



IN THE KNOW

- **Kansas Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius** has announced that the preliminary process of finding ways to make health insurance affordable to all Kansans is nearly complete. Thanks to a \$1.3 million federal grant, Sebelius commissioned the largest-ever study of the health insurance market, including a massive survey of Kansas consumers. A committee of policymakers, consumers and businesspersons has been working to develop a plan to make health insurance affordable to all Kansans within five years. Project Access assisted with the research by setting up interviews with several of its patients. Sebelius visited Wichita on October 16 as part of the process of conducting statewide meetings to inform Kansans of the research gathered thus far and to obtain public feedback. For more information, visit www.ksinsurance.org
- The Project Access informational brochure is now available in Spanish and Vietnamese as well as English. To obtain copies for your office, please call the office at 688-0600.
- Any physician who wants to refer a Project Access patient to a particular colleague is asked to please check first with the program office, 688-0600. The staff can verify that the physician being referred to is participating in the program.

ACCESS INFORMATION

Project Access Receives HRSA Grant

Once again, Project Access has successfully completed the rigorous process of submitting a grant proposal and undergoing a site visit. The U.S. Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) selected Wichita-Sedgwick County in September as one of 60 communities to receive funds through its Community Access Program (CAP). The \$1 million one-year grant award began September 1 and runs through August 31, 2002.



With such a short timeframe, the program's staff, volunteers and community partners have lost no time setting up work groups to implement the grant's goal to improve access to the local health care system for the uninsured.

A task force to develop a case management program has already been established. Made up of representatives from SRS, Via Christi Regional Medical Center-St. Francis and St. Joseph campuses and Wesley Medical Center, the task-force will develop protocols and outcomes and hire teams of social workers and nurses who will be based at each hospital. The case management teams, funded by the CAP grant, will work to link patients identified by each hospital to primary care providers.

Ed Dismuke, MD, dean of the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, is heading another group to study the impact of the new efforts on lowering hospital usage and costs.

"We're very excited about this latest grant and the opportunity it

affords us to develop case managers at each hospital," said Anne Nelson, Project Access program director. "We believe it will provide a significant benefit to the patients and the hospitals, both in the immediate future and in the long run."

Wichita Represented at National Conferences

October was a month of travel for Anne Nelson, program director, who attended two conferences — one for programs receiving grants from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the other for those receiving HRSA CAP awards.

Chris Cherches, Wichita city manager, and Joe Meek, MD, accompanied Nelson to Cleveland for the RWJF "cluster meeting." Improving political and legislative relationships to enhance the program's long-term sustainability was the purpose of the conference.

The group returned with ideas to better integrate with the business community and local, state and national legislators.

"We have a true public-private partnership that many other cities have not fully developed," Cherches commented. "It was delightful to learn that Wichita continues to be a leader in addressing the issues of the uninsured, thanks to the commitment of the medical community."

Nelson, along with Dwight Allen, executive director of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County,

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Patients Grateful For Program's Help

Asking patients about their experiences with Project Access is an important component of the program's commitment to evaluating its effectiveness. Betsy Bloxham, whose involvement with the program began in its early stages of development, is under contract to collect and compile this information for Project Access.

The process of surveying patients includes mailing a two-page questionnaire and return envelope to each participant at the conclusion of his or her enrollment period in Project Access. Patients are asked to respond to eight Likert-scale questions about their satisfaction with the program and are invited to add any comments. Bloxham records the patient responses verbatim.

"They speak for themselves," said Bloxham. "It is very compelling to read their comments. We've even received responses written in Spanish."

The great percentage of comments are positive — 90% according to Bloxham — but negative responses receive followup attention. "We view all patient comments as a way to improve our program."

A sample of patient comments who were surveyed in April, May and June is listed below:

"You helped give me back my eyesight. No words can express the thanks I feel. But Thank You.

"Your project was the ONLY possible way I could have ever had my surgery. Your staff was so professional and helpful and I felt very welcomed, not belittled. Just want to thank you and Thank God for your program."

"I would like to thank all of you at Project Access. If it were not for your help I would not have been able to have my knee surgery. I thank you very much."

"I would just like to say that Project Access was a real blessing in my life. I thought I would have to live with my condition for the rest of my life. But now I am hopeful and looking forward to new things and living my life to the fullest. I am now enrolled in school and am setting goals for a new career! Thank you very much, and God Bless You."

"Really appreciated the no hassle and no waiting period. You were there when I needed your services the most. Thank you."

"This program is a great benefit to the our community. Thank you for offering it and assisting when the time is needed. Your staff is understanding, caring and respectful. Thanks a million!"

National Conferences

continued from front

traveled to Washington, DC. There, they interacted with other representatives working to developing initiatives to coordinate their community's efforts to extend health care for the uninsured. Connecting computerized patient database systems, developing case management programs, integrating mental and dental health services and working with public and private entities were a few of the topics covered in various workshops and breakout sessions.

"Considering recent national events, this meeting highlighted the importance of programs like Project Access," Nelson added.

NUMBERS COUNT

2,560 patients are enrolled in Project Access as of October 31

547 physicians are participating in Project Access

\$3,730,067 is the total amount of care donated by physicians who have submitted HCFAs

\$8,536,270 is the total amount of care donated by area hospitals who have submitted UB92s

\$521,524 is the total amount of prescriptions purchased with funding provided by the Sedgwick County Commission and the Wichita City Council and filled at no charge by **69 participating pharmacies**

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