

Primary care extension program should be funded, study says

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(HealthDay)—The Primary Care Extension Program (PCEP) has the potential to transform primary care and needs to be funded, according to a study published in the March/April issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Robert L. Phillips Jr., M.D., from the American Board of Family Medicine in Washington, D.C., and colleagues explain how the PCEP, which was authorized but not funded by the 2010 [Affordable Care](#) Act, is critical to enhancing primary care effectiveness, integrating primary care and public health, and translating research into practice.

The researchers draw an analogy between how the Cooperative Extension Program of the U.S. [Department of Agriculture](#) sped the modernization of farming a century ago and how the PCEP could speed the transformation of primary care through local deployment of community-based Health Extension Agents. The authors call for \$120 million in annual federal funding for the PCEP, with a target of \$500 million for future appropriations, saying the PCEP could speed the transformation of primary care, integrating primary care with public health and translating research into practice. The urgency of these goals requires rapidly building the PCEP, the authors say.

"In conclusion, the rapid pace of change in health care demands that a PCEP be viewed as an essential, and not optional, ingredient for transformation of primary care and improvement of [population health](#)," the authors write.

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