

Building Professional Pathways For New Americans: Partnerships

Wilhelmina Holder, MD CM, DTPH, MS
Executive Director
Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE), Inc.
St. Paul, Minnesota
wilhelminaholder@aol.com
(651) 226-0429

June 22 - 23, 2009

Program Background/Leveraging Resources

- 2003 Non-profit- 501 (c) 3 Organization
- 2004 - 2007 Dept. of Labor grants (FCBI)
- 2005 Assets & Needs Assessment of FTHPs funded by U of MN, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
- 2006-2007 MN Legislative appropriation – DEED
- 2008 – 2011 DHHS, ACF, ORR

Collaborative Partners

- ❖ The African & American Friendship Association for Cooperation & Development (AAFACD), Inc.
- ❖ International Institute of Minnesota
- ❖ Center for Cross-Cultural Health
- ❖ Global Language Institute, Kaplan Test Center
- ❖ St Paul WorkForce Center
- ❖ Allina Hospitals & Clinics, HealthPartners Intern. Clinic
- ❖ Hennepin County Medical Center
- ❖ MN Dept of Health, Office of Minority & Multicultural Health
- ❖ DHHS-ORR: Office Refugee Resettlement
- ❖ MN Foundations: Headwaters, Park Nicollet, Women's, & Blue Cross Blue Shield

Data Estimate

Over 300 foreign trained healthcare professionals are residing in MN, based on internal data and those from International Institute of MN and MN Dept of Health, Office of Minority and Multicultural Health

Program Data/Demographic

- AAFACD registered 196 foreign trained healthcare professionals
- 70% medical doctors; 29% nurses; 1% others (dentists, pharmacists, clinical psychologist & physiotherapist)
- 54% female; mean age: 35 yrs.
- 58 physicians are at different levels of the USMLE exams and are active in the program

Countries of Origin of FTHPs

Africa: Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, and Tanzania

- **Asia and Middle East :** Burma, India, Iran and Iraq
- **Eastern Europe:** Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan
- **Latin America:** Cuba, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela

Major Barriers/Challenges

- Language Proficiency
- Time/Age factors
- Financial Issues
- Loss of Professional Identity
- Complexity of Licensing Processes & Health system
- No system providing clinical experience
- Lack of residency slots

(Research study: “Needs Assessment of Foreign Trained Healthcare Professionals (FTHPs), 2005”)

FTHP Program Services

- **Education & Information**
- **Case Management and Referral**
 - Employment & Integration
- **Resources**
 - Scholarship, Students' loans
- **Mentorship: Peer & Professional**
- **Advocacy for System Changes**
 - US Clinical experience; Residency Slots
 - Alternative Professional Pathway
 - Financial Aid/"Student" Loan
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**

Program Participants



Accomplishments - 2009

- 14 passed USMLE steps I and II
- 4 got into residency
- 8 passed step I, preparing for step II
- 21 preparing for Step I
- 19 processing evaluation or considering alternate pathways

Threats & Opportunities

Threats:

Current community based organizations are struggling to get adequate funding thus fewer culturally appropriate organizations exist

Opportunities:

Partnering and linking with other organizations

Advantages of obtaining diverse sources of funding

- **Increases community involvement**
- **Increases visibility**
- **Increases program sustainability**
- **Addresses an important requirement for a community-based organization**

Searching for diverse funding

1. Research
2. Networking
3. Board Membership
4. Conferences and community events
5. Relationships

Conclusion

In order to sustain programs and organization:

Diversifying resources

Diversifying partnership

In response to community need