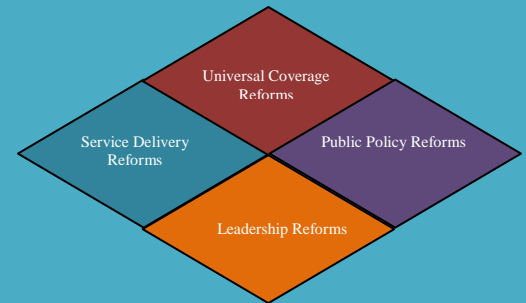


## Primary Health Care and Community Oriented Primary Care: A Collaborative, Cooperative, and Coordinated Approach to Meeting the Health Needs of a Community



World Health  
Organization



In 1978, the International Conference of Primary Health Care, sponsored by the World Health Organization, issued the Declaration of Alma-Ata.<sup>1</sup> The Declaration asserted that,

Primary health care is essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination.

Community Oriented Primary Care (in which a local health system takes responsibility for the health of an identified community and in collaboration with the community: identifies the public and personal health problems facing the community; develops and implements community appropriate public and personal health care interventions; measures the impact of the interventions; and corrects plans and actions based on lessons learned) was much discussed during the decade prior to the Declaration and served as the impetus for the development of the Community Health Center program supported by the federal government beginning in the late 1960's with the "War on Poverty." While COPC was not mentioned in the Declaration, it is entirely consistent with every aspect of the Declaration, and represents a means of achieving the ideal expressed in the Declaration.

In 2008, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, WHO issued a report, *Now More Than Ever*,<sup>2</sup> that summarizes lessons learned from evaluation of past efforts to achieve the ideal stated in the Declaration, and that identifies four reform strategies to pursue to bridge the gaps between where we are and where we would like to be. The reforms are: policy innovation to achieve universal access and social protection; health service delivery innovation to promote collaboration, cooperation, and coordination between public and personal health care providers; health policy innovation to promote the integration of public and personal health; and leadership innovation to promote inclusive, participatory, negotiation-based, long-term, and community appropriate health system solutions.

The Health Access Summit offers an opportunity to apply lessons learned in Primary Health Care and Community Oriented Primary Care to a substantial problem facing the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo county, and New Mexico. We are fortunate that we have a long successful history in New Mexico with community based collaboration, cooperation, and coordination, and that we have many individuals and organizations with the experience and commitment in community-based approaches necessary to the development of a comprehensive and successful systems solution to the problem focus of the Health Access Summit.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/publications/almaata\\_declaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/publications/almaata_declaration_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.who.int/whr/2008/whr08\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/whr/2008/whr08_en.pdf)