

IBM Launches Health Corps to Help Communities Around The World Address Public Health Challenges

Pilot Project with D.C.-Based Unity Health Care Will Address Behavioral Health

Washington, D.C. - 12 Apr 2016: Today at the [13th Annual World Health Care Congress](#), IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) unveiled a first-of-its-kind corporate citizenship program called the [IBM Health Corps](#). The new service initiative will bring IBM's top talent and cognitive technologies to help communities address health challenges such as primary care gaps, health worker shortages, and access to safe water and nutritious food.

As the promise of data-driven solutions emerges in healthcare, the initiative will dispatch the company's leading innovators with expertise in data, analytics, and artificial intelligence to work alongside public health leaders to understand their challenges and implement sustainable, data-driven solutions for health problems identified by the communities themselves.

IBM plans to pilot the Health Corps in a project with [Unity Health Care](#) in May. Based in Washington, D.C., Unity, one of the nation's largest community health centers, provides primary care to more than 100,000 underserved residents through its 26 local clinics, including those based in schools and homeless shelters. As the health community increasingly recognizes the need to bridge the gap between siloed health care services, Unity plans to integrate behavioral health into its primary care practices. Unity believes that this could benefit individuals whose emotional or behavioral health issues exacerbate their other chronic diseases. Unity believes it may also lower emergency and long-term health expenses. The Health Corps team will be tasked with creating an operational blueprint for piloting and scaling a model for clinics that combines both primary and behavioral health care within each care team.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with IBM Health Corps to help us address our patients' behavioral health needs," said Seiji Hayashi, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Executive Vice President for Transformation and Innovation, Unity Health Care, Inc. "With their expertise in data analytics and population health capabilities, IBM's support will catalyze our work and help us improve the quality of life for thousands of people in the D.C. community."

Later this year following a competitive proposal process, IBM will select five communities to receive the expertise of IBM's best problem solving teams equipped with relevant health and technical expertise in

disciplines such as cognitive, cloud, mobile and social computing; predictive analytics; medicine and population health, who will analyze the local health challenges, then recommend detailed solutions. These might include blueprints and strategies for organizational, programmatic, technological, and operational enhancements. The commercial value of each engagement is estimated at USD \$500,000. Applications may be submitted to IBM through April 20th by visiting ibmhealthcorps.org.

Already, IBM has completed two successful pilot programs through engagements that took place in late 2015:

- In **Calderdale, U.K.**, where more than 65 percent of adults are overweight or obese, IBM Health Corps partnered with the Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council to help tailor its health outreach and design specialized physical activity programs. The IBM team used cognitive technology to analyze unstructured data, such as social workers' case notes, to help officials identify the unique needs of vulnerable populations, including foster youth and elderly residents, to help them make better health decisions and increase their levels of physical activity. Insights gleaned from the data could lead to more effective programs, partnerships and policies to encourage physical activity for Calderdale's citizenry.
- In **Johannesburg, South Africa**, IBM Health Corps collaborated with Africa Health Placements to address acute physician shortages. IBM built a mobile-enabled application that will allow clinic and hospital administrators to directly report staffing needs to the government in real time. The team also built a mathematical model for use by health managers and policy makers to analyze and visualize the data captured from the facilities and better deploy medical staff. Together, these technologies aim to facilitate better short- and long-term staffing decisions, potentially leading to better health outcomes, decreased patient wait times, and more equitable healthcare for communities. IBM, Africa Health Placements and the South African Department of Health plan to pilot these technologies shortly.

"We've been fascinated during this project to see how Watson can be applied," said Merran McRae, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council Chief Executive. "We don't tend to think of free-form text as a source of data for analysis, and our work with IBM has really broadened our minds as to what is data, what is information and how can we turn that into a usable insight to help guide our interventions. We found Watson absolutely mind-blowing."

"Our work with IBM Health Corps shows the potential of mobile technologies at the front-end in primary care facilities and high impact visual modelling at the policymaker level to provide important insights and link key players in the health care management chain," said Saul Kornik, CEO of Africa Health Placements. "Real time insights can improve decision making and planning that will have real impact on healthcare access and patient's lives."

The announcement was made during IBM Chairman, President and CEO Ginni Rometty's keynote at the 13th Annual World Health Care Congress in Washington, D.C.

IBM's History of Community Service

The roots of IBM's new pro bono health grant program lie in IBM's existing community service problem solving programs that address issues ranging from urban resiliency to economic development. One such program – IBM's [Corporate Service Corps](#), often called the private sector version of the Peace Corps – has dispatched nearly 3,000 IBM employees on more than 1,000 team projects across 38 countries over the last eight years.

Meanwhile, IBM's [Smarter Cities Challenge](#), another community service program focused on urban problems such transportation and economic development, has sent IBM problem solving teams to nearly 130 cities worldwide, with approximately 800 IBM top experts delivering pro bono services valued at more than USD \$66 million.

Both Corporate Service Corps and Smarter Cities Challenge have included health-related projects. For instance, IBM pro bono teams have collaborated with mayors, government leaders, and non-profits to strengthen data infrastructure, collection and analysis to address food deserts in Birmingham, Alabama; chronic asthma in Louisville, Kentucky; and 911 emergency services in Memphis, Tennessee. Other health-related projects have included efforts to improve planning and operations in Ghana, Africa and Cusco, Peru to combat mother-to-child transmission of HIV and cervical cancer.

Learn more about the Health Corps pilot projects on the [IBM THINK Blog](#).

For more information about IBM's philanthropic efforts, please visit www.citizenIBM.com or follow [@CitizenIBM](#) on Twitter.
