

The Role of MassHealth Training Forum: A Vehicle for Communicating Timely, Accurate MassHealth and Commonwealth Care Program and Policy Information During a Critical Period of Health Care Reform Implementation

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Objective

To demonstrate how the MassHealth Training Forum is an effective communication strategy for emerging policy and program changes as a result of recent health care reform legislation

Purpose and Background

- The MassHealth Training Forum was developed and implemented through a collaborative effort of MassHealth and the Office of Community Programs, a program of Commonwealth Medicine, UMMS
- The program was initiated in FY 04 to provide a reliable, accurate vehicle of communication about changing MassHealth policies and programs among provider and community agencies who work closely with MassHealth members
- Following the implementation of Health Care Reform legislation in April 2006, MTF was also an important source of information for the Commonwealth Connector Authority

Methods

The MTF communication methods consist of:

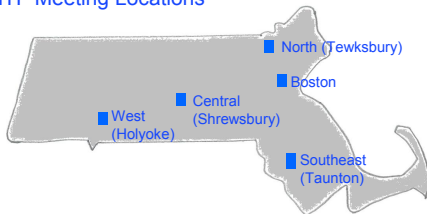
- MTF meetings are held in 5 regions throughout Massachusetts quarterly for a total of 20 meetings a year

The MTF meeting format is:

- Formal presentations and handouts intended to inform participants of:
 - Changing programs and policies
 - Resources available to support their efforts to assist community members eligible for or receiving state subsidized health care programs
 - Questions & Answers
 - Roundtables sessions allow participants to seek further clarification and discuss challenges with presenters

- Electronic MTF Updates
- MTF website <http://www.masshealthmtf.org>
- MTF brochure and other printed materials

MTF Meeting Locations



MTF Meeting Attendance Trends

Region	FY05	FY06	FY07	% Change FY06 / FY07
Southeast	247	226	370	64%
Western	165	136	234	72%
North	105	112	241	115%
Boston	172	194	422	116%
Central	119	161	285	77%
Total	808	829	1552	87%

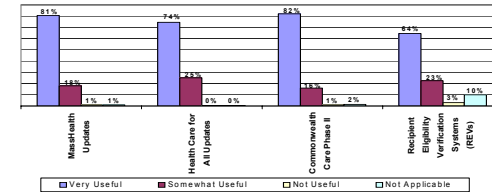
UMASS MEDICAL SCHOOL COMMONWEALTH MEDICINE

Results

MTF meeting evaluation data from January 2007 (approximately 6 months after health care reform legislation was passed):

- When asked "How useful to your work was the information presented today?", results show that 81% of meeting participants reported the MassHealth presentation offered information that was useful in their work and 74% of participants reported that the Commonwealth Care presentation was useful

Presentation Rating by Topic - January 2007



- When asked "Do you or your agency share/distribute MTF Meeting Materials?", 90% of survey respondents answered yes and most indicated their staff size which statistically indicates MTF information is conservatively reaching over 2,400 people
- Evaluation responses from meeting participants demonstrate the value of the MTF program as a resource of accurate, timely information about emerging healthcare reform policies and programs
- MTF meeting attendance increased 87% from FY06 (829) to FY07 (1,552)

Conclusions

- Massachusetts Health Care Reform marks a period of significant policy and program change. Over the past year, health and human service agency staff working with the uninsured and underinsured have found MTF to be a valuable and useful source of information
- MTF demonstrates the importance of having an established vehicle of communication between State and community organizations, especially when introducing new and complex programs within an accelerated time period

Policy Implications

- To successfully implement new State policies, reliable communication systems are needed. MTF is an effective communication vehicle which offers an exchange of information about new policies and programs as they are implemented
- An important secondary outcome of MTF is the feedback offered by community organizations about implementation of new health care reform programs. At strategic points MTF participants provided State agencies feedback about the new health insurance programs. This exchange provided an opportunity for the State to reconsider program components and readjust program requirements if appropriate

"We have become great community leaders and are better able to serve our community thanks to a group of great trainers that help us to get informed and stay up to date"---Janelle M. Perez, Lowell Community Health Center

"We are here to serve the medical needs to our community. This program (MTF) adds another layer through which we are able to help those with the greatest need [...]"Francisco A. Tolentino, Martha Eliot Health Center

"MTF trainings and support have provided our staff with the knowledge and skills they need to help low-income, uninsured, minority and immigrant communities improve their health outcomes and to reduce health disparities." Francisca Guevara, Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center