



Central Valley Health Network



Community  
HealthCorps

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## A New Era for National Service and the Community HealthCorps

*President Barack Obama signs the Kennedy Serve America Act and  
Community HealthCorps goes live with its new website*

**FRESNO, Calif.**, May 5, 2009—President Barack Obama has signed the [Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act](#) into law, ushering in a new era of national service. The new law, which comes as the economic downturn has ramped up demand for social services, reauthorizes the Corporation for Community and National Service and expands Corporation programs through 2014 to help needy communities. Once the landmark law takes effect on October 1, 2009, it will initiate programs that foster new opportunities in volunteerism and strengthen existing service programs. A few highlights include:

- Expanding service positions in AmeriCorps from 75,000 to 250,000 Americans by 2017;
- Granting a larger education award for students saddled with college debt by increasing the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award and aligning it with the Pell Grant student loan program; and
- Focusing national service to more communities in need through the creation of a new Healthy Futures Corps and four other Service Corps – Education Corps, Clean Energy Corps, Veterans Corps and Opportunity Corps.

President Obama's signing of the historic law follows on the heels of his call for passage of national service legislation before a joint session of Congress. The legislation received strong bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress. Community HealthCorps National Director Jason Patnosh praised the legislation in letter to the editor published last week in [USA Today](#). He wrote, "The Kennedy's Serve America Act... will go a long way to inspire and increase the number of people and organizations who come together for the common purpose of making our communities stronger. We know it works."

"The HealthCorps program is playing an increasingly vital role in our California federally qualified health centers," said Sosha Quintero, Workforce Development Director at Central Valley Health Network (CVHN), a consortium of health clinics in California. "For many of our clinics, HealthCorps volunteers perform key duties such as improving utilization of health care services, health promotion and disease prevention education, enrollment of patients in public health insurance plans, needs assessments, and providing culturally appropriate patient support that all serve to enhance the quality of customer service and care for underserved patients."

Focused on direct services, CVHN's HealthCorps members provide a variety of health services and programs for patients by serving as community health workers. Additionally, HealthCorps serves as a pipeline to careers in health care and produces civic leaders who continue to serve their communities long after their service has been completed.

CVHN has the largest HealthCorps program in the state of California with some of the highest recruitment and retention success rates nationwide. The program has 42 volunteers placed at 10 Health center sites. HealthCorps members serve over an 11 month period, where they assist as many as 50,000 low-income persons annually.

For more information about the new law and volunteer opportunities, please visit the new web site launched by the Community HealthCorps at [www.communityhealthcorps.org](http://www.communityhealthcorps.org).

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Central Valley Health Network (CVHN) is a consortium of 12 Federally Qualified Health Center corporations that provide comprehensive preventive primary care services and advocate on behalf of low-income and medically underserved families throughout the Central Valley of California. CVHN members are the medical home for families with many members providing medical, dental, pharmacy, and mental health services. CVHN has 124 sites in 21 counties that provide 2.5 million encounters to over half a million patients annually of whom 77% are at or below 100% of federal poverty level, 49% Medi-Cal, 35% uninsured, 74% Latino, and 40% farmworkers.

Founded in 1995 by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), Community HealthCorps is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes health care for America's underserved, while developing tomorrow's health care workforce. Approximately 650 Community HealthCorps members serve in 35 partner organizations and 4 affiliate organizations at more than 150 delivery sites across 16 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. For more information about Community HealthCorps, visit [www.communityhealthcorps.com](http://www.communityhealthcorps.com); to learn more about NACHC, which represents the nation's network of more than 1,200 Federally Qualified Health Centers, visit [www.nachc.com](http://www.nachc.com).