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HRSA AND FTA AWARD A COMBINED \$416,000 TO HEALTH OUTREACH PARTNERS

OAKLAND, CA – Health Outreach Partners is launching a Transportation Initiative, which aims to determine the impact of transportation barriers on health care costs and to strengthen patient-centered transportation solutions that improve access to care. The Health Resources and Services Administration and the Federal Transit Administration are supporting the Initiative with two separate funding agreements.

“Even with the success of the Affordable Care Act and 18 million newly insured individuals, access to health care is still a challenge for individuals and communities,” says HOP CEO Oscar C. Gomez. “Transportation has been and continues to be one major barrier to accessing health care services. Through this project, we have an opportunity to build on the success of the ACA by addressing the intersection of health care access and transportation, and begin dismantling this barrier.”

In any given year, at least 3.6 million Americans do not obtain medical care because of a lack of transportation. While distance to health care services is often considered a problem for rural communities, the lack of transportation impacts many different populations, including veterans, immigrants, farmworkers, and low-income adults and children. Evidence shows that access to reliable transportation correlates with improved health outcomes and increases the utilization of services. Moreover, in the wake of the ACA, the national focus around health care access continues to shift from enrollment into health insurance to ensuring access and utilization of health care services, of which transportation plays a key role. Efforts to strengthen patient-centered transportation solutions are needed more than ever.

HOP has a long history of addressing transportation barriers to care. Since 2000, HOP has conducted bi-annual needs assessments in which transportation has been consistently identified as one of the most prevalent barriers to accessing care among underserved populations served by health centers. Beginning in 2011, HOP implemented the project “Transportation Models that Work.” Through this project, HOP published case studies, convened a policy advisory council, and conducted a national campaign aimed at highlighting opportunities for more meaningful transportation access.

Through the Transportation Initiative, HOP will expand upon its previous work by implementing a national survey of health centers, Veteran’s Administration Medical Centers, and private providers to quantify the impact of lack of transportation on health care costs. Additionally, HOP will

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identify communities that are adopting transportation solutions that show promising opportunities for return on investment. Finally, HOP will establish peer-to-peer learning opportunities for health centers and primary care associations to identify strategies, share successes, and document lessons learned.

Recent funding from both HRSA and the FTA will increase HOP's ability to address and develop solutions to this pressing issue. According to Mr. Gomez, "HOP is very excited to be an active member of the important collaboration between the community health care world and the transportation sector. If we are serious about achieving meaningful health care access and making significant strides towards achieving health equity for the working poor, the elderly, veterans, and the most marginalized members of our communities, we need to explore and implement more cross-sector collaborations such as this Transportation Initiative."

Health Outreach Partners (HOP) is a national organization based in Oakland, CA, that works to build strong, effective, and sustainable grassroots health models by partnering with local organizations in order to improve the quality of life of low-income, vulnerable, and underserved populations. For more information about HOP and its programs, visit www.outreach-partners.org.