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ONE MILLION ENROLLMENTS IN ELEARNING AND DISTANT LEARNING COURSES: OPEN UNIVERSITY OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM OF BRAZIL (UNASUS)

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Background: Distance Learning Education in Health Field is growing and new challenges are presented to reach health professionals working in remote areas.

Introduction: The Open University of the Unified Health System (UNA- SUS) promotes continuous health education based on the principles of distance learning to Brazilian health workforce, mainly primary care.

Materials and Methods: We performed a descriptive analysis from all enrollments in UNA-SUS distinguishing Professional Qualification and Specialization courses. Data was collected directly from UNA-SUS information system, from 2008 to 2017.

Results: From 2008 to nowadays, UNA-SUS had 936,746 enrollments in 21 Specialization and 90 Qualification Courses, reaching 485,731 professionals (mean of 1.92 courses per alumnus), distributed in 5,431 Brazilian municipalities, 62% of them with a population of 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. Alumni were mainly women (78.4%), nurses (24.18%), working in primary care (37.31%) Conclusion rates were 80,1% for Specialization courses, with 65% graduated and 15,1% failed. Conclusion rates for open online courses where 28,9%.

Discussion: Reaching 96% of all Brazilian cities and 485,731 alumni, UNA-SUS was capable to deliver health education to countryside and to other health professional's shortage areas, such as indigenous districts and metropolis outskirts. UNA-SUS succeeded in expanding tenfold specialization seats for family health and have good results in e-learning qualification courses.

Conclusions: UNA-SUS has innovated continuous education to health professionals in Brazil. Courses seem to have responded the previous unattended educational needs of the workforce, mainly due to reaching primary care professionals in smaller towns and remote areas, consolidating itself as a nationwide continuous education provider.

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