



# ACCESS INFORMATION

**I** am pleased to report that work is well underway on The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant. Project Access staff and volunteers have been busy planning strategy and tackling details.

Dwight Allen, executive director of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County, and I traveled to Houston to learn more about the grant's requirements and to meet representatives from the 19 other programs who also received a RWJF "Communities in Charge" grant.

Jim Burnosky of Medimetrix, the national health care management firm directing the grant, returned to Wichita to provide technical assistance and share models of success.

As a result of these activities, the following plan is underway:

- 1) To gather demographic data about the chronically underserved, uninsured population in Wichita-Sedgwick County.
- 2) To conduct an actuarial analysis of the demographic data and determine what is the cost of serving the identified population.
- 3) To design a business plan with a financing strategy mechanism, including possible funding sources, to address the health care needs of the uninsured.

*We are operating on a short time frame, but I have total confidence that our community partnership will continue to build on the success we have already achieved.*



Anne Nelson  
Program Director

## Hospitals Vital To Program's Success

**T**reating patients without health insurance is not new to the Wichita area's major hospitals — Riverside Health System, Via Christi Health System and Wesley Medical Center. Their commitment to the health and well-being of the community led them to be early proponents of Project Access.

"The dynamic leadership of the local hospitals has truly made it possible to implement Project Access in our community," said Anne Nelson, program director.

Three administrators representing their individual hospitals have played key roles. Their perspectives on the program follow:

### Pat O'Donnell Via Christi Health System

Via Christi was working on a similar project when Pat O'Donnell first heard about Project Access.



"We immediately signed on to help develop Project

Access," said O'Donnell, director of Community Mission Services. "It was a great idea and we didn't want to duplicate efforts."

O'Donnell was particularly intrigued by the program's cooperative focus. "Via Christi has always worked with the community clinics. Project Access, though, offered a more systematic, collaborative approach. Partnering with the medical society to add the physician

volunteer component just made so much sense."

Working with his competitors was not a problem. "From the very beginning, all the hospitals worked extremely well together. We need to be strong allies to improve health care for the community."

Project Access has been in operation only six months, but the benefits are already clear to O'Donnell. "Having one central point for referrals is such a big benefit for Via Christi. It is helping us to better manage our charity care, to serve more folks and to enhance our community partnerships."

The benefits for the community are clear. "It's providing the hospitals, doctors, insurers, the city and county — everyone involved — a better picture of the scope of the problem. As Project Access matures, I hope we can develop a model to grow beyond immediate care needs and reach people before health problems occur."

### Cheryl Dixon Riverside Health System



Better coordination of patient care is what appealed to Cheryl Dixon when she became involved with Project Access.

"It is a more holistic approach to patient care," Dixon, director of Continuing Care Services, said.

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## IN THE KNOW

- Good Samaritan Clinic begins enrolling patients on April 3, completing the process of linking all area clinics to Project Access.
- The number of physicians participating in Project Access has increased to 460. The total number of patients enrolled is 569.

### THANK YOU

**Dr. Christopher Moeller** for presenting the Project Access story at the annual meeting of the United Way of the Plains.

**Wichita City Council and Sedgwick County Commission, and their representatives Sarah Gilbert (City) and Renfeng Ma (County)**, for their assistance in finalizing details related to funding for patient prescriptions.

**Dr. Katherine Latimer, anesthesiologist**, for recruiting additional anesthesiologists to participate in Project Access.

### THANK YOU

**to the following clinics who are new Project Access partners and the individuals who assisted with the process:**

#### **Wesley OB-GYN Residency Clinic**

Dr. Douglas Horbett, medical director

#### **Wesley Family Practice Residency Clinic**

Dr. Carol Johnson, medical director

### CORRECTION

**Harry Funke** is affiliated with Via Christi's Home Medical Services.

## Hospitals Support Project Access

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"Project Access offers a continuity of care for those patients who come to Riverside, enabling us to better serve patients after they leave."

Dixon concurs that Project Access is an extension of what Wichita's hospitals were already doing. "The local hospitals collectively have supported the indigent care clinics for years, providing diagnostic services and other support. Joining Project Access was a natural step for us."

The near problem-free introduction of Project Access is particularly pleasing to Dixon. "Implementing the program has gone very smoothly. It has been exciting to be part of the process, to see the numbers of people enrolling in Project Access increase."

When asked about the value of Project Access to the community, Dixon responds that "it is bringing the issue of the uninsured to the forefront. It adds the human, personal side to the problem. I hope that with the Project Access planning grant, the community will collectively take this issue to the next level and seek long-term solutions on a larger scale."

### Valerie McGhee Wesley Medical Center

Since joining the planning efforts for Project Access, Valerie McGhee,



director of Guest and Senior Services, has witnessed "a lot of desire to make this work. The community is recognizing the need to care for people

who have fallen through the cracks in the health care delivery system. With Project Access, we can now document that patients without insurance delay care. If we can head off illness and injury, we can decrease the number of people using emergency rooms unnecessarily and improve the overall quality of health in the community."

McGhee agrees that the Project Access system has worked remarkably well. "It is almost scary how easy this has been. Our staff used to spend hours on the phone to find free services and other resources. With Project Access, we don't have to go through so many hoops. We want people to get the best possible care and this program helps make that happen. It's wonderful the number of physicians willing to donate their services. The medication component is also a huge benefit. Patients can receive the medicines they need."

Is it any wonder that Project Access is a success?

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