

## A multi-site study of community health centers' readiness to address COVID-19 in the U.S.

**Rationale:** The purpose of the focus groups is to understand, from the participants' perspective, the 1) organizational and individual strengths and gaps in preparedness, 2) role of technology, particularly telehealth, and 3) secondary consequences, including psychosocial impact, of COVID-19.

### Organizational and Individual Strengths and Gaps in Preparedness

#### Current Organizational Policies and Procedures

What current policies and procedures does your health center have in place to address emergencies (e.g., bioterrorism, disease outbreaks, natural disasters)?

*Probe about understanding of related infrastructure, communications, precautions, training and education, safety.*

What are the barriers and facilitators to implementing the described policies and procedures?

*Probe about both internal and external factors that support/hinder implementation of their respective health centers' plans for responding adequately to emergencies.*

Do you have any concerns about your health center's decision making during emergency events? Specifically to COVID-19?

*Probe about potential difficulties around decision making including ownership, management direction, cooperative efforts and decision making, disagreements over policy, responsibility, and management response.*

#### Organizational and Individual Preparedness for COVID-19

To date, what measures has your health center taken to specifically prepare for COVID-19?

*Probe about activities that health center has adopted, implemented, and/or planned specifically in preparation for COVID-19.*

To what extent do you, as a provider, feel equipped and prepared for COVID-19?

*Probe about understanding of healthcare guidance around COVID-19 including prevention and control, screening/diagnostic testing/management, processes for reporting persons under investigation (PUIs), evaluation and management of close contacts of PUIs, safety precautions.*

### Role of Technology (particularly Telehealth) (15 Minutes)

#### Role of Technology

To what extent have technological advances improved capacity to prepare for and respond to COVID-19 at the healthcare systems level? Your specific health center? Your role?

*Probe about potential improvements around communications across the field, staff, and patients. Probe about the role of technology today (2020) compared to prior emergencies (e.g., anthrax and bioterrorism in early 2000s).*

## **Use of Telehealth**

[For participants from health centers using telehealth]: For those of you who use any form of telehealth at your health center, what forms of telehealth do you use? How does telehealth fit into your strategy for combatting COVID-19?

*Probe about types of telehealth used (e.g., eConsults, live telehealth, telephone patient consultation, remote patient monitoring, Project ECHO).*

## **Secondary Consequences of COVID-19**

### **Impact on Health System and Health Workers**

What are your concerns, if any, around the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 and related efforts, on the health system? On health workers?

*Probe about potential secondary consequences of COVID-19 and related efforts, including health workers' mental health (e.g., stress, trauma), health systems' capacity to respond?*

### **Impact on Patients**

What are your concerns, if any, around the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 and related efforts on patients?

*Probe about concerns around fear and isolation of the sick and quarantined; breakdown of social support structures (e.g., social isolation); stigmatization of those with COVID-19; discrimination and marginalization of Asian Americans.*

## **Closing**

Is there anything else you would like to share that I haven't already asked?

*Thank participant for his/her time.*