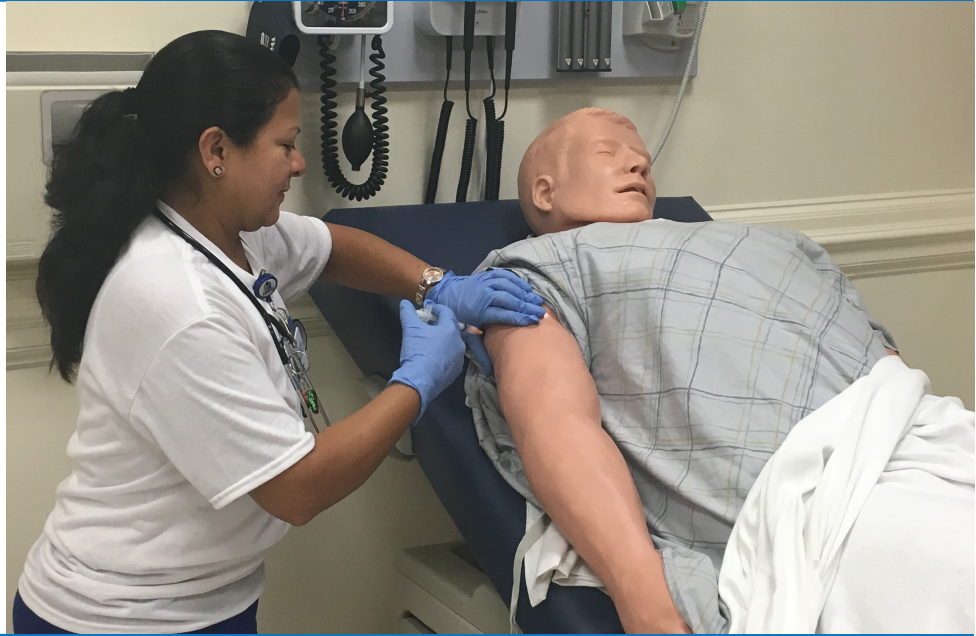


The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund supports training programs that address workforce skill needs identified by health care providers as they work to improve patient care and reduce costs. Commonwealth Corporation administers this fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) has been caring for East Boston and surrounding communities for over 45 years. As the leading health care provider in their area and a Level 3 NCQA-certified Patient Centered Medical Home, EBNHC provides more than 300,000 patient visits per year and delivers 1,000 babies annually in partnership with Boston Medical Center.



Workforce Challenge:

The quality improvement and cost control objectives of Chapter 224 have increased pressure on all staff interacting with patients, especially direct care workers. Staff must perform at a higher skill level and work as a team to provide consistent, coordinated care, helping clinicians identify specific health signs and indicators to promote preventative care and reduce unnecessary hospital visits. At EBNHC, these changes mean higher expectations for Medical Assistants. However, the Medical Assistant workforce comes with different levels of experience and expertise, and inconsistent education/training standards. Additionally, nurses and physicians have varying levels of expectations of their Medical Assistants and other direct care staff.

“In the rapidly changing health care environment, staff is continuously asked to do more, and it can be challenging to find the time and resources to train staff accordingly. Funding from the Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund Initiative has helped our Education & Training Institute provide the training our Medical Assistants need to provide the best possible patient care.”

-Cindy Theodore, RN
Administrative Director, Nursing & ED

Training Strategy and Expected Outcomes:

In order to improve the quality and efficiency of care provided to patients, EBNHC needed to standardize expectations, processes, and training opportunities throughout the organization. EBNHC used grant funds to enhance a comprehensive training program for Medical Assistants that focuses on new roles and responsibilities, teamwork and communication skills, processes and procedures, overview of chronic diseases, proper use of instruments and equipment, overview of infectious diseases and infection control, and electronic health records training. By standardizing training, EBNHC is leveling the skills of their Medical Assistants regardless of their background, and will therefore be able to provide consistent, continuous care with a focus on overall better patient outcomes. As a result, EBNHC has been able to assign additional responsibilities to their Medical Assistants, including preventative care, administration of depression screenings and vaccinations and patient guidance and support with MyChart registrations. MyChart registrations increased from 23% to 32% and depression screenings increased from 49% to 77%.