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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 9, 2014

Changes in Healthcare Delivery Inspire New Roles for Frontline Staff

NYACH Conference Highlights Health Coaching Opportunities for Medical Assistants to Improve Patient Outcomes

NEW YORK - With healthcare reforms underway in New York State and across the country, the healthcare industry is under pressure to meet the ambitious “triple aim” of higher quality patient care, better population health, and lower costs.

Yesterday, more than one hundred representatives from healthcare provider organizations, education and training institutions, community based organizations, and funders participated in the New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare’s (NYACH) second annual workforce conference, *The Innovative Primary Care Team*, co-sponsored by The Hitachi Foundation.

The primary care workforce is generating attention as New York State works towards a goal of reducing avoidable hospital use by 25 percent over five years. The New York State Department of Labor predicts that the number of jobs in New York City’s ambulatory care sector will grow by more than 35 percent between 2010 and 2020 while the Affordable Care Act’s focus on rewarding quality over quantity has escalated the need to better manage chronic conditions and keep patients connected to the primary care system.

Conference attendees focused on ways to enhance frontline worker roles to help providers meet the triple aim while simultaneously creating career ladder opportunities for their staff. “This conference provided a unique opportunity to bring together a host of stakeholders from industry, education, and the non-profit community to ensure that the current and future workforce is being trained with the new skills required to work effectively in today’s changing healthcare environment,” commented Shawna Trager, executive director of NYACH.

Sunita Mutha, MD, Director of the Center for Health Professions at University of California San Francisco emphasized in her keynote address that, “The transformation that we need to make in healthcare can’t happen without engaging the frontline workforce in new ways.” The conference highlighted how institutions such as Union Health Center and Iora Health have created positions that combine traditional Medical Assistant responsibilities with health coaching and other techniques for patient engagement and chronic disease management. Iora Health has shown a 20 percentage point increase in controlled hypertensives from the national average of 63% to 83%, across all of their practices along with increased patient satisfaction and engagement¹. Union Health Center reduced patient cycle times, lowered no-show rates, increased performance on a number of quality measures, and also generated cost-savings².

¹ www.iorahealth.com

² Blash, Lisel, Catherine Dower, and Susan Chapman, “Union Health Center: Update 2014” Center for the Health Professions, Research Brief, 2014.

To ensure the current and future healthcare workforce is prepared with the new skills needed to practice in this environment, educational institutions such as College for America are exploring new approaches to education that include core competency based training and online education. The Center for Excellence in Primary Care and the Primary Care Development Corporation have also developed curricula and best practices for teaching the communications and teamwork skills needed to help patients adhere to care plans, coordinate care among teams of professionals, and reshape healthcare delivery in New York.

Speakers at the NYACH conference included:

- Sunita Mutha, MD, *Director & Professor*, Center for the Health Professions, University of California San Francisco
- Audrey Lum, RN, MPH, *Chief Clinical Officer*, Union Health Center
- Neil Patel, MD, *Associate Medical Director*, Iora Health
- Julian L. Alssid, *Chief Workforce Strategist*, College for America
- Sarah Colvario, MS, *Trainer and Practice Coach*, Center for Excellence in Primary Care, UCSF Department of Family and Community Medicine
- Christina Araujo, *Medical Assistant and Health Coach*, Center for Excellence in Primary Care, UCSF Department of Family and Community Medicine
- Karla Silverman, MS, RN, CNM, *Director, Clinical and Training Initiatives*, Primary Care Development Corporation

About NYACH

NYACH's mission is to build an effective workforce development system in NYC by identifying healthcare employers' needs; helping education and training organizations adapt their approach to better meet those needs; and ensuring low income and unemployed New Yorkers have access to viable career opportunities in healthcare. NYACH is a public-private partnership between the NYC Department of Small Business Services and the NYC Workforce Funders.

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The Hitachi Foundation is an independent, philanthropic organization that seeks to discover, demonstrate and expand business practices that both measurably improve economic opportunities for low-wealth individuals in the U.S. and enhance long term business value.