

PROJECT ABSTRACT

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health

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Improving health, promoting a skilled healthcare workforce and achieving health equity throughout our nation is an important direction for national, state and local organizations dedicated to the needs of underserved communities. The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) proposes to lead that direction to build the capacities of the 54 Primary Care Offices located in each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Basin.

Primary Care Offices are the designated organization for the coordination of shortage designations, National Health Service Corps program and provider recruitment and retention, collaboration in health center planning and development and collaboration with other partners to support access to primary care. This is a heavy load, given the changing primary care environment and long standing shortages of primary care. PCO are often small offices (2.2 people is median staffing level) with shallow resources which may not allow for staff to be dedicated to innovative approaches to care or integration.

NOSORH proposes to work with the PCO National Committee and engage expert partners to build vital PCOs who stand ready with data and technical assistance capacity to address underserved needs in their state. Project partners include: the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network, the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago and Varela Consulting Group. Six goals and a modest budget are proposed to build the capacity of PCO:

Goal 1: Organize for the successful management, collaborative activities, evaluation and sustainability of the NOSLO Cooperative Agreement activities.

Goal 2: Provide training and technical assistance to strengthen the operational and management capacity of PCOs.

Goal 3: Provide resources for PCO and facilitate federal/state information exchange to support implementation of the ACA.

Goal 4: Disseminate information on federal and state policy and program workforce issues that impact state efforts.

Goal 5: Identify and promote collaborative models of recruitment and retention and integration of public health and primary care.

NOSORH has a proven track record of building leadership and partnerships for state organizations to improve health. NOSORH will utilize its leadership, infrastructure, and expertise to convene federal and state stakeholders to ensure PCO are the vital, well managed sources of technical assistance that is a cornerstone for deployment of HRSA resources, skilled health workforce, and health equity across our nation's states and territories.