

PRIMO

**Primary Care Resource  
Initiative for Missouri  
Annual Report 2015**



In 1993, Missouri enacted legislation to address several health care issues in the state. A major component of the legislation, section 191.411, requires the development of a plan to make health care more available and accessible to all Missouri residents. In response, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services established the Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri. Known as PRIMO, the program is designed to increase the number of primary care medical and dental professionals and to improve health care delivery systems in areas of need within the state.



# PRIMO 4 Components

- Health Care Delivery System Development
- Recruitment/Placement of Health Professionals
- Student Loans
- Health Professional Loan Repayment

### PRIMO SFY14 Budget

Health Care Delivery	\$443,502.00
Recruitment/Replacement	\$110,000.00
Student Loans	\$500,000.00
Loan Repayment	\$160,000.00

\* PRIMO student loans were made available through money donated by the Missouri Hospital Association and money that was repaid to the program.



# Health Care Delivery System Development

PRIMO seeks to develop systems of integrated and coordinated health care services throughout Missouri to improve the delivery of health care by using state funding to expand or create new community-based medical, dental or behavioral healthcare services.

PRIMO provides funding opportunities to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), FQHC Look-a-Likes and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) to increase access to healthcare services. Missouri's FQHCs are local, non-profit, community-based health care centers serving low-income and medically-underserved rural and urban communities. RHCs are required to provide outpatient primary care, basic laboratory services and must be located in a non-urbanized area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. A clinic must also have a federal designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

HPSAs are designated at the federal level in conjunction with the State Primary Care Office (PCO) acting as an analyzer and applicant. The three types of HPSA designations are Primary Care, Dental and Behavioral/Mental Health. Within these types, there are three "sub-types" which are categorized by geographic (i.e. county/service areas); demographic (i.e. specific populations groups such as low income) and institutional (i.e. prison or other defined facilities).

PRIMO provided funding to the following health care delivery sites during State Fiscal Year 2015:

## **Community Health Center of Central Missouri** –

Assisted in providing funding for a dental hygienist to service residents in its Linn, California and Fulton clinics and purchased a Panoramic X-Ray unit and other digital dental equipment. The hygienist service is very much needed in the communities. An additional 354 patient encounters were provided.

**Compass Health Wellness** – Funding was used to partially staff a newly established FQHC in Cedar County. Staff included a dentist, dental assistants, dental hygienist and the customer service representative.

The customer service representative provided the first point of contact for the dental clinic. She greeted patients, checked them in and out of the clinic, made follow-up appointments and billed the appropriate insurance carrier. Dental staff provided dental exams and treatments to El Dorado Springs area residents. Additionally, the dental hygienist provided dental screenings and education to 2nd and 5th grade children in the El Dorado Springs and Stockton school districts.

**Eastern Missouri Health Services** – Funding provided radiological services to rural residents of Bowling Green. Patients accessing medical services at this RHC must travel a minimum of 12 miles to Pike County Memorial Hospital, located in Louisiana, for radiologic exams that are deemed necessary for diagnosis and treatment. Transportation was found difficult, if not impossible, for many of these patients. On average, the clinic was able to provide radiologic services to 25-30 patients during start up months.

## **Southern Missouri Community Health Center** –

Assisted this FQHC in hosting mini health fairs at two clinic sites to offer free screenings to the general public, provided information on accessing care, information on resources and activities in the communities and provided demonstrations of changes the communities can make on their own. The FQHC introduced the public to providers and the quality of care provided, but also inspired community residents to make positive changes in lifestyles. This project increased the number of new primary care patients the FQHC sees on a monthly basis by approximately 24 percent.

**Your Community Health Center** – Utilized funds to hire a pharmacist and behavioral health consultant to enroll 100 patients with multiple medical conditions in the pharmacist education and medication management programs. The pharmacist and behavioral health consultant followed up with patients to assist in improving health outcomes. The pharmacist was also successful in securing a 340B registration for the health center which allowed the health center to purchase prescription medications at discounted pricing.



# Recruitment & Placement

Key barriers to recruiting and retaining primary care professionals include Missouri's aging health care workforce, fewer health care professionals choosing to practice in primary care and the state's population shifts. State, private and academic partners continue to work together to address and identify specific needs across Missouri. Some of these organizations include: Missouri Area Health Education Centers (MAHEC), Missouri Primary Care Association (MPCA) and Missouri Hospital Association (MHA). All have been critical in addressing specific elements of the primary care workforce shortage.

PRIMO works directly with organizations to assist in the recruitment and placement of health professionals in underserved Missouri communities through a variety of methods. One method is the use of the Practice Sites recruitment software to implement the Missouri Health Professional Placement Services, through collaboration with the MPCA. Providers are recruited in the fields of primary medical, dental and behavioral health for underserved areas of Missouri, and health care facilities are identified with open job opportunities. The health care professionals then work directly with a professional recruitment and placement manager to find the practice site best suited for the professional and the community.

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The tables below illustrate the number of opportunities available to health care professionals, and the number placed during the State Fiscal Year 2015.

## Practice Sites Opportunity Data State Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Opportunity Specialty	State Fiscal Year 2014	State Fiscal Year 2015	Total
Family Medicine	70	93	163
Internal Medicine	18	14	32
OB/GYN	2	5	7
Pediatrician	4	5	9
Advanced Practice Nurse	9	14	23
Physician Assistant	0	2	2
Dental Hygiene	1	0	1
Dentist	18	28	46
Psychiatry	6	5	11
Other Mental Health Professional	10	20	30
Hospitalist	0	1	1
Other Physician	11	12	23
Pharmacist	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>349</b>

## Practice Sites Placement Data State Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Opportunity Specialty	State Fiscal Year 2014	State Fiscal Year 2015	Total
Family Medicine	1	2	3
Internal Medicine	1	0	1
OB/GYN	0	0	0
Pediatrician	0	0	0
Advanced Practice Nurse	3	0	3
Physician Assistant	0	0	0
Dental Hygiene	0	0	0
Dentist	4	9	13
Psychiatry	0	0	0
Other Mental Health Professional	0	0	0
Pharmacist	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>



# Student Loans

The PRIMO Student Loan Program is a competitive state program that awards forgivable loans to students pursuing health care training leading to Missouri licensure or registration in the following fields:

- Primary Care Medicine
- Dentistry
- Dental Hygiene

Loan amounts are based on discipline, level of degree and range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 per year. Loans can be repaid in two ways: earning forgiveness or repaying with cash. To earn forgiveness, students are required to provide primary health care services in a federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSAs) or a Department of Health and Senior Services approved location upon completion of their training. The forgiveness obligation is one year of qualified employment for each school year in which a student received a loan, with a minimum one-year and a maximum five-year service obligation.

Primary health care services are defined as the hands-on provision of direct outpatient-based primary and preventive health care services.

Utilizing an annual \$500,000 contribution by the Missouri Hospital Asso medical residents, 12 medical students, one dental student, two dental hygienists and two behavioral health students.

## PRIMO Student Loans Fiscal Year 2015

	Undergraduate	6 Yr Medical	Medical/ Dental School	Residency	Total
Medical	1	1	10	8	20
Dental			1		1
Behavioral Health	1			1	2
Dental Hygiene	2				2
<b>Total</b>	4	1	11	9	25

Map 1 details the locations of PRIMO physician and dental scholars who are either currently earning forgiveness or have fulfilled forgiveness of their loans. These health professionals originally received their loans beginning in 2003. There are 120 primary care physicians and 22 dentists who obtained degrees through financial assistance from PRIMO. Considering it can take a physician a minimum of 11 years, a dentist a minimum of eight years to complete their education and up to five years to earn forgiveness, PRIMO has proven successful for increasing primary care physicians and general dentists in rural and urban HPSAs of Missouri. It is estimated each physician averages as many as 4,200 patient encounters a year. A dentist can average 2,700 patient encounters a year.



# Health Professional State Loan Repayment

The purpose of the Health Professional State Loan Repayment Program (HPSLRP) is to improve access to primary care by assisting underserved communities located in federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) with recruitment and retention of primary care providers. HPSLRP provides funds for repayment of qualifying educational loans of up to \$25,000 annually for full-time primary care physicians and general dentists. In return for the loan repayment award, participants must complete a two-year service obligation at a nonprofit private or public site located in a HPSA in Missouri.

This project is supported by the State of Missouri and the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program is funded 50 percent by the federal grant and 50 percent by private donations. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015, 10 primary healthcare professionals were awarded loan repayment assistance to repay qualified educational debt.

For more information, contact the Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 800.891.7415.



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