

ACCESS INFORMATION

IN THE KNOW

● Developmental work is nearly complete on a new operational database to replace the CARES software that Project Access has used since opening its doors in 1999. The new database will link the separate softwares used to manage administrative information, including patient enrollment and provider participation data, billing form data, patient survey information and prescription program data.

"The new database is a very robust software that will make it easy to generate reports and to facilitate evaluation activities," said Anne Nelson, program director.

In response to requests, Project Access hopes to share the database system with other similar community projects.

● Project Access' application for continued grant funding from the Healthy Communities Access Program was approved in October. This is the third one-year grant that Project Access has received from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

The grant funds case management teams located at area hospitals who connect high ER utilizers with primary care providers. The latest statistics reveal a 62.5% reduction in utilization of ER services by patients in the case management program, with a \$1.5 million cost avoidance for the hospitals.

The new grant allows more patients to be helped with a goal of developing local funding.

Dental Initiative Added to Project Access

A one year project designed to deliver donated dental services to 600 qualified patients in Sedgwick County was launched by Project Access in October. The new dental initiative is the result of a unique partnership between the Wichita District Dental Society, Wichita Community Foundation, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and Project Access.

It is estimated that each year 3,000 people without insurance visit the city's hospital emergency rooms suffering from acute dental pain. Most of these patients receive a prescription to temporarily ease dental pain, but remain in desperate need of professional dental help to alleviate the underlying cause, said Dr. Daniel Caliendo of Wesley Medical Center's Trauma Services.

The new dental initiative will allow Project Access to screen individuals identified for participation by hospital emergency room staffs and send qualified patients to local dentists who have volunteered to treat an average of 12 patients

annually. Patients will enroll in the program for one month. Project Access will schedule appointments and handle paperwork.

The primary medical goal of the one year pilot project is to treat acute dental pain for enrolled patients. Preventive activities may be added in the future.

Lucynda Raben, DDS, took a leadership role in organizing the

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Local Clinics Unite To Share Information

Five of the six indigent care clinics in Wichita-Sedgwick County have committed to participate in a project to share a common database of patient information. The clinics involved in the Clinics' Patient Index Project are: Center for Health and Wellness; Good Samaritan Clinic; GraceMed; Guadalupe Clinic; and the Sedgwick County Health Department.

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Community Celebrates Four Years of Project Access



The Project Access Fourth Birthday Party held September 7 at Botanica featured a menu of cake and ice cream.



Attending the Project Access celebration were representatives from many of the community partners who have contributed to the program's success, including (from left) Pat Hanrahan; Paul Uhlig, MD; Arneatha Martin; Paul Meals; and Joe Davison, MD.

Study of Hospital ER Usage Informative

Coordinated care for the uninsured that focuses on primary care would be 30-40% less expensive than a system emphasizing treatment in emergency rooms or inpatient care. This is one conclusion of the Hospital Utilization Study of Uncompensated Care compiled by the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita for Project Access.

The study analyzed 1999-2002 inpatient, outpatient and emergency room data on uninsured and Medicaid patients served by Via Christi Regional Medical Center and Wesley Medical Center. During the three-year period, the two medical centers cared for almost 15,000 uninsured patients annually.

According to the study's conclusions, had a primary care provider been available, potentially 88% of emergency department visits could have been avoided.

"We hope the study will help to improve patient health outcomes," said Paul Meals, Project Access' Operations Council co-chair.

Project Access' HRSA CAP grant has funded the utilization study. Health care economists from Medimetrix, a national consulting firm, are also reviewing the data and comparing it to national trends.

The utilization study will continue for another year and include 2003 hospital data and care provided by KUSM-W residency clinics. To read the study, visit www.projectaccess.net

Dental Initiative

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local dental community's participation in the project. The Wichita Community Foundation became a funding partner after dental care among the uninsured was identified as a significant health care need during a March meeting of area funders. Planning funds came from grants awarded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the federal HRSA Community Access Program.

NUMBERS COUNT

Since September 1, 1999...

4,403 patients have enrolled in Project Access, and 598 patients are active as of November 11.

550 physicians participate in Project Access and 50 physicians volunteer in six community clinics for a total participation rate of 67% of MSSC members.

\$7,755,247 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$18,499,508 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$1,619,567 in prescriptions have been purchased (72,142 prescription claims filed) with funding provided by the Sedgwick County Commission and the Wichita City Council and filled at no charge by 65 participating pharmacies.

Clinics Unite

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The goal of the Clinics Patient Index Project is to better coordinate care of the community's indigent and uninsured patient population. The shared computer system will serve as a patient data repository and provide more accurate information about patients being served at the clinics. In addition, the system will aid in compiling demographic information and tracking health care trends. Presenting a unified presence in the community for fund-raising and media coverage are other potential benefits of the cooperative database.

"We want to acknowledge the clinic staffs and commend them for having the foresight, along with the time and energy, to develop this shared patient database system," said Anne Nelson. "Working together, their efforts promise to strengthen our community's patient care safety net system."

Grant funds received from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and HRSA are covering the costs related to the Clinics Patient Index Project. Similar shared database projects are being developed by the majority of communities nationwide who receive CAP funds from the federal government. It is anticipated that the local Clinics Patient Index Project will be in operation by January 2004.

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