

ACCESS INFORMATION

IN THE KNOW

- In March, Project Access will host a visit from members of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's national advisory committee. The visitors will observe the day-to-day operations of the program and attend an Operations Council Meeting.
- Paul Meals, SRS chief of medical services, and Anne Nelson attended a January meeting for RWJF grant-funded program directors held in Santa Monica, CA where Meals was recognized for his leadership role as Operations Council co-chair.
- Site visitors from Salt Lake City and Oklahoma City were in Wichita recently for an intensive two-day training session presented by Project Access staff. While in Wichita, they met with representatives from SRS and local clinics and attended an Operations Council meeting.
- In fall 2002, Project Access awarded \$124,000 in direct service funds to the six local indigent care clinics to support their day-to-day operations.
- Project Access is waiting to learn if the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration will continue funding its Community Access Program (CAP). Wichita wants to apply for a third one-year grant to fund the case management teams based at the local hospitals. The teams have experienced early success connecting high utilizers of hospital ERs with primary care providers.

Cover The Uninsured Week is March 10-16

According to 2002 Census Bureau figures, over 41 million Americans are uninsured. Eight out of 10 are in working families with 72% living in households with a full-time worker. Most are self-employed, contractors, employees of small firms or work in service-oriented industries. Men make up 53% of the uninsured while 47% are women. Adults aged 25 to 34 comprise 22% of Americans lacking health care coverage; those aged 18-24 and 45-64 each account for 21% of the total. Hispanics represent 30% of the uninsured with Whites accounting for 47%. More than 20% of the people who file for bankruptcy site medical debt as a problem.



These statistics and many more are part of the message to be communicated during **Cover the Uninsured Week, March 10-16**. Working together to educate the public and national leaders about the issue of the uninsured are The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and many of the country's most influential organizations — The California Endowment, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, Business Roundtable, Service Employees International Union, Healthcare Leadership Council, American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, Health Insurance Association of America, Families USA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, AARP, American Hospital Association, Federation of American Hospitals, Catholic Health Association of the United States and United Way of America. Former presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter are honorary co-chairs.

Cover the Uninsured Week will include an unprecedented week-long series of activities intended to sensitize the public and opinion leaders to the plight of Americans who lack health insurance. Organizers hope to generate extensive media coverage that will communicate the importance of solving this problem to leaders and policymakers in every sector of American society.

The week will launch with a national event in Washington, D.C., followed by activities across the country that highlight various constituencies — including business and labor organizations, health care providers, medical education groups, religious and governmental leaders, consumer groups and advocacy organizations — and their unique perspectives on the problems facing Americans who do not have health insurance. The news and entertainment industries have been asked to help raise awareness about the issue.

"This is truly an admirable effort to initiate a national dialogue on the staggering health care crisis caused by the rising number of uninsured Americans," said Christopher Moeller, MD, president of Project Access's local governing board.

Locally, the Kansas Health Ethics will examine the ethical dilemmas of health care access and affordability during its annual conference March 14-15 at Wichita State University's Rhatigan Student Center. Anne Nelson of Project Access will join a panel discussing the challenges and opportunities for improved health care access in Kansas.

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Staff Member Is Key To Program's Success

When Tricia Petz was hired by Paul Uhlig, MD, in 1998, it never occurred to her that she was embarking on a career that would lead her to Project Access. But Tricia played a crucial role in the early development of Wichita's Project Access and today she is the program's administrative assistant.

"I have been here since day one and I wouldn't want to be any place else. I look forward to coming to work every-day," Tricia said.

Soon after Tricia began working for Dr. Uhlig, he began to pursue with earnest the creation of a local program to coordinate health care for the uninsured under the auspices of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County. During the preliminary planning phase, Dr. Uhlig and the medical society submitted a grant proposal to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) for funds to launch Project Access. Tricia assisted with producing that first grant application which was successful.

As the local community began to come together to establish Project Access, Tricia took on a variety of organizational responsibilities, particularly those related to setting up the Project Access office and the program's database.

Just prior to Project Access opening its doors September 1, 1999, Dr. Uhlig departed for a position at Dartmouth College School of Medicine in New Hampshire and closed his office in Wichita. Tricia officially joined the Project Access staff that included Anne Nelson, program director.

Today, Project Access has seven employees. Tricia manages the program's enrollment and patient databases as well as the pharmacy database. She produces demographic data reports and grant reports for RWJF, United Way of the Plains, the City of Wichita and other funders. She updates the websites for Project Access and the Call-A-



Tricia Petz

Nurse program, assists with the numerous site visits to Wichita and organizes community outreach activities. Tricia has given presentations to businesses, organizations and physician offices, staffed exhibit booths and represented Project Access on Wichita's delegation to the All-American City Award event in 2002.

"Tricia helped to translate an idea into a reality for our community," said Anne Nelson. "She is very committed to Project Access and, as anyone who has had contact with our office knows, she is a joy to work with."

Cover The Uninsured

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Other conference speakers include Yolanda Partida from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation addressing ways to improve Latino patient communication and health, and Paul Uhlig, MD, examining how to achieve dignity and understanding across health care cultures.

Contact Kansas Health Ethics at 684-1991 to receive a conference brochure.

NUMBERS COUNT

Since September 1, 1999...

3,820 patients have enrolled in Project Access, and **624 patients** are active as of February 20.

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

\$6,235,915 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$14,244,522 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$1,252,771 in prescriptions have been purchased (**54,925 claims filed**) 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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