



IN THE KNOW

● Charisma Salus means “gift of health” in Latin—an appropriate name for Project Access’ new custom designed software to track patients receiving care and providers donating their services. The Project Access office recently completed converting to the software program, and began the process of trademarking the name “Charisma Salus.”

The software program was designed by David Franklin of Key Evado, LLC for Project Access, and is available for purchase by other volunteer-based, physician-initiated projects. Chattanooga, Tennessee’s medical society has bought the software for its newly-founded Project Access program.

Detailed information about the software, including screen snapshots, sample reports and purchasing options, can be found at www.charismasalus.com. In the future, technical support will be offered online as more communities use the software.

- The Kansas Association of Community Action Programs presented Project Access with an award for collaborative excellence during its annual meeting July 15. The program was nominated by Sarah Gilbert of the City of Wichita. She joined Paul Meals and Carolyn Earnest, co-chairs of the Project Access Operations Council, and Anne Nelson, director, at the presentation ceremony.

“Thank you, Project Access. The peace of mind you gave me was priceless.”

ACCESS INFORMATION

Data from Hospital Utilization Study Shared

For two years, researchers from the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita have studied how people who are uninsured, underinsured or receiving Medicaid use area hospitals. At a meeting held May 26, several Project Access partners participated in an in-depth discussion of the results. Also attending was Terry Stoeller, who represented Medimetrix, a national health care consulting firm that has worked with Project Access since 1999.

Project Access funded the study with a federal grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Dr. Ed Dismuke, dean of KUSM-Wichita, and Terry Jones, also from KUSM-Wichita, presented the results compiled from inpatient, outpatient and emergency room data during the time period of May 1999 – April 2002 provided by Via Christi Regional Medical Center and Wesley Medical Center. Some of their findings include:

- During the three-year period, almost 15,000 uninsured patients made over 27,000 visits to area hospitals, and more than 17,000 Medicaid patients made 43,000 hospital visits.
- Approximately 65% of all hospital charges were incurred by 30% of the patient population.

- In-hospital visits make up the smallest portion of all hospital encounters (15%) while totaling the largest proportion (75%) of all charges.

- Timely access to a primary care provider could have managed 88% of emergency department visits.

- Uncoordinated patient care costs are estimated to average \$6,000-\$6,500 per person per year versus average costs of coordinated care at \$3,700-\$4,500 per person.

- Estimates indicate that coordinated care yields a 30-40% cost savings.

- A coordinated care program that emphasizes finding a primary care home would be less expensive than the current safety net that depends on emergency room care or inpatient care for

seriously ill patients. An example of such savings is the Project Access case management program which has reduced hospital usage by 53% among its participating patients.

“Wichita is examining important issues related to caring for the uninsured,” commented Stoeller after the meeting. “Those of us in the national program office are impressed at the level of local commitment and cooperation. This study is the first step in moving toward a broader dialogue and developing workable strategies.”

By August 1, the hospital utilization study will be accessible at www.projectaccess.net.



Participating in a meeting to discuss the hospital utilization study initiated by Project Access were Dr. Tim Scanlan (left), Medical Society of Sedgwick County president; Terry Stoeller, national health care consultant; and Dr. Christopher Moeller, Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation president.

New Computer System Links Area Clinics

Wichita is blessed with a strong network of community clinics dedicated to providing health care to people with few options when they become ill. Helping these patients just got easier with the March 26th debut of the Clinics Patient Index (CPI), a shared web-based repository of patient information.

Developing the CPI has been a collaborative effort involving Project Access and the following clinics: Center for Health and Wellness; Good Samaritan Clinic; GraceMed; Guadalupe Clinic; and the Sedgwick County Health Department.

CPI works by linking the clinics together via a secured website through which they can access each patient's demographic information and health care records. The system complies with federal HIPAA regulations governing patient privacy. Both the clinics and Project Access have submitted the first sets of patient data into the CPI, as the designers complete the final production and testing phase.

Once fully operational, staff at the participating clinics will be able to retrieve information for patients who often access medical care at several community clinics. It is anticipated that in the next few months, the local hospitals also will use the CPI

to enter and retrieve information about patients seeking medical care at the emergency rooms who are uninsured.

"The goal of the CPI is to better coordinate patient care through more effective communication among the community clinics," said Anne Nelson, program director. "This approach has worked well in other cities, and we expect that it will be a success in Wichita-Sedgwick County."

Project Access secured grant funds from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to finance the project. Kansas State University's IT Innovations was contracted to design the software, and EnVisage, also of Manhattan, is managing the CPI's implementation.

"The information available from the Clinics Patient Index will help the clinics track trends and determine community needs," said Connie Satzler of EnVisage.

"CPI is revolutionary for the clinics because never before have we had clear, accurate statistics," said Fred McLean of Good Samaritan Clinic. "Now that we're sharing information and resources, together we can better determine how to help the patients and see where the holes are in the community's safety net."

NUMBERS COUNT

Since September 1, 1999...

5,106 patients have enrolled in Project Access, and **746 patients** are active as of July 28.

545 physicians participate in Project Access and **50** physicians volunteer in six community clinics for a total participation rate of **75%** of MSSC members.

\$9,521,178 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$22,643,087 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$1,928,485 in prescriptions have been purchased (**86,469** 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.**

In addition, pharmacy efforts by Project Access has leveraged over **\$420,000** in donated medications for the programs patients.

Since October 1, 2003...

161 patients have been enrolled in Project Access' Dental Initiative and referred to area dentists for treatment. Of that total, **28** patients have been referred to specialists.

45 dentists are participating in the Dental Initiative.

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