



## National Association of Community Health Centers

CCL® coaching rounds out a substantial investment  
in the development of senior organizational leaders

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) administers a year-long developmental program for executives of member facilities – not-for-profit health centers across America that provide care for poor, migrant and homeless communities. The program is open to established senior leaders who apply as a team, and more than 140 individuals have graduated since its inception in 1999. The goal: improve the performance of these leaders in ways that benefit them, their health centers, the people they serve, and the greater healthcare field.

The EXCELL program is impressively strong, combining formal coursework in leadership and management, 360-degree assessments and specialized skill training. However, early evaluations and feedback from participants revealed they struggled to apply what they were learning to the realities of the workplace. The EXCELL faculty and leadership team concluded that a coaching component might be the best way to solve that challenge, and they brought the Center for Creative Leadership aboard to help create it.

CCL research has shown that integrating coaching with a classroom-based program can measurably increase its value. Findings indicate that coached participants, as compared with uncoached participants, set fewer, more focused developmental goals and are more successful at achieving their goals than uncoached participants and they demonstrate significant improvements in a variety of leadership skills.

CCL coaching became a voluntary option for EXCELL participants in 2001, and about one-third of the 45 attending chose it. The program consisted of 10 hours of telephone coaching over the course of the year, beginning with a two-hour feedback and planning session to process assessment data, formulate long- and short-term developmental goals, and prepare short-term strategic action plans. The coaching allowed participants to work through a range of

### OBJECTIVES:

- Increase transfer of learning from the program to the work setting
- Provide personalized attention to individual, team and organizational issues
- Facilitate formulation of practical goals and action plans

### OUTCOMES:

- Coaching allows participants to problem-solve in real time
- Participants judge coaching among the most beneficial elements in their development
- Very high retention rate among graduates of the program

workplace concerns they were personally facing and to receive practical advice about enhancing their leadership styles.

The leaders reported that the coaching enabled them to do realtime problem solving, applying the content from the EXCELL curriculum in many cases and at other times benefiting from the additional frames of reference and resources provided by their coaches. CCL coaching became an integral part of the program in 2002.

The program design has since been enhanced to allow participants to meet their coaches at the first workshop of the year for brief oneto- one meetings and discussions of their data. In addition to individual coaching, leadership teams have the option of being coached together. At their discretion, a team may even set up on-site visits by their coach to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of their particular health center. “The CCL coaches have become familiar with the specific complexities of the health centers,” notes NACHC Chief Medical Officer Tom Curtin, who utilized and evaluated CCL coaching during the first year. “That helps build immediate credibility among the new participants that the coaches have this past experience.”