

Quarter/Dates of Activity: Q2 October 2007 through December 2007
Seed Grant: San Joaquin Valley Health Enterprise Zone Project
Grantee Organization: Central Valley Health Policy Institute, California State University, Fresno
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Description of this Quarter's Activity and Impact on Partnership Goals and Objectives

This Quarter's Activities have continued to focus on gathering information from a variety of sources that were both strategic and incidental to other health policy activities. Based on a recommendation from a task force member, some of the work has focused on understanding what resources are available to address health workforce shortages, have they been effective and, if not, why not. Understanding what is or isn't available, is critical to framing the problem and substantiating the request for resources. Contacts have been made to a variety of state agencies and at all levels of government, although some interviews are pending. Thanks to Rollie Smith we have made a connection with Thomas Lorentzen, Region IX Director for Health and Human Services, and hope to meet with him in the near future to discuss the concept of expanding the Federally Qualified Health Clinic Model to specialty care.

We are following legislative efforts at the state and federal level. Assemblymember Mervin Dymally has authored a two year bill (AB 1134) for Medical Enterprise Zone tax credits which will be heard in the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee on January 14. The bill is sponsored by the California Association of Family Practitioners. Also, the Health Officers Association of California is sponsoring a bill by Assemblymember DeSaulnier to designate Public Health Districts for the purpose of assessing a public health sales tax. This bill will also be heard in the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee on January 14. . Assemblymember Ed Hernandez is also been identified as a possible champion of HEZ legislation. CJ Strategies (a federal legislative advocate group) from Washington D.C., is exploring federal Specialty Physician Shortage Legislation based on a HEZ concept on behalf of Kaweah Delta Health Care District.

We have also contacted a number of providers and physician recruiters. Sandi Palumbo, Executive Director for both the Fresno-Madera Medical Society and Kern County Medical Society (as well as a task-force member) has offered to host a regional meeting of physicians. This meeting will provide an opportunity to conduct an informal "focus group" to identify incentives that are most attractive to both primary care and specialist physicians. We are also scheduling a meeting with Family Practice residents through Dr. Alex Sherriffs, UCSF-Fresno Faculty in Family and Community Medicine.

Lynne Ashbeck, Regional Vice President of the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California (and a task force member) is planning to host a meeting of regional hospital councils and providing an opportunity to present the HEZ concept and receive feedback.

Contacts have been made to the business development sector through the Economic Development workgroup and the Central California Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC). A presentation has been scheduled to the CCEDC Board on January 18. A meeting with Craig Scharon, CEO of Central Valley Business Incubator, is pending. Additionally a relatively new program through the Fresno Economic Development Corporation, BEAR (Business Expansion, Attraction and Retention) has identified healthcare as a sector of interest and an appointment with the Director, Emerson Estrada, is pending

Finally, the K-12 workgroup was approached regarding the concept of a "Health High School", a model that has been implemented in the Sacramento area.

The San Joaquin Valley Health Enterprise Zone Project is responsive to the Health and Human Services Work Group Goal 2: "Enhance access to appropriate health care services and improved public health management" and its activities support Objective A under Goal 2: "Provide incentives for difficult to recruit health and medical professionals." This quarter's activities have continued to research resources and strategies over multiple sectors so that the proposed model(s) is aligned with available resources, recognized need and political will.

We have also completed the calculation of population-based rates of identified physician specialists by county, region and state as requested by the task force.

Planned Activities for next 3-6 months

1. Complete interviews with targeted experts including providers, recruiters, business consultants, economic development staff, state agency staff, legislative staff as indicated in the scope of work
2. Complete formal write-up of interviews
3. Develop concept paper based on interviews
4. Submit concept paper to Public Health Partnership, partnership board, task force members and other interested stakeholders for review and comment
5. Incorporate suggestions and comments into the concept paper
6. Schedule Task Force Meeting Two for late March to report summarized findings and select communities for the feasibility assessment

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback

Challenges: It remains challenging to reach out beyond Fresno County to providers, local government and others having experiences and expertise that could add to and strengthen the development of the HEZ concept.

Problems/Bottlenecks: The primary difficulty with this project is time. We have been slowed down on scheduling interviews due to impacted schedules and the holidays. Connecting and scheduling meetings has taken longer than anticipated so we have not completed all activities scheduled for Quarter 2.

Feedback: Feedback from state legislative contacts has not been favorable in terms of state funding for a new designation due to the looming budget crises. In general, everyone contacted has been cooperative in providing their time and wisdom through interviews and data requests.

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly.

This quarter's outreach has primarily consisted of chance meetings at state and national conferences where the project was discussed and connections made with potential sources of expertise not originally identified. For example, there was an opportunity to talk with Dr. David Carlisle, Director of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development at an informal "chat session". There has also been connections with both health and non-health business individuals where resources and approaches have been discussed, providing further insight into the Health Enterprise Zone concept, including a "community responsibility" approach.