



## IN THE KNOW

- Project Access has added additional eligibility criteria to its enrollment process. Eligibility guidelines now state that patients must:
  - be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent U.S. residents with legal proof of residency.
  - reside in Sedgwick County.
  - have no health insurance and not receive Medicaid, Medicare, HealthWave or Veteran's benefits.
  - have a gross household income at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.
- Due to a significant increase in prescription medication expenses, Project Access has discontinued enrolling patients for prescription-only enrollment at the area indigent care clinics. Prior to this decision, Project Access was able to financially assist some patients who were receiving primary care through the community clinics with their medication needs. However, with increased demands on Project Access's prescription funding, this practice was ended as of March 1, 2002.
- Physician offices are reminded to ask Project Access patients to present their ID card during all physician visits. It should not be assumed that a patient is currently enrolled in the program unless identification is provided. Please direct any eligibility questions to Project Access at 688-0600, and please submit your billing forms for tracking purposes.

# ACCESS INFORMATION

## Project Access Celebrates Its Success

The Olive Tree Banquet Room was filled on March 6 with Project Access supporters, community partners and participating physicians who joined the program in celebrating its achievements since opening its doors on September 1, 1999. "Caring and Connecting For A Better Community" was the theme for this community forum.

Christopher Moeller, MD, welcomed the attendees and updated the group on the impact of Project Access. Moeller, president of the Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation, remarked that the health care community has donated \$14 million in care, and SRS and Project Access have reviewed eligibility for 14,000 people during the last two and-a-half years. With the support of city and county governments, the program has purchased over \$700,000 in prescription medications. Physician participation has continued to grow to include 560 physicians — 66% of members of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County.

Also of significance is the nearly \$2,000,000 in grant funding received by Project Access from various federal, private foundation and community grants. "These are

funds that would not have come to our community before or would not have been used to address access to health care," Moeller pointed out.

One of the major grant funders of Project Access in Wichita is The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. James Burnosky of MediMetrix, the

organization contracted to manage RWJF's Communities in Charge grants, shared his perspective on Project Access and its role in the national effort to expand health care access.

"Wichita is one of the stars of the 14 communities funded by the foundation," Burnosky said. "Wichita took the Asheville model and moved it to a sustainable level. Now, you are doing your part to help other programs get off the ground. This public celebration is well deserved because you all have accomplished something important for your community and for the nation."

In closing, Dr. Moeller noted that we face a host of challenges since September 11, but based on the track record of Project Access, Wichitans are up to the task.



James Burnosky, representing The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, was the keynote speaker at the Project Access Community Forum.



Dr. Christopher Moeller (left), master of ceremonies for the forum, Anne Nelson, program director, and James Burnosky, keynote speaker.

# New Outreach Program Underway at Via Christi and Wesley

A care coordination program at area hospitals was launched this fall when Project Access was notified that its grant application to the U.S. Health Services and Resources Administration was accepted for funding. One of the grant's primary objectives is to place teams of social workers and nurses at Via Christi Regional Medical Center and Wesley Medical Center to work with patients using the emergency rooms for non-urgent situations.

"We want to help people without insurance to receive the primary care services they need in more appropriate settings than local emergency rooms," said Anne Nelson, program director.

The case management teams at Via Christi and Wesley include a social worker and a nurse. After identifying emergency room patients who don't have insurance and who have had more than three visits in 12 months, a case management team contacts the patients, sometimes visiting them at home. They work closely with each patient to address specific health needs, to determine eligibility for medical benefits (such as Medicaid, Medicare or HealthWave), to initiate appropriate health education

activities and to access community resources and services.

"The goal of the program is to help patients find funding for their medical needs and to locate a medical home so that don't rely routinely on the ER for their health care," explains Fran Bue, RN, care coordination director at Wesley Medical Center.

Locating a "medical home" usually means referring patients to an indigent care clinic, to a hospital family practice clinic or to Project Access for enrollment

"The case managers often accompany patients to their first appointment at a clinic or with a physician," says Bob Emmart, social work manager and coordinator of Via Christi's two case management teams. "The people we have assisted are so appreciative of the help."

In addition to addressing issues related to their medical needs, patients receive assistance connecting with other available community resources.

"The case managers also act as patient advocates," Bue says. "Our team makes referrals to area agencies and organizations for help with problems related to a patient's daily life, such as housing, transportation, credit or legal concerns. SRS has been a great help with these situations, and is a

key component in the Community Care Coordination program."

Approximately 100 ER patients per month meet the criteria for followup contact by Wesley's Community Care Coordination team. The Wesley team is actively managing about 48 patients a month. Since the fall, the Via Christi teams have worked with 120 patients.

"We're tracking the use of the ER by the patients in Via Christi's Community Care Coordination program for the six months before and after they begin receiving assistance," Emmart said. "It's a bit early, but the preliminary results are looking good."

## NUMBERS COUNT

**3,075 patients** are enrolled in Project Access as of April 5

**552 physicians** are participating in Project Access

**\$4,500,000** is the total amount of care donated by physicians who have submitted HCFAs

**\$10,200,000** is the total amount of care donated by 7 area hospitals who have submitted UB92s

**\$780,531** 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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