



Project Access hires new manager

ECM patients perceive improved health

Monica Flask is the newest face in the Project Access offices. She joined Project Access this summer as program manager, replacing Allen Nelson who moved to Salina after working with the program for eight years.



“Allen did an incredible job to help Project Access develop and expand,” said Anne Nelson, Central Plains associate executive director. “We’re fortunate to fill his position with someone of Monica’s caliber and experience.”

A native of Halstead, Monica earned an undergraduate degree in social work at WSU and a masters degree at KU where she also completed doctoral coursework in social welfare. “My masters degree had an emphasis on health care administration,” said Monica. “This position is a great opportunity to utilize my skills in program planning and evaluation.”

Her professional experience is extensive. Monica directed the social work departments at Bethel Hospital and Halstead Hospital and taught social work courses for 10 years at Bethel College. Most recently, she worked as the social work coordinator of case management services at Via Christi Regional Medical Center’s Family Medicine Clinics. Monica was also as a member of the Central Plains Operations Council where she was able to closely observe Project Access.

“I have been impressed by the level of community support for the program, the caliber of Central Plains’s leadership and the quality and integrity of the Project Access staff,” she said. “I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to its future.”

In 2007, a study concluded that services provided by Enhanced Care Management of Sedgwick County (ECM) produced positive changes

in costs, utilization and clinical quality of care for participating Medicaid clients. Now, a new study reveals that ECM clients believe their physical and mental health status has improved since enrolling in the program.

Compiled by Ruth Wetta-Hall, RN, PhD, director of the KUSM-W Center for Research and Evaluation, the recent study compared SF-8 assessments completed by ECM clients to norms of perceived health status among the general U.S. population. The study’s findings were based on SF-8s taken voluntarily by 79% of ECM clients, most of whom were enrolled in the program for more than one year.

The SF-8 measures these categories:

1. physical functioning
2. bodily pain
3. limitations due to physical health problems
4. limitations due to personal or emotional problems
5. social functioning
6. energy/fatigue
7. general health perceptions
8. perceived change in health.

Summary: SF-8 Physical & Mental Health Scores

(median scores)	ECM CLIENTS			U.S. Norms
	Enrollment	1st Year	2nd Year	
Physical Health	31.89	34.33	36.00	51.89
Mental Health	49.61	50.91	62.36	51.14

The SF-8 median physical health score for the general population is 51.89 and 51.14 for the mental health score. The higher the score, the higher the perceived health status.

The median physical health score when ECM clients enroll is 31.89 — 20 points lower than the general population norm. However, after just one year of enrollment, SF-8 scores for ECM clients rose to 34.33.

Clients with the longest enrollment in ECM — two years — showed further upward improvement in perceived health status. Their median physical health score was 36.00. This is a significant increase, but still nearly 16 points below the U.S. population norms for physical health.

The median mental health score for ECM clients at the time of enrollment is quite similar to the general U.S. population — 49.61 and 51.14 respectively. But after participating in the program for two years, ECM client mental health scores rose to 62.36, considerably higher than the U.S. population median score.

The program staff concluded two possible reasons for the improvement in ECM clients’s mental health status: patients are accessing additional social supports that enhance their perceptions and/or clients are accessing medical services that produce an indirect improvement.

“We are pleased with the positive outcomes our patients are reporting,” said Matt Schrock, ECM program manager. “This information forms a baseline from which we can track changes in health status over time.”



Wichita physician happy to help ECM staff and patients

Clients or visitors seldom see one of the most important persons working with the Enhanced Care Management program. Adrian Walling, MD is ECM's contracted medical director. His responsibility is to work with the program's nurse care managers and to develop an individual plan for improving the health of ECM patients.

"Anytime the staff needs medical information about a patient's health condition, I am here to help," Dr. Walling explained. "I help the care managers teach their clients to understand their medical conditions and how they can better organize and manage their health."

"Dr. Walling is a great asset to the staff," said Matt Schrock, ECM program

manager. "He makes a real difference by sharing his knowledge about the illnesses our clients live with everyday."

His role does not include seeing patients or trying to replace the primary care physicians ECM clients visit.

Adrian Walling was born in England and graduated from medical school in Scotland. He moved to Kansas in 1980 and practiced medicine first in El Dorado and then Wichita. After working with managed care plans



Dr. Adrian Walling shares patient reports with Sheila Blackmon, ECM nurse care manager.

for 20 years, he joined Central Plains as a consultant in 2005. Dr. Walling is also an associate professor in KUSM-W's Department of Family and Community Medicine and is married to Anne Walling, MD.

"I am pleased to see that during the last two years so many people are

doing very well with the services provided by the ECM care team," said Dr. Walling.

New ECM staff



In her position as Intake Coordinator, Maria Marshall is the first person many ECM clients meet when they enroll in the program. Maria's job is to contact HealthConnect

Medicaid clients, explain ECM services and invite them to join the program. She checks eligibility and completes the enrollment process.

A native of Peru, Maria moved to the United States in 2000. Her work experience includes positions with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services's Work Program and the Cerebral Palsy Foundation. She joined ECM June 30.

Dental care available

Primary care and specialty physicians caring for Project Access patients in need of dental services are encouraged to contact the program office for a referral to a local dentist.

Kristi Friesen coordinates dental referrals in the Project Access office and her contact number is 688-0600. Kristi will ask physician offices to complete and fax her a dental assessment form. She will then make arrangements with a participating dentist. Patients must be enrolled in Project Access for a medical need prior to a dental referral.



Project Access hosts visitors from Iowa

Since Project Access opened its doors September 1, 1999, it has hosted dozens of site visitors from other communities. The most recent visit occurred June 16 when representatives from Cedar Rapids, Iowa spent the day in Wichita learning about the program's organization, services, data collection and community partners.

Joining Project Access staff for the information exchange were Central Plains board member Paul Uhlig, MD, GraceMed's executive director Dave Sanford and the program's evaluator, Ruth Wetta-Hall, assistant professor at KUSM-Wichita.

NUMBERS TO KNOW

Since September 1, 1999...

8,244 patients have enrolled in Project Access and **604 patients** are active daily.

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

\$20,782,649 in care has been donated by physicians submitting HCFA billing reports.

\$54,342,237 in care has been donated by seven area hospitals submitting UB92s.

\$3,346,771 in prescriptions have been purchased and **184,395 prescription claims** filed with funds provided by the Sedgwick County Commission and Wichita City Council. These were filled at no charge by **77 participating pharmacies**.

In addition, pharmacy efforts by Project Access leveraged over **\$2,126,469** in donated medications for the program's patients.

As of October 14...

235 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	51
Asthma	36
Congestive Heart Failure	23
COPD	41
Diabetes	53
Frailty	28
Hyperlipidemia	77
Hypertension	108
Ischemic Heart Disease	36
Lower Back Pain	81