From: Halpern, Andrew
To: Patterson, Nicole (HRSA)
Subject: Hello from Dr. Halpern
Date: Tuesday, May 31, 2011 12:15:20 PM

Ms. Patterson:

Hello. While the MHC I work for (i.e. Community Reach Center) is *the* Adams county, CO Medicaid provider (i.e. Medicaid/Medicare by it's very definition assists the *underserved*), while I have a 2+ MONTH waiting list for patients to get in to see me (that includes ill children whom need follow up appointment) and while Child Psychiatry & Adult Psychiatry are the top two (respectively) *underserved* specialties in Medicine - Community Reach Center and Adams county apparently do not qualify for a HPSA designation.

Community Reach Center and I have been in contact with the Colorado State Primary Care Office/HPSA Physician Loan Repayment Program over the past year; we have provided them with this and other pertinent information supporting our/my application for the Physician Loan Repayment Program. Indeed, despite the additional fact that I care for patients at a community health clinic (i.e. Community Health Services/CHS) – treating many of the *same* patients as the pediatricians/pcps (i.e. whom DO qualify for HPSA/loan repayment as CHS is a designated HPSA facility) – I/Community Reach Center still cannot obtain HPSA or similar designation due to HPSA guidelines by which the CO PCO must abide. Ironically, it is likely that there are many more pcps in Adams county than there are Child Psychiatrists in BOTH Adams and Denver counties. Yet while children and adults typically can get seen by pcps much more readily than they can by a Child or Adult Psychiatrist - we Psychiatrists/Psychiatry in this region do not meet the *current* HPSA guidelines (i.e. and therefore the Colorado Health Professions guidelines as *underserved*).

I am committed to caring for children (and adults) in this mixture of *underserved* rural & urban settings. Indeed, my special interest and expertise lies in caring for those with Autism & other Neurodevelopmental disorders; given the paucity of *any* type of providers whom will care for this medically in need population – clearly *underserved* designations (should) also apply to patients with these particular Medical diagnoses and needs – in my opinion .

However, regardless of the medical diagnosis - I truly enjoy practicing in a community mental health setting. However, given the $250,000+ of Medical School and Residency debt I've incurred – I continue to find it difficult to *get ahead* – financially speaking; that there are many lucrative fee-for-service opportunities available nearby to someone with my skill set has not escaped me. Indeed, while I am a relatively seasoned veteran at Community Reach Center with only one year in their employment, no less than FIVE Child Psychiatrists performing the same duties in identical clinical settings left (Community Reach Center) in just the *two* years preceding me; that many of these physicians/Child Psychiatrists left to take more lucrative positions - some likely with physician loan repayment offers or programs - is an unfortunate reality of the *business* that Medicine and Mental Health Care has become – especially in less *prominent* places of/like Adams county.

In any event, as I would like to continue helping those with significant needs here in Adams county

(i.e. with Community Reach Center) and since there appear to be *ample* funds available via the Colorado Health Professions Shortage office/PCO (and perhaps Federally as well???) for physician loan repayment – I hope you will strongly consider the aforementioned circumstances in either reconsidering & updating the HPSA guidelines for this area of Colorado or point me in the direction of an alternative Physician Loan Repayment program for which I should qualify.

Please feel free to forward this email to your colleagues and other appropriate parties. Both on a professional and personal level - your assistance is GREATLY appreciated! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

-Andrew Halpern, D.O.

-Andrew

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