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## Association for State and Territorial Health Officials Request for Applications: Primary Care Intensive Learning Community

### I. Summary Information

**Purpose:** The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), with support from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) through a cooperative agreement for National Organizations for State and Local Officials (NOSLO), invites states and territories to apply for a 24-month Primary Care Intensive Learning Community, which will offer technical assistance to teams comprised of state and territorial health officials (S/THOs) (or a designee) and Primary Care Office (PCO) staff working on innovative strategies to advance primary care, improve access to care, and improve health outcomes in their jurisdiction.

**Request for Applications Released:** January 31, 2018

**Applications Due:** February 28, 2018

**Selection Announcement:** By March 9, 2018

**Estimated Primary Care Intensive Learning Community Period:** Year 1 technical assistance from March-August 2018 (full period of performance will be a 24-month learning community contingent on funder approval for Years 2 and 3).

**Number of Learning Community States:** Four state/territorial health agencies

**ASTHO Point of Contact:** Emily Moore, Director, Clinical to Community Connections  
([emoore@astho.org](mailto:emoore@astho.org))

### II. Project Description

#### Background:

To allow PCOs to engage in state health transformation effectively, they must coordinate with their S/THO. PCOs assess the health access needs across each state and are responsible for maintaining and improving the primary care workforce, which makes them natural partners in their state's health transformation activities. This project will help states to create projects and groups that leverage PCOs' expertise as core components of health transformation plans. PCOs have the capacity to draw attention to access to care needs, state health workforce needs, and gaps in the integration of primary care and other preventive services, as well as the integration of behavioral health and primary care. PCOs are familiar with the data and evidence that can inform solutions, and through joint work with other stakeholders, PCOs can inform statewide transformation projects that can bring innovative solutions to these persistent problems.

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This project will offer technical assistance to PCOs to familiarize them with health systems transformation projects and to allow PCOs to fluently and comfortably engage with other stakeholders in transformation projects. The project will educate S/THOs about the capabilities of their PCO and the role PCOs can play in health systems transformation, and then build the direct interpersonal relationship between the S/THO and the PCO. This project will be an opportunity to maximize the impact of the S/THO's visible leadership and effectively empower the PCO to bring its unique resources to the transformation conversation. Finally, the project will actively assist states in planning and structuring their efforts to integrate primary care concerns into their transformation work. It will require joint involvement from the PCO and the S/THO, with the S/THO providing the vision and authority to direct and catalyze the work, and the PCO responsible for working with other stakeholders to develop, share, and implement efforts to address primary care and access to care needs as part of the state's broader transformation efforts.

### **Project Description:**

The learning collaborative will solicit applications from state or territorial health agency teams, requiring the involvement of the S/THO and the PCO, as well as a designated team of additional stakeholders (may be both within or outside of the state or territorial health agency) to ensure the inclusion of primary care, access to care, and health workforce capacity issues as elements of health systems transformation. Up to four state or territorial health agency teams will be selected. The project will further PCOs' roles as leaders in their areas of responsibility and expertise and as active participants in broader statewide projects, and enhance S/THOs' awareness of and activities related to primary care, behavioral health, and public health integration, access to care, and health workforce.

This work will engage states currently working on and actively engaged in statewide health care transformation initiatives. This project is designed to:

1. Help state and territorial health agencies develop a team and establish a structure to examine and support issues in their state related to primary care such as access to care, quality improvement, public health, behavioral health, and preventive care integration with other clinical services, and workforce.
2. Help state and territorial health agencies address geographic variations in these issues related to rural and urban areas in their state.
3. Help states develop or implement (depending on state progress and goals) activities on topics noted above through coalition and teambuilding tools and resources, as well as strategic planning and project management.
4. Offer expert advice and subject matter expertise on relevant health systems transformation issues to support primary care goals in selected states.

In some cases, ASTHO may involve HRSA experts or procure consulting services from subject matter experts, depending on the issue area.

### **Projected Timeline:**

The projected timeline for the learning community is as follows:

- January 31, 2018: Learning community opportunity released.

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- February 28, 2018: Deadline for completed applications.
- March 9, 2018: Applicants notified of selection.
- March 21, 2018, 1:00-2:30pm ET: Initial kick-off call (virtual learning session) with participating states and territories to review objectives and plans for the learning community.
- April 2018: 1:1 Calls and emails with states to begin planning for one in-state day- long strategic planning session and identify dates.
- May-July 2018: Hold one day in-state day-long strategic planning sessions – planning calls will be ongoing throughout this period to plan in-person strategic sessions and technical assistance needs. These planning sessions will help form a draft strategic plan for the project period (Years 2 and 3).
- July 31, 2018: Each team will have a complete strategic plan.
- August 31, 2018: Virtual group sharing session/report-out on strategic plans for all teams.
- September 2018 - August 2019: ASTHO will host intensive site visits in the participating states, potentially with subject matter expert support, as needed. ASTHO will host either an in-person or virtual all-team meeting to share progress, review and update plans, and allow state teams to learn from subject matter experts, including peer state staff in other jurisdictions.
- September 2019 – March 2020: ASTHO will host final site visits in the participating states, potentially with subject matter expert support, as needed. Technical assistance will continue with calls, webinars, and a final virtual sharing session for all state teams as a group
- March 2020: Learning community concluded and post-learning community evaluation will begin, to be concluded by August 2020.

**State teams taking part in the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community must include the following members:**

- PCO director or designated staff;
- Senior Deputy or State/Territorial Health Official;
- Primary care partners, champions and/or primary care association members; and,
- Additional stakeholder(s) critical to innovative primary care work in the state (teams should include appropriate parties to help implement state-specific plans, such as key state and territorial health agency (S/THA) staff, Medicaid officials, state behavioral health leads, state offices of rural health, state licensing boards, patient or consumer advocates, representatives of hospital systems, community health centers, payers, partners from other sectors of state/territorial government, etc.). ASTHO strongly encourages bringing together a team with diverse perspectives and roles related to primary care and health systems transformation.

**S/THA teams chosen for the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community must also commit to the following:**

- S/THA teams must select a point person for ASTHO correspondence.
- It is critical that the required team members listed above coordinate with each other on an ongoing basis on primary care and access to care issues in regular workgroup meetings or other mechanisms. This Learning Community can help brainstorm how this collaboration and coordination might be further enhanced, however it is our hope that these efforts continue beyond the duration of the learning community.

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### III. Selection Process

To indicate your interest in participating in the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community opportunity, please send a Letter of Interest (LOI) to **Emily Moore, Director, Clinical to Community Connections, at [emoore@astho.org](mailto:emoore@astho.org) by February 28, 2018. LOI must be signed by your State/Territorial Health Official indicating his/her support of your agency's participation in the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community.**

Please include the following information in your LOI:

- **Name, title, and contact information for project leader** (point person for ASTHO correspondence, per above).
- **List of proposed team members**, as described above, including name, title, and contact information (email/phone) for each.
- **Brief description of primary care-related technical assistance needs.** If your agency has received ASTHO technical assistance related to primary care, access to care, or PCOs over the past year, please explain how participation in the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community will complement those efforts.
- **Brief description of how primary care is part of the strategic priorities for your state health department and/or state Medicaid office.**
- **Brief description of how your state health department and/or state Medicaid office is considering primary care in the context of specific health systems transformation activities,** including Medicaid waivers or other payment policies, legislation passed or pending, medical homes, care integration, etc. Please explain whether and how PCOs are involved in planning if these efforts are underway.

LOIs should be concise (approximately 3 pages) and may include attachments. Upon receipt of completed LOIs, the following criteria will be used to select the final S/THAs for participation in the Primary Care Intensive Learning Community:

- S/THAs using primary care models, care integration, and PCOs to increase access to care among vulnerable and underserved populations, such as rural communities, adolescents, and maternal/child populations;
- S/THAs with clearly articulated technical assistance needs;
- S/THAs with effective stakeholder engagement processes and/or plans; and
- S/THAs with health policy designs and/or planning processes in which primary care models feature significantly.

We look forward to your response and participation in this important initiative. Please contact Emily Moore ([emoore@astho.org](mailto:emoore@astho.org)) with any questions you may have about this application and she will be in touch via email to provide clarification or set up a call to discuss further.