



Writing an Op-Ed Promoting Operation Engage and Community Health Clinics

Length

500-800 words (the shorter, the better).

Introduction

1-2 sentences that set the piece up to talk about *Operation Engage* and community health clinics. It should be timely, newsworthy, and interesting.

The introduction could simply announce that your chapter has partnered with a local clinic to expand residents' access to health care. You could also share an interesting anecdote. Or you could share a recent stat about the number of people in your community who are in need of care.

Thesis

Your thesis should make this point: Community health clinics provide a vital safety net to poor patients.

Body

Roughly half of the body should define what community health clinics are and show that they play an important role in patients' lives and in the healthcare system. Be sure to put these points in your own words.

Here are some points you could pull from and expand on that demonstrate that health clinics are a vital resource.

- Community health clinics provide low or no-cost, quality medical care to millions of Americans (how many clinics are in your area? And how many people do they serve? Here's a great resource for state specific data -- <http://www.nachc.org/research-and-data/state-level-data-maps/>
- Nationwide, community health centers serve more than 24 million patients in 9,800 rural and urban communities across America.¹
- Patients use these clinics for everything -- including primary care, women's health, prenatal care, pediatrics, preventive care, dental, optometry, HIV/AIDS care, behavioral health services, and more.
- These clinics serve some of our most vulnerable patients. Seventy-one percent of the patients at community health clinics have incomes below the federal poverty line.² Most health center patients are uninsured or publicly insured.³
- Clinics offer high quality care. Ninety-nine percent of patients are satisfied with the care they receive at health centers.⁴ Health centers perform just as well or better than private practice physicians on 94 percent of quality measures.⁵ Health centers have reduced infant mortality rates by up to 40 percent.⁶
- Health centers are extremely accessible for patients because they offer:
 - Night and weekend hours.⁷

¹ <http://nachc.org/about-our-health-centers/>

² <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Americas-Health-Centers-March-2016.pdf>

³ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Chartbook16.pdf>, figure 1.4

⁴ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Americas-Health-Centers-March-2016.pdf>

⁵ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.communityhealthcenters.org/support-chc/109-communityhealthcenterfacts.html>

⁷ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

- More preventive services.⁸
- Higher rates of accepting new patients.⁹
- Community health clinics are an important part of the healthcare system. They save money by reducing patients' use of emergency rooms, preventing hospitalizations, improving access to primary and prenatal care, preventing and managing chronic care, and more.¹⁰
 - It's estimated that these clinics save the healthcare system as much as \$24 billion a year, including \$6.7 billion in savings for the federal share of the Medicaid program.¹¹
 - Community clinics also have the potential to save the healthcare system an additional \$18 billion a year, if more people are directed to use them.¹²
 - Areas with a lot of clinics spend \$926 less per Medicare beneficiary than areas with low health center penetration.¹³
 - Health centers save \$1,263 per patient per year.¹⁴
 - Health center patients have 18 percent lower rates of emergency department visits, 64 percent lower rates of multi-day hospital admission, and one-fourth of total hospital inpatient bed days compared with non-health center patients.¹⁵
 - Total cost of care at clinics is 41 percent lower annually than it is at other providers.¹⁶
- Health clinics serve as a linchpin for the economy.
 - In 2012, they generated at least \$26.5 billion in economic activity for their communities.
 - They also produced 230,000 jobs in some of the country's most economically deprived communities.¹⁷

Roughly one-quarter of the body should discuss how these patients will enjoy expanded access to care through Operation Engage. Be sure to put these points in your own words.

- Really customize this section! How has your chapter helped to expand access to care through **Operation Engage**? Share anecdotes or stats to prove your point.

Roughly one-quarter of the body should discuss how patients can further their access to care by working with agents and brokers to secure and manage their health insurance. Be sure to put these points in your own words.

- Agents and brokers are experts.
 - Sixty-seven percent of brokers and agents have 10 or more years' worth of experience in the industry.¹⁸
 - Premiums are 13 percent lower in counties with the greatest concentration of brokers.¹⁹
 - Eighty-four percent of people who sought assistance shopping for exchange plans in 2014 rated brokers and agents "helpful" -- a higher approval rating than any other source of assistance received.²⁰
- Agents and brokers are consumer advocates.
 - Seventy-two percent of brokers and agents spend "most" or "a lot" of their time explaining coverage to clients.²¹

⁸ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

⁹ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.nihcm.org/categories/the-health-safety-net-community-health-centers-vital-role?limitstart=1#Endnotes>

¹¹ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Americas-Health-Centers-March-2016.pdf>

¹² <http://www.communityhealthcenters.org/support-chc/109-communityhealthcenterfacts.html>

¹³ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Chartbook16.pdf>, figure 5.1

¹⁴ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Quality-of-Care-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.communityhealthcenters.org/support-chc/109-communityhealthcenterfacts.html>

¹⁷ <http://nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Americas-Health-Centers-March-2016.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8321-f.pdf> (pg. 7)

¹⁹ <http://khn.org/news/brokers-associated-with-more-cheaper-health-coverage-study-says/> (actual data is here on page 39 <http://www2.census.gov/ces/wp/2013/CES-WP-13-58.pdf>)

²⁰ <http://hrms.urban.org/briefs/obtaining-information-on-marketplace.html>

²¹ <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8321-f.pdf> (pg 7)

- Forty-nine percent of brokers and agents spend "most" or "a lot" of their time investigating coverage options for clients.²²
- Nineteen percent of brokers and agents in the individual market spend "most" or "a lot" of their time helping clients resolve claims questions or disputes with their carriers.²³
- Agents and brokers can improve consumers' access to healthcare by informing them of their options.
 - Two-thirds of the Americans who signed up for Medicaid since 2014 actually qualified for the program before the ACA.²⁴ They just weren't aware they were eligible. Having agents/brokers meet with patients and explain different insurance options will expand coverage.

Conclusion

The conclusion should hammer home the importance of community health clinics and explain how patients will receive improved access to healthcare through *Operation Engage*.

²² <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8321-f.pdf> (pg 7)

²³ <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8321-f.pdf> (pg 7)

²⁴ http://econlog.econlib.org/archives/2016/12/good_news_on_re.html