PACHC MEMO 15-01

**Please share with:** Executive Management, HR Directors, and Staff Recruiters

**February 5, 2015**

**TO:** Chief Executive Officers of Pennsylvania Community Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics

**FROM:** Cheri Rinehart, President and CEO

**SUBJECT:** Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center

**SUMMARY:** The Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center, a division of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers, continues to expand its services in order to help recruit and retain primary care providers and other personnel at FQHCs and other safety net facilities.

**BACKGROUND**: PACHC has been involved with workforce issues and recruitment and retention for about six years. The Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center was started in April 2013 when PACHC entered into a grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH). The Career Center works closely with PADOH, various state associations, the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network, the National Health Service Corps and the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health.

**CURRENT SERVICES:** The Career Center concentrates most of its efforts on recruiting four kinds of providers: physicians, and specifically, family physicians, internists, pediatricians, obstetrician/gynecologists, and psychiatrists; general dentists and dental hygienists; primary care certified registered nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives; and physician assistants. However, the Career Center will also assist with recruitment of other positions such as CEO, fiscal, IT, behavioral health and others. The Career Center has also developed several tools and services to help Community Health Centers  with recruitment.

**Website -** The [**Career Center website**](http://paprimarycarecareers.org/),[www.paprimarycarecareers.org](http://www.paprimarycarecareers.org), was launched in April 2014. It is the focal point of much of our recruitment and retention efforts. The two most frequently visited pages on the website are Find A Job and Job Seekers. See the next section for more information on how we work with employers to post open positions.

**Member education and services** – Whether through live training, newsletter articles, or other means, one mission of the Career Center is to provide information and education to Community Health Centers , Rural Health Clinics, and Critical Access Hospitals. We host an annual “workforce intensive” at the PACHC Annual Conference, and we scour news sources for information about personnel and staff issues to give you the most up-to-date information and guidance. Increased education is planned for 2015, perhaps through occasional webinars.

**Career Fairs** – The Career Center holds annual primary care career fairs, usually in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in September. We invite a large cross section of physician residents and student dentists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. PACHC members are strongly urged to attend and receive a discounted rate for a booth. We also invite hospital recruiters to attend to attract more candidates. A Steering Committee comprising representatives from professional societies and state and federal agencies helps guide the career fairs. In addition, Career Center staff attend career fairs hosted by other organizations to try to increase the pool of candidates interested in employment in a health center or other safety net organization.

**Outreach to Schools and Residencies** – In order to make the Career Center more visible and to increase the number of graduates interested in working for an FQHC or other safety net facility, we make a concerted effort to reach out to and build relationships with primary care residencies and medical, dental, nurse practitioner, and physician assistant schools. Career Center staff give presentations, man education booths, and even offer mini-career fairs.

**WORKING WITH PACHC MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS:**

**Workforce Committee** – A committee composed of member health center executives and human resource staff oversees the work of the Career Center. The committee meets every other month to receive reports, give input on programs and projects, and provide strategic direction to staff. We welcome new participants.

**Job Posting** – The Career Center works with members and other primary care organizations to post job openings on our website, [www.paprimarycarecareers.org](http://www.paprimarycarecareers.org) and on the website of the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network, [www.3RNet.org](http://www.3RNet.org). We also use social media to post jobs on Facebook and via Twitter. Other social media outlets are also being pursued. Job postings are free to PACHC members.

**Job Posting Policy for Nonmembers** – The Career Center welcomes job postings from nonmembers, and we publish a job posting policy that sets prices and guidelines. As with career fairs, the more jobs to choose from, the more interest we attract.

**Referrals** – PACHC members, particularly clinical staff, can assist in recruitment by referring colleagues and classmates to the Career Center.

**MEMBER ACTION**: PACHC members can add to the success of the Career Center in a variety of ways, including:

* Serve on the Workforce Committee
* Respond in a timely manner when candidates are referred by the Career Center
* Notify the Career Center of successful hires from referrals
* Inform the Career Center of changes in your recruitment point(s) of contact for hiring and ensure they are on the distribution list for our weekly email newsletter, “News CHCs Can Use”
* Participate in Career Center events like the PA Primary Care Career Fairs
* Share the credentialing checklist with appropriate individuals in the health center
* Give us feedback

To do any of the above, contact Career Center staff Judd Mellinger-Blouch at judd@pachc.org or Shelly Ahlers at michelle@pachc.org.

**FUTURE PLANS:** The Workforce Committee, PACHC executives, and Career Center staff will continue to strategically approach recruitment and retention of high-quality healthcare professionals for Community Health Centers , Rural Health Clinics, Critical Access Hospitals and other primary care access points. We will adjust our tactics as necessary to:

**Increase the flow of candidates to employers.** It’s important that our members and other employers have a broader spectrum of candidates to meet, interview, and consider in order to find the right candidate for the job. Just putting a warm body into an open job is not sufficient.

**Offer education and services.** Helping PACHC members and other safety-net facilities improve their hiring and retention practices is key to providing more primary care access. The Career Center can help by providing educational opportunities that meet our members’ needs, and by developing or contracting for services that fill gaps for our members.

**Improve the visibility and viability of the Career Center.** In order to continue our important work, the Career Center must be viewed as a major contributor to workforce development in Pennsylvania. More employers and candidates must be familiar with the work we do and how we can be of assistance to them. In addition, making the Career Center more financially viable in an uncertain fiscal environment is critical to its long-term survival.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

For more information about the Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center and PACHC’s other efforts regarding primary care workforce issues, please contact Judd Mellinger-Blouch, Director, at judd@pachc.org or 717-761-6443, Ext. 211; or Shelly Ahlers, Recruitment Coordinator, at michelle@pachc.org or Ext. 215. The Career Center website, [www.paprimarycarecareers.org](http://www.paprimarycarecareers.org), is also an excellent source of information.