



This Week in Primary Care The National Health Service Corps Issue

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) was founded in 1972, as an old guard of general practitioners retired and newly trained physicians increasingly chose to specialize. Designed to train a new generation of primary care doctors and connect them to communities that needed them, the NHSC paid participants' way through medical school in return for a term of service in a Health Professional Shortage Area after completing residency. For most participants, that meant three years on scholarship and three years of service. Over the 1970s, the budget of the program swelled 10x and the number of participating physicians increased with it, from [181 to 1800](#).

In the 1980s, amidst fears there would soon be too many physicians, Congress [restricted funding to the NHSC](#) (Major Milestones, see also the PC4AA 9/16/25 issue). At the same time, the program introduced a new mechanism: loan repayment. Instead of receiving a guaranteed prospective scholarship, some NHSC participants would have to take out large loans to pay for medical school on their own, then receive help repaying those loans during their service years. Since then, loan repayments dwarf scholarships; in [2023](#), 7,302 health professionals were on loan repayments versus 228 on scholarships.

In a [new article](#), PC4AA's Eve Shapiro talks with five physicians who participated in the National Health Service Corps about why they did it, what their service was like, and how it changed them. From organizing an interdisciplinary public-health team to care for everyone in a Tennessee town, to jumping in a 90-minute ambulance any time someone needed a C-section; from setting up a brand-new pediatrics primary care clinic, to starting in a Federally Qualified Health Center for three years of service that's now sixteen years and counting, these Corps physicians expanded access to primary care and have continued to care for those on the margins. [Read on](#) for what we can learn from the early NHSC Scholarship program—not just as a country but community by community— to build primary care for all Americans.

TONIGHT: October 21st Teach-In/Learn-In!



Teach-In/Learn-In

Tuesday, October 21

8:30pm EDT



Steve Martin

What Works: Primary Care and Community Prevention

REGISTER NOW!

bit.ly/oct21zoom

*Join PC4AA for a conversation
about making primary care
accessible for all!*

Register Now!



The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

By Eve Shapiro, October 17, 2025

As long as there are people in this country who are denied essential health services because of poverty, or race, or lack of access for any reason, we have fallen short of our promise as a Nation.

-[White House Report on Health Care Needs](#), July 10, 1969

What is the moral role of primary care in society?... Poor and rural communities... have been largely abandoned or neglected by contemporary medical practitioners.

-Fitzhugh Mullan, M.D., [Big Doctoring in America](#), 2002

[Read the Article](#)

Did you miss our most recent Teach-In/Learn-In?

Share it with friends? Watch it again?

[You can watch here!](#)



[Watch Video](#)



**Do you have skills to share?
Volunteer with Primary Care for All Americans!**

Let Us Know

Become a Primary Care Champion!

Your support will help power the movement for primary care for all!

Donate Now

We're hiring!

Primary Care for All Americans is searching for enthusiastic people for the following part-time roles. Depending on your qualifications, job descriptions may be combined or adjusted. Pay is \$20-\$30/hour, depending on experience. No experience is required, except where noted.

- The production associate will coordinate constituent relations, manage the mailing list, produce bi-weekly newsletters, manage the scheduling of meetings for multiple committees and state and local workgroups, update the website, and help out in other ways that come up. Five hours per week.
- The communications associate will develop and nurture relationships with external partners, oversee internal and external communications, including social media, and contribute to the newsletter and website.

Please express your interest by emailing us:

Email Us!

Become a Primary Care Champion!

We're excited to invite you to join us in making a meaningful difference in healthcare access for all Americans. By becoming a Primary Care Champion, you can support our vital work and help us create a healthier future for everyone.

Every contribution counts!
Together, we can drive impactful change in our communities.

Thank you for considering becoming a Primary Care Champion!

- Do you have a primary care story? Good or bad, **we want to hear it!**
- Follow PC4AA on **Instagram**, **Facebook**, and **LinkedIn!**
- We are looking for volunteers to work with our social media team! **Click here** if you are interested.
- Please **support PC4AA** in the fight for primary care for people, not for profit!

Donate Now!

HOW TO BOOST PC4AA ON SOCIALS!



Link here to our socials and more!

Each issue we showcase how access to primary care makes people healthier, saves money, and can be the cornerstone of a healthcare system that puts people over profit.

Was this newsletter forwarded to you? Do you believe in access to primary care for all Americans? [Click here to join our mailing list!](#)

[Invite a Friend to Join the Movement!](#)

Share Your Primary Care Story With Us!

Have you had an unfortunate experience trying to access primary care? A great experience with a primary care provider? Whether you are a patient, caretaker, or health care professional, we want to hear your story! How has access to primary care affected you and your family?

[Tell Us Your Story](#)

We may even ask you to share your story with our supporters in one of our Teach-In/Learn-Ins! You can watch Kristen's story for inspiration.



Watch Recordings of All Our Recent Teach-In/Learn-Ins

[PC4AA Videos](#)

The PC4AA Website is now available in Spanish!

PC4AA Español

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you believe in access to primary care for all Americans, please join our mailing list!

Join Us!

Primary Care for All Americans | 8900 Van Wyck Expressway | Jamaica, NY 11418 US

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