members need to understand and be able to speak clearly about all parts of the process of transformation and QI techniques and change management principles.
Considerations for needed workforce in practices:

• Nurses with ambulatory care training
• Highly skilled office assistants
• Data managers/aggregators
• Report writers and other IT staff to work on data harvesting
• Staff that are trained in the reporting requirements of the various incentive and disincentive programs.
Questions?

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