



Partnering With Primary Care Associations and Health Center Controlled Networks: *Strategies, Ideas, and Resources for Community Health Centers*

Overview


During a learning network session, health centers identified opportunities for partnering with [Primary Care Associations \(PCAs\)](#) and [Health Center Controlled Networks \(HCCNs\)](#). PCAs and HCCNs are vital partners in strengthening the infrastructure and long-term impact of community health centers. These organizations offer technical assistance, training, data infrastructure, advocacy, and peer support to help health centers deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

PCAs are state and regional organizations that provide training, technical assistance, and advocacy support to health centers. PCAs help improve clinical, operational, and financial performance and respond to statewide health needs.

HCCNs are groups of health centers collaborating to improve quality of care and value-based delivery through health information technology (IT). HCCNs strengthen data systems, enhance patient data security, and support quality improvement initiatives.

Practical Strategies

- **Performance Improvement:** PCAs and HCCNs can help health centers enhance clinical quality, operational efficiency, and patient experience through structured technical assistance, learning collaboratives, and quality improvement initiatives.
 - **Grant Support and Resource Identification:** Both PCAs and HCCNs share relevant grant opportunities, assist with proposal development, and may serve as partners for collaborative funding.
 - **Workforce Development and Retention:** Both PCAs and HCCNs help health centers recruit and retain a skilled workforce through training programs, service corps partnerships, and professional development opportunities.
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- **Regional Collaboration for Scale:** Both PCAs and HCCNs can connect health centers with peer organizations to pursue multi-site funding or jointly advocate for shared early childhood development (ECD) priorities.
 - **Advocacy and Policy Guidance:** PCAs amplify the voice of health centers at the state and federal levels, influencing policies that impact funding, workforce development, and health outcomes.
 - **Training and Capacity Building:** PCAs can provide professional development opportunities on topics such as developmental screening, trauma-informed care, and family-centered care.
 - **Program Implementation:** PCAs can collaborate with health centers to support and scale ECD programs and replicate models statewide or regionally.
 - **Health IT and Data Support:** HCCNs offer tools and services to optimize electronic health records (EHRs), leverage data analytics, and meet reporting requirements.
 - **Clinical Integration Support:** HCCNs can support ECD service integration through EHR training, resources, templates, dashboards, workflows, and ECD quality.
 - **Data for Impact and Improved Outcomes:** HCCNs provide health centers with the data tools needed to measure and communicate program outcomes – key to sustaining funding from payers, government agencies, and philanthropic sources.

Actionable Ideas

Partnering With PCAs

- Participate in quality improvement learning collaboratives and technical assistance programs as well as ECD affinity groups across the state or region.
 - Use PCA advocacy for pediatric and ECD policy and funding at state and federal levels.
 - Share outcomes and best practices from ECD programs with PCAs.
 - Seek PCA support on state-specific, value-based payment alignment for ECD services and other billing.
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Partnering With HCCNs

- Collaborate on health IT enhancements for ECD tracking and reporting.
- Join ECD-focused quality improvement projects.
- Share technical challenges with peer health centers and co-develop solutions.
- Receive quality improvement coaching from field leaders.

Resources

Finding a PCA or HCCN

- [National Association of Community Health Centers - Directory of PCAs & HCCNs](#)
- [Health Resources and Services Administration's HCCN Search Tool](#)

If you have questions, please email us at ECDHSCenter@zerotothree.org.



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