



# ACCESS INFORMATION

**R**ecently, a small group of Project Access patients agreed to meet with the program staff. The enlightening conversation served as our first Consumer Participation Committee meeting.

We asked the consumers to define some of the barriers to accessing health insurance based on their experiences. The responses were very interesting and included:

- Insurance is either not available or the premiums cost too much when it is available.
- No access to insurance exists for people who cannot work.
- Insurance only covers catastrophic illness or injury.
- When insurance can be used is confusing.
- Insurance doesn't pay for certain services or procedures. Why pay premiums when services are denied and patients have to pay for the care anyway?
- Filling out paperwork is frustrating and difficult at the time of application and when accessing services.

During the discussion, patients also shared their gratitude for the care provided by area physicians through Project Access. A resounding "thank you" was expressed by all. I join these patients and the community in thanking you for the care you provide every day and for your generous contributions to Project Access patients.



Anne Nelson  
Program Director

## Residency Clinics Have History Providing Medical Care Locally

**L**ong before Project Access existed, even before the KU School of Medicine built the Wichita campus in the 1970s, resident physicians were meeting the health care needs of the local community.

Today, residents work with patients at family practice residency clinics located at Via Christi-St. Francis, Via Christi-St. Joseph or Wesley Hospital. They also receive training at residency clinics specializing in internal medicine, surgery, orthopaedics, OB/GYN, pediatrics, radiology, anesthesiology and psychiatry.

Residency programs are traditionally based at hospitals with full-time teaching staffs and on-site outpatient clinics. Wichita, however, is a leader in the development of a community-based residency training programs which rely on volunteer physician faculty and utilize medical facilities throughout the city.

"D. Cramer Reed (respected Wichita physician who spearheaded the campaign for a medical school in Wichita) always said that when we were looking for a manual 30 years ago on how to establish a community-based teaching program, there wasn't one," remarked Dr. Joe Meek, dean of KUSM-Wichita. "Well, there still isn't one,

but now Wichita is a model for the rest of the country."

Whether working at one of the nine residency clinics, area hospitals, the Wichita-Sedgwick County Health Department, indigent care clinics or in private practice offices, resident physicians provide quality medical care while gaining valuable learning experiences.

"It's often referred to as a 'school without walls'," said Dr. Garold Minns, chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at KUSM-Wichita. "Residents work and learn in a real-life atmosphere. They are learning what real-life medicine is like."

"Wichita is a great place to train," commented Dr. Richard Leu, director of Via Christi's Family Practice Residency Program. "Every hospital is a teaching hospital."

And practically every physician is a teaching physician. "Out of the 800 or so doctors in Sedgwick County, 500-600 volunteer in the resident teaching program," Meek proudly stated. "They are committed to physician education, and reimbursement for their efforts isn't an issue."

With such a strong local commitment to service, it is little wonder that the integration of Project



Dr. Sarah Fischer (left) and Dr. Lynnette Jacobsen are two residents who work with patients at the Family Practice Clinic at Via Christi - St. Francis campus.

## IN THE KNOW

- As of June 26... 500 physicians are participating in Project Access. 946 patients are enrolled in Project Access.
- Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation, Inc. submitted a grant application on behalf of Project Access to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. If accepted, the \$950,000 grant will fund a coordinated system of health care delivery for Sedgwick County's uninsured. Twenty programs will be funded nationwide.
- Project Access has submitted an application to United Way of the Plains for a 2001 venture grant totalling \$160,000, an increase of \$40,000 over the amount funded in 2000 for administrative support and office-related expenses.
- A commercial produced by United Way of the Plains that highlights Project Access is airing on local TV channels.

### THANK YOU . . .

**Dr. S. Edwards Dismuke, Ruth Wetta-Hall and Ed Fonner** for their help and support with Project Access' grant-writing activities.

**Lori Labarca and staff at Via Christi Rehabilitation Services** who agreed to provide rehabilitative services for patients.

**Dave Jones and United Cerebral Palsy of Kansas** for their interest in partnering with Project Access.

**Earl Eversole, director, Broadway Home Health Care,** for his commitment to donate some medical equipment to Project Access.

## Residency Program

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Access into the area's health care delivery system has proceeded smoothly and quickly.

"The residency clinics provided care to patients who do not have medical insurance or have limited income long before Project Access was envisioned," Meek explained. "Project Access has expanded the residency clinics' philosophy of providing quality care regardless of ability to pay."

The residency programs have benefitted from the establishment of Project Access. "Wichita has a strong community of physicians dedicated to serving patients," Leu noted. "Project Access has helped to equalize the playing field for caring for patients without insurance. No one minds doing their fair share."

"Project Access has assisted the residency clinics with sub-specialty referrals, hospital care, laboratory work and patient prescriptions," Minns said. "It has brought in additional support from other entities, such as United Way and the city and county governments. And Project Access has demonstrated to medical students and resident physicians how ideas from the

community can solve local problems."

Anne Nelson, program director of Project Access, gives Dr. Rick Kellerman, chair of the KUSM-Wichita department of Family and Community Medicine, much of the credit for the residency clinics' involvement with Project Access.

"From the beginning, Dr. Kellerman was an important link with the residency programs. He helped us to forge a partnership with the residency clinics which are so critical to our community's efforts to serve the uninsured citizens of Wichita-Sedgwick County."

When Dr. Minns first learned of Project Access he

wondered "why did it take us so long to figure this out?" The simplicity of everyone doing their part appealed to him. Dr. Leu asked "where do we fit in?" and soon realized that Project Access would enhance the quality and range of patient care already available at the residency clinics. Dr. Meek understood that Project Access would complement the residency program's commitment to education and service.

"It's been a win-win situation for the entire community," Meek observed. He is right.



*Dr. Tracy Elliott, a resident working at the KUSM-Wichita Patient Care Center, checks patient Ted Mays.*

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