



FEATURED MEMBER



The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) builds healthy communities by supporting qualified health care providers dedicated to working in areas of the United States with limited access to care. More than 40,000 primary care medical, dental, and mental and behavioral health professionals have served in the NHSC since its inception. Today, there are more than 10,000 NHSC members providing culturally competent care to more than 10.5 million people. We provide this care at more than 14,000 NHSC-approved health care sites in urban, rural, and frontier areas. The following story demonstrates the impact our members are having every day.

Jonathan Leggett – Psychologist, Vermillion-Parke Community Health Center, Cayuga, Indiana

HIS STORY: Growing up in extreme poverty in the towns of Meridian, MS and Mobile, AL, instilled in Dr. Jonathan Leggett a drive to tackle the issues and obstacles to success in these tight knit communities – such as limited access to health care. When he first arrived in Cayuga, Indiana to serve in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) at the community health clinic, he sensed that he could do the type of work that would not only help patients at the clinic, but also impact people throughout Cayuga and even Vermillion County.

Yet, with his experience growing up, he understood that he first needed to earn the trust of those around him; so he immersed himself and showed that his commitment to the community went beyond his time at the clinic. He joined a local church, became a member of the local Optimist Club, and was elected Vice President of the Local Coordinating Council for a Drug Free Vermillion County. Additionally, he worked with the pastor of his church to provide a 6-8 week marriage therapy seminar that focused on communication, expectations, and recognizing patterns of violence.

“Working here has made me feel like a part of the community,” said Dr. Leggett. “I’m involved in so many ways and in so many places, I feel like I’m having a much broader impact and I am more connected than I was in previous experiences.”

Dr. Leggett has worked at the Vermillion-Parke Community Health Center since 2010 and joined the NHSC in September of 2011 after a friend and NHSC alumni encouraged him to apply while he was receiving his Ph.D. While he recognizes and appreciates the financial benefits of the program, it was the opportunity to work with populations in need that drew him to the NHSC.

He has already seen the impact of his dedication to this community, which has included identifying and tailoring programs to meet specific mental health issues. These programs have been geared towards addressing substance abuse, domestic violence, and unhealthy communication in relationships which are often repetitive, interconnected and cyclical.

One patient who for years relied on alcohol and other substances to manage his mental health disorders has stopped abusing. The care he received resulted in his ability to assume a more active role as a father and husband. In addition, Dr. Leggett developed an internship for master’s-level students to counsel adolescences in Vermillion County Public Schools. Currently, their work is centered on teaching children communication skills, emotion management, and ways to deal with abusive parents—all similar issues that Dr. Leggett has seen among the patients in the adult population of Vermillion County.

“I can help people at the clinic who are involved in substance abuse,” he said, “but I am also trying to devise solutions for those in the community who may never come through my door. Dr. Leggett added that he hopes his efforts result in a reduction in the amount of people who rely on substances to cope with their problems.

“I’ve fallen in love with trying to help this community,” he said. “I would recommend that people join NHSC because it’s a rewarding experience—beyond the financial benefits.”