

ACCESS INFORMATION

IN THE KNOW

- Project Access's **grant application** for an additional year of funding from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) was approved in August. Project Access receives \$700,000 through HRSA's Community Access Program (CAP). The grant funds ensure case management teams will continue working in the emergency departments at area hospitals. The grant year runs from September 1, 2002 to August 30, 2003.
- Wichita participated in a recent **statewide meeting** of Kansas communities who have received CAP grants. Also attending the meeting held in Salina were representatives from Manhattan, Sharon Springs and Kansas City, MO. The group is initiating efforts to gather statistics on the projects from each region and to share the information with state and national legislators.
- In November, Anne Nelson, Project Access program director, along with Paul Meals, SRS chief of medical services, met with a **community coalition in McPherson** working to establish a program to provide health care services for the city's uninsured. McPherson received a Sunflower Foundation grant to develop the infrastructure needed to increase health care access.
Since January, Project Access has provided **technical assistance to 31 communities** interested in developing programs to serve the uninsured.

Information Sharing Programs Underway

For many Project Access patients, accessing health-related information can be as difficult as accessing health care services. Now, two programs are available to assist patients with the information they need to make appropriate health care decisions.

Since July, the **Call-A-Nurse** program has been answering questions in the evenings and Saturdays when doctors' offices and clinics are closed. RNs respond to inquiries from patients about medical conditions, upcoming procedures and medications. Project Access has contracted with the Via Christi Health Connection program for the service. Patients who might have gone to a hospital emergency room when feeling unwell at night can phone Call-A-Nurse, discuss their symptoms and make informed decisions about how best to respond to their health conditions.

The hours for Call-A-Nurse are 5:00 - 11:00 PM Monday through Friday and Saturdays 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM. Patients receive the number upon enrollment.

The Via Christi **Marcus Consumer Health Resource Center** is not a new program, but since November 1, Project Access physicians and patients are being encouraged to utilize the Center's educational resources. A grant from the Kansas Health Foundation enables Project Access to extend financial support to the Marcus Center for the health education

service now available to currently enrolled patients.

"Through this new partnership with the Marcus Center, we hope that Project Access patients will develop a sense of empowerment in their efforts to manage their personal health care," said Allen Nelson, Project Access services coordinator.

Joelle Chandra-Wales, a registered nurse, staffs the Marcus Center and takes requests for



Joelle Chandra-Wales of The Marcus Center helps Project Access physicians and patients to locate appropriate health-related information.

health education materials from Project Access physicians, case management teams and patients. Using the Internet and other resources, Joelle locates information on health care conditions, such as managing dia-

betes or high blood pressure. The information is provided in a format, reading level and language useful and meaningful to the patient.

Requests for consumer health educational materials from the Marcus Center can be made by calling 268-6080. To facilitate tracking efforts, physicians are encouraged to specify that the inquiry is for a Project Access patient.

"Both programs are intended to help our patients make informed decisions about their health in partnership with their primary care physicians," said Anne Nelson, Project Access director. "We hope physicians will encourage their patients to use these services."

ATTENTION: Physicians

When prescribing medications for Project Access patients, please designate generic instead of name-brand drugs whenever possible.

After completing a patient consultation, specialists are reminded to communicate the results to the patient's primary care physician.

Once physicians and hospitals have provided services, please submit the appropriate billing forms to the Project Access office. Although no reimbursements occur, the program carefully tracks all services provided to patients and recognizes each provider's participation.

Questions? Please call 688-0600.

Program Honored

The Counseling and Mediation Center recently honored Project Access with their annual Samaritan Award. During the organization's award dinner November 14, Christopher Moeller, MD, accepted the award on behalf of the Project Access staff, its community partners and the Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation board of directors.

National Effort To Tackle Issue of Uninsured

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has teamed with some of the nation's most influential organizations to co-sponsor Cover the Uninsured Week

March 10-16, 2003. This unprecedented week-long series of events is a major effort to focus attention on the plight of the uninsured, to establish the issue as a top priority and to build support for seeking solutions.

CoverThe
UninsuredWeek

The week will include activities designed to foster dialogue between elected officials, business, labor and religious leaders, health care providers, the media and the uninsured.

Former U.S. presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter are honorary co-chairs of the nonpartisan effort.

Eight of 10 uninsured Americans are employed but unable to afford health coverage.

New Employee Joins Project Access

Fern McGehee is the newest addition to the Project Access staff. Since November, when she joined the



program in a newly-created part-time position, Fern has coordinated patient applications to pharmaceutical companies assistance programs.

"Fern's work will expand the prescription drug benefit, resulting in a preservation of funds and an extension of our resources," said Anne Nelson, program director.

Fern graduated from Kansas State University with a BA in psychology. Her work experience includes tenure with SRS as an eligibility specialist.

NUMBERS COUNT

Since September 1, 1999...

3,649 patients have enrolled in Project Access, and **618 patients** are active as of December 6.

547 physicians participate in Project Access and **50 physicians** volunteer in six community clinics for a total participation rate of **72% of MSSC members.**

\$5,647,521 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$13,170,188 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$1,1385,805 in prescriptions have been purchased (**48,833 prescription claims filed**) with funding provided by the Sedgwick County Commission and the Wichita City Council and filled at no charge by **69 participating pharmacies.**

Medical Society of Sedgwick County
1102 S. Hillside
Wichita, KS 67211
(316) 688-0600
www.projectaccess.net

