

Patient's health improves with help from ECM

When Polly Tucker signed up with Enhanced Care Management in June 2006 she had lots of complaints.

"I was sick and in pain all the time," Polly said. "I really needed help."

That is just what she got from ECM's team of care managers, including Dawn Wolfe, nurse care manager; Wines Mavia, community resource care manager; and Theresa Renner, disease management specialist.

Using a multi-disciplinary approach, ECM care team's first step was to assess Polly's health status and develop a care plan to address her medical conditions.

"They were the first ones to say 'let's make a plan'," Polly explained. "What I had been doing wasn't working. I needed to try something else."

With ECM's assistance, Polly found a new primary care physician who determined she needed knee surgery. Recovery went smoothly and Polly completed physical therapy on her own. Now, she keeps in regular touch with her physician.

"I just love my new doctor," Polly said with a smile.

ECM also helped Polly find a dentist to treat her dental problems and obtain new dentures.

"The most important thing I have learned from ECM is that to get better I need to care for myself," Polly said.

She is working hard to achieve this goal. Polly received a set of scales to keep an eye on her weight as well as a blood pressure monitor. She has cut back on fried foods and uses a pedometer while exercising.

"Polly is a great inspiration," said



Polly Tucker (center) visits with ECM staff members Theresa Renner (left) and Dawn Wolfe during a home visit. Polly feels "healthier than ever."

Dawn Wolfe, ECM nurse care manager. "She is a real success story."

"Polly is doing so well and managing her own health now," said Renner. "We keep in regular touch by phone."

"The ECM staff are so friendly," Polly said. "I am lucky to have them and I am so grateful for all their help."

Project Access increases income eligibility

The Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation Board of Directors voted during its March 13 meeting to increase the income eligibility for enrollment in Project Access to 200% of the federal poverty level.

As a result of the new guidelines, an individual with an annual income up to \$20,784 is eligible to enroll in Project Access and receive donated medical care. At this income level, a Project Access patient would earn approximately \$10 an hour.

This is the first increase in income eligibility since Project Access opened its doors September 1, 1999.

Medical equipment assistance available

Eighteen months after undertaking a cost savings plan, Project Access has added durable medical equipment to the list of services eligible patients can receive through the program.

New dollars for equipment were freed up from grant funds received from the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County after Project Access implemented a generic-only prescription policy and a maximum allowable cost plan.

The city (through a Community Block Grant) and the county award Project Access a combined total of \$492,000 annually for prescription assistance.

"We knew there was a real need," said Allen Nelson, program manager. "Once we had the results of our cost-saving efforts, the city and county agreed to a contract change allowing Project Access to offer medical equipment assistance."

Starting in February, Project Access can buy or lease durable medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, shower chairs, CPAP and BIPAP machines and oxygen, up to \$2,000 annually per patient.

Participating program physicians can send their Project Access patients along with a prescription for the equipment to Via Christi Home Care, 555 S. Washington, the designated provider.

For more information, contact Fern McGehee at Project Access, 688-0600.



Allen Nelson (left), program manager, selected Fern McGehee, prescription assistance coordinator, to manage the new medical equipment assistance.

New ECM employee

Melody Stucky is the new administrative assistant for the Enhanced Care Management of Sedgwick County. A native of Wichita, Melody brings 17 years experience as secretary to the CEO of Family Consultation Services and eight years with COMCARE to her position.



"I am so excited to be part of ECM," Melody said. "It is a great feeling everyday driving to work to a program that provides such desperately needed services for our community."

Central Plains board adds new members

The Central Plains Regional Health Care Foundation recently announced the addition of three new members to its Board of Directors: Paul Uhlig, MD, whose term began March 13 and Maurice Duggins, MD and Barbara Rolph, who will begin their terms in June. Below is biographical information on each:

Paul Uhlig, MD, a thoracic surgeon, recently returned to his native Wichita. Uhlig was the driving force that led to the creation of Project Access in 1999 before he left to join the medical staff of the Dartmouth College School of Medicine.

Maurice Duggins, MD, a family medicine physician, is the medical director at Center for Health and Wellness and a faculty member at Via Christi St. Joseph Family Medicine Clinic.

Barbara Rolph is an active member of a Wichita family business that owns several Carlos O'Kelly's and Applebee's franchises. She also volunteers with a number of community organizations, including the Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita Children's Home and The Salvation Army.

Evaluations of ECM reveal promising results for program's future

Two recent evaluations of Enhanced Care Management of Sedgwick County show that the program is helping participants improve their health. Although the studies are examining a program barely two years old with patient enrollment averaging seven months, "we are encouraged by the positive trends the evaluations show," said Matt Schrock, ECM program manager.

A partnership between Central Plains and the Kansas Health Policy Authority developed the program in 2006. ECM uses a care management model, delivered by teams of nurses and social service professionals who assist eligible Medicaid HealthConnect

enrollees to better manage their chronic health conditions and to appropriately utilize the community's health care delivery system.

According to a study completed by Trajectory Healthcare, the number of inpatient stays and emergency department visits among the ECM population during the program's first six months declined significantly when compared to a Wyandotte County referent group. It also found an increase in the percent of dollars allocated toward professional services, including primary care physician visits, provided to ECM patients in comparison to Wyandotte County. The report concluded with a strong recommen-

dation to continue the ECM program.

An analysis compiled by Ruth Wetta-Hall of the KU School of Medicine-Wichita revealed the challenge of assisting the program's clients, most of whom earn less than \$1,000 a month, have unstable lives, are socially isolated and believe they have little control over their health. During the program's first 18 months, ECM staff provided an average of 376 hours of contact to each client. The majority of referrals were made to social services (58%), followed by medical services (24%) and dental care (18%).

To view these studies, visit the ECM website — www.ecmsc.net

NUMBERS TO KNOW

Since September 1, 1999...

7,864 patients have enrolled in Project Access and **579 patients** are active daily.

577 physicians participate in Project Access and **50 physicians** volunteer in six community clinics for a total participation rate of 58% of MSSC practicing physicians.

\$19,322,481 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$49,540,148 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$3,244,382 in prescriptions have been purchased and **172,405 prescription claims** filed with funds provided by the Sedgwick County Commission and the Wichita City Council and filled at no charge by **72 participating pharmacies**.

In addition, pharmacy efforts by Project Access leveraged over **\$1,932,770** in donated medications for the program's patients.

As of April 1...

200 clients are actively enrolled

in Enhanced Care Management of Sedgwick County.

67% of ECM clients are challenged by three or more of the following chronic conditions:

Arthritis	42
Asthma	41
Congestive Heart Failure	18
COPD	28
Diabetes	46
Frailty	11
Hyperlipidemia	45
Hypertension	88
Ischemic Heart Disease	17
Lower Back Pain	57