

## **Teaching Health Centers**

In an effort to increase the size of the primary care workforce and encourage training in non-hospital settings, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) established a Title VII grant program to teaching health centers (THCs) in 2010 to establish new or expand existing accredited primary care residency programs.

### **GRANTS TO DEVELOP TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS**

The law authorized \$25 million for FY2010, \$50 million in FYs 2011 and 2012, and such sums as may be necessary in subsequent years. Of the total funding, up to \$5 million per year may be spent on “technical assistance program grants” a term that is not defined in the statute and will have to be explained through regulation. Beginning in 2011, teaching health centers became eligible for Medicare direct medical education (DME) and indirect medical education (IME) funds.

#### **What is a teaching health center?**

Teaching health centers are defined as community based, ambulatory patient care centers that operate a primary care residency program. They can include federally qualified health centers, community mental health centers, rural health clinics, and health centers operated by the Indian Health Service.

#### **What residency programs qualify for the grant?**

Residency programs that qualify are: family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine-pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, general and pediatric dentistry, and geriatrics.

#### **How much funding can each teaching health center apply for?**

Each THC may apply for awards up to \$500,000 a year for up to 3 years.

#### **What can award funds be spent on?**

Funds must be spent to cover the costs of establishing or expanding a primary care residency program including expenses related to curriculum development, recruitment, training, and retention of residents and faculty, accreditation, and faculty salaries during the development phase. Funds can also be used to cover technical assistance provided by entities including area health education centers (AHECs). The AHEC program is dedicated to addressing the shortage of primary care services, common to certain communities, by creating collaboration and partnerships between academic health centers and these communities. The Secretary of Health & Human Services is instructed to give preference to applicants that have an existing affiliation agreement with an AHEC.

#### **How many grants have been awarded?**

Eleven Teaching Health Centers received funding to train 50 additional resident full-time equivalents beginning in July 2011. An additional 11 Teaching Health Centers received funding in 2012. In 2013, \$12 million was awarded to 32 teaching health centers across the country. The grant application cycle for 2014 has not been announced.

**Additional Resources**

- *Eligibility requirements, timeframes, costs and payments.*

<http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/teachinghealthcenters/>