

GEOProfile

Thirty-three community clinic leaders graduated from Blue Shield of California Foundation's Clinic Leadership Institute on June 26, following 18 months of intensive education and leadership development. Clinic Leadership Institute, a program of Blue Shield of California Foundation, engages emerging leaders from community clinics throughout California to position them to be visionary leaders and change agents.

Community clinics are central to California's healthcare safety net, providing care to more than 4 million people every year. Rising patient loads and uncertainty of funding has impacted community clinics over the past two years, making strong leadership more important than ever. Community clinics are also adapting to the new healthcare environment formed by the passage of federal health reform.

"Clinic Leadership Institute graduates will be leading the safety net through unprecedented times," said Brenda Solórzano, chief program director for Blue Shield of California Foundation. "The newfound tools and skills of these leaders will provide the safety net with a strong foundation for working in the post-reform environment. These times require leaders who are agile, creative and committed to providing quality care for Californians in need."

During their training with the Institute, participants engage in interactive and instructive activities focused on strategic thinking, financial management, health policy and other critical leadership skills. Participants take their knowledge back to their communities by implementing projects at their home clinics. The Center for the Health Professions at the University of California, San Francisco is the administrator for Clinic Leadership Institute.

The graduates' projects were also presented at the graduation ceremony. These projects included emergency plans to the 2009 H1N1 epidemic; creating an information exchange between electronic health records and disease registry to increase immunization rates among children; and working with local areas to direct non-emergent cases away from emergency rooms for proper care.

Clinic Leadership Institute is an outgrowth of the foundation's longstanding commitment to supporting California's healthcare safety net. Since 2003, the foundation has invested nearly \$40 million in approximately 200 health clinics, consortia, and their associations across California.

Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the largest healthcare grantmaking organizations in California. For more information, visit: www.blueshieldcafoundation.org.