



ACU
ASSOCIATION OF CLINICIANS
FOR THE UNDERSERVED

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

ABOUT THE ACU

ACU is a uniquely transdisciplinary membership association uniting clinicians, advocates, and organizations in the **shared mission** to improve the health of America’s underserved populations and to support the clinicians serving them.

Founded in 1996 by members and alumni of the National Health Service Corps, we are the leading voice of **advocacy** for the NHSC. Our members include diverse organizations such as health centers, primary care associations, free clinics, and health departments spread across the U.S., as well as clinicians from 18 professional disciplines.

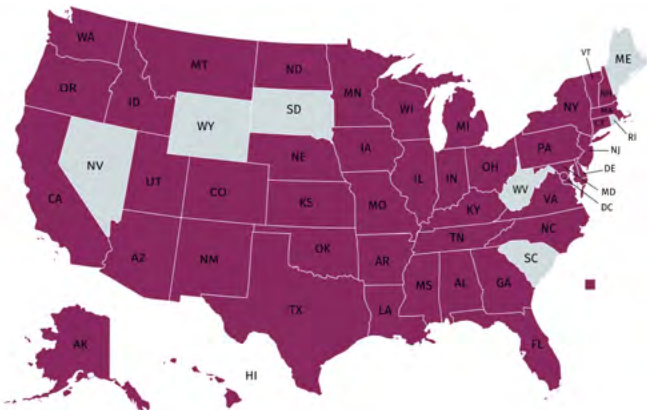
Our Collective Community Includes



Organizations, Individuals, and Advocates

Ranging from health centers, primary care associations, and free clinics to healthcare providers, students, and advocates for health equity.

Organizational Members in 2020 hailed from the following states:



RESPONDING TO COVID-19

COVID-19 posed a critical challenge to our community, and ACU responded with agility to the evolving pandemic to support our providers, patients, and partners.

PPE Initiative

As personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies ran low in the face of the emerging crisis, ACU stepped in to connect our community with PPE to help protect providers and patients. With the aid of our key partner Centene, we were able to supply more than 100 health centers from all corners of the nation with vital PPE to support their work caring for patients on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of December 2020, the ACU had provided:



N95
Masks



Bottles of
Hand Sanitizer



Pairs
of Gloves

Educating the Field

ACU and our STAR² Center also united our providers and advocates for more than 10 webinars specifically addressing critical topics related to the pandemic, from healthcare delivery for incarcerated populations and social determinants of health to effective advocacy and suicide prevention. These **webinars** collectively reached over 1,300 attendees.

PROGRAMS: THE STAR² CENTER

Our **Solutions, Training, and Assistance for Recruitment and Retention (STAR²) Center** works closely with the Bureau of Primary Health Care to build and sustain a robust health center workforce through resources, trainings, and technical assistance for health centers, PCAs, and HCCNs. Highlights of the STAR² Center’s 2020 activities include:

Webinars & Trainings



Selected Resources & Tools

- **Turnover Calculator Tool:** to help FQHCs calculate and mitigate turnover
- **Data Profile Dashboards:** comprehensive resources to help FQHCs assess data and reach their recruitment and retention goals
- **Chief Workforce Officer (CWO) Toolkit:** to help PCAs and CHCs recruit and retain strategic and innovative workforce leaders
- **Building an Inclusive Organization Toolkit:** assists FQHCs in building more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforces
- **PCA Training and TA Self-Assessment:** aids PCAs in assessing their organization’s TTA for health centers
- **Online Courses:** Creating a Compensation Package for Retention and Engaging High-Functioning Managers for Retention
- **STAR² Center Talks Workforce Success Podcast:** season one exploring CWOs

PROGRAMS: SUICIDE SAFER CARE

The ACU has partnered with Concert Health for **Suicide Safer Care**, the largest effort to engage primary care providers in the history of suicide prevention. Generously supported by Centene, the SSC program instructed numerous providers and their teams in evidence-based strategies to prevent suicide in primary care in 2020.

Organizational Trainings



In addition to primary care providers, the trainings reached 109 nursing professionals, 319 behavioral health clinicians, and numerous other front-facing staff and administrators. Four more trainings are planned in the first quarter of 2021.

New Resources on Pediatric & Provider Suicide Prevention

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth age 15-24. Recognizing this, ACU worked to address suicide prevention in this vulnerable population and built an addendum to our **Suicide Prevention in Primary Care** toolkit. The module identifies specific criteria and concerns for providers when delivering care to the pediatric population.

The ACU also responded to the urgent need to support providers during and after COVID-19, creating a training specifically addressing provider risk of suicide. The national webinar “**Caring for the Healers: Preventing Suicide Among Providers**” offered vital strategies for organizational change to 365 attendees, and further trainings reached health centers across the U.S.

CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

The ACU works to achieve health equity for the underserved through professional education, training and technical assistance, clinical tools, and more. In addition to our growing programs, we also train thousands of clinicians each year in our virtual and in-person **annual conferences** and **webinars**.

2020 Virtual Conference

To safely convene our community during the pandemic, the ACU held its first Virtual Conference in September. Focusing on transdisciplinary practices in care for underserved populations, the event offered strategies to improve the FQHC workforce, ensure successful diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, address health disparities, and implement new practice models. The event attracted attendees from 41 health centers, primary care associations, and other organizations nationwide.



National Webinars



Topics included civic engagement, eye health and vision care, suicide prevention, and more. Seven sessions in our *Policy & Practice* series explored the changing world of providers during COVID-19 and beyond, examining areas ranging from effective advocacy and social determinants of health to empowering patients for civic engagement.

* Figures include both STAR² Center and general ACU activities.

PROGRAMS: EYE HEALTH & VISION CARE

Healthy vision is crucial to overall health, but many underserved communities have little access to **eye health and vision care**. ACU is leading the charge to increase access to these services for the underserved in concert with partners across the U.S. With the support of the Centene Foundation for Quality Healthcare, ACU hosted vision screening events, provided grants, and offered technical assistance—all geared toward improving access to vision care for the underserved.

Grant Support for Health Center Vision Programs

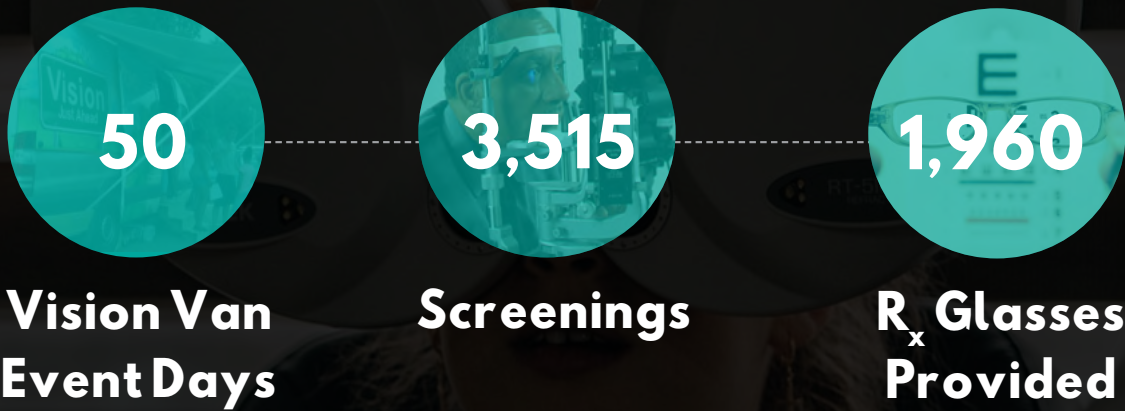


Recipients included OneWorld CHCs (NE), Heartland Health Center (NE), HealthLinc, Inc. (IN), Lanai CHC (HI), North Texas Area CHCs, and East Georgia Healthcare Center.

Resources

- *Integrating Eye Health and Vision Care for Underserved Populations into Primary Care Settings*: details needs and best practices for delivering these services in integrated care.
- *Vision Services Readiness Assessment, 2020*: a questionnaire for FQHCs to assess their readiness to start an eye health and vision care program.

Vision Van Events from 2017-Present



POLICY & ADVOCACY

ACU is the nation’s leading advocate for the National Health Service Corps, spearheading the effort to protect and secure funding for this vital program. ACU is also working to lift the voices of our patients and clinicians on Capitol Hill, **advocating tirelessly** for health equity and to make our healthcare system more inclusive, responsive, and accessible.

Key Policy & Advocacy Activities This Year

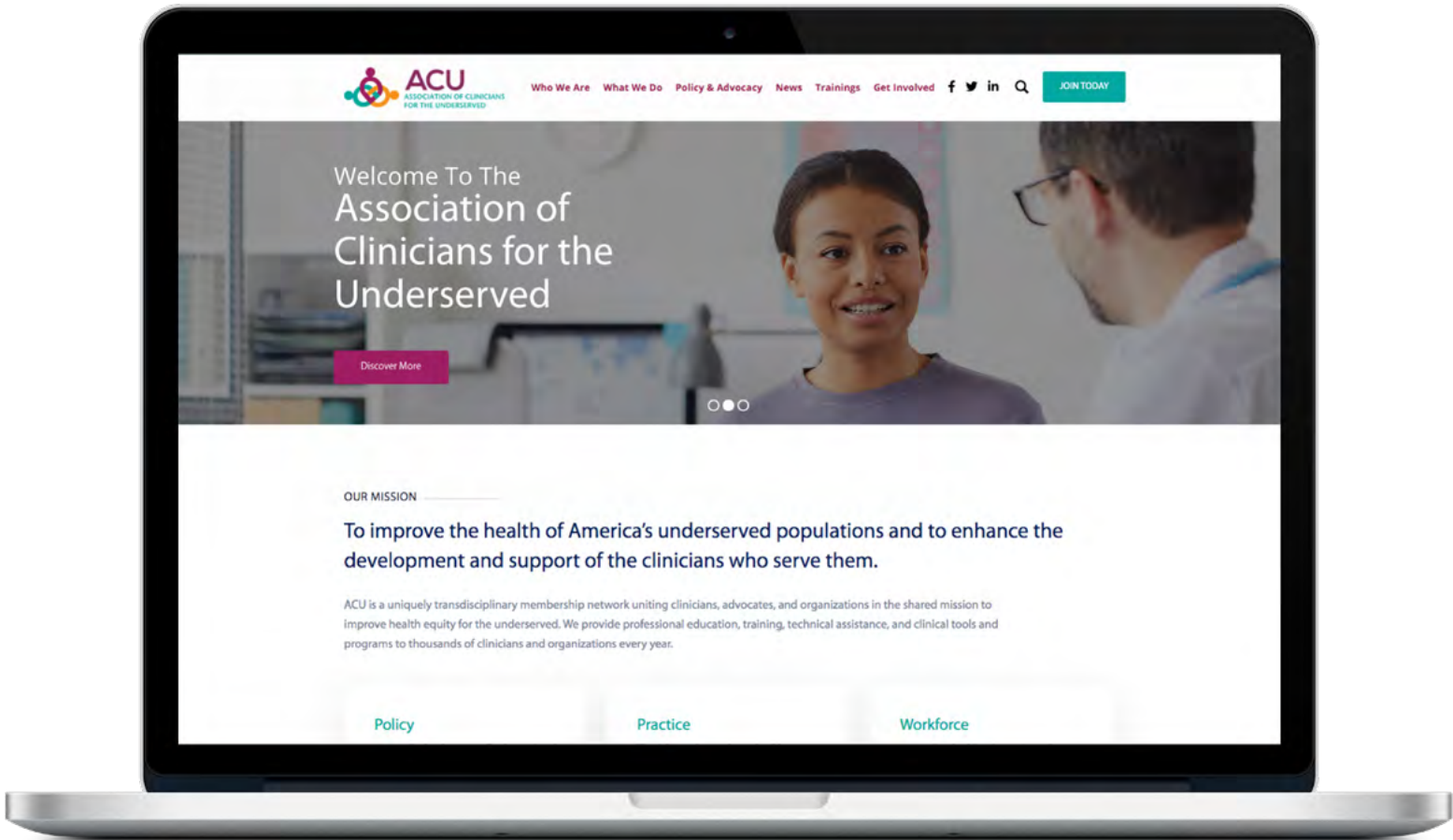
- **ACU led advocacy efforts to secure long-term, stable funding for the National Health Service Corps—as a result, more than \$1.06 billion in funding for the NHSC was included in the FY21 Omnibus Bill passed by Congress in December.**
- Responding to COVID-19, ACU led aggressive advocacy for critical policy changes related to telehealth reimbursement, PPE access, and emergency supplemental/stimulus funding for the NHSC.
- ACU led a powerful coalition of stakeholders ranging from the National Hispanic Medical Association and NACHC to the AAMC in issuing two letters to Senate leadership, urging the inclusion of the **Health Heroes 2020 Act** and Strengthening America’s Health Care Readiness Act—which included up to \$20 billion in NHSC funding—in stimulus packages.
- ACU made a **clear statement** on the murder of George Floyd, committing to fight for health equity and to address and end the systemic racism that plagues our nation.
- ACU **submitted comments** to HRSA’s Health professional Shortage Area RFI, recommending a modernized HPSA scoring system addressing all factors contributing to health disparities, including geography, socioeconomic, education, and race/ethnicity.
- As a member of the Partnership for Medicaid, ACU joined a coalition of stakeholders in issuing a letter to House and Senate leadership urging the enactment of the Helping Medicaid Offer Maternal Services Act to extend pregnancy-related Medicaid benefits to one year after a pregnancy’s end. ACU also signed onto a letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar requesting that the department rescind the odious Securing Updated and Necessary Statutory Evaluations Timely requirement.

REINVENTING OUR LOOK

The ACU unveiled our newly redesigned website and logo this year. To better support you and further our shared mission to improve the health of underserved communities, we launched a newly enhanced, mobile-friendly **www.clinicians.org** to connect you with even more supportive programming and resources.

We also refreshed our logo, which celebrates the union of **providers, patients, and partners** necessary to achieve true health equity.

While our brand has evolved, our commitment to improve care for the underserved remains unchanged and continues to be our guiding mission.



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