



AUG 16 2007

In partnership with
PROJECT ACCESS NOW
(NORTHWEST OREGON WASHINGTON)

"In the quiet hours when we are alone and there is nobody to tell us what fine fellows we are, we come sometimes upon a moment in which we wonder, not how much money we are earning, nor how famous we have become, but what good we are doing" - A.A. Milne

Monday, August 13, 2007

Ann Walsh
Board of Naturopathic Examiners
800 NE Oregon St., Suite 407
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Ms Walsh,

Physicians go into medicine to heal. When a sick patient loses a job and health insurance, many physicians will waive their fee to help their patient get well and get back to work. But physicians can't do it alone in today's health systems. It is difficult to coordinate all the resources needed by an uninsured patient. Valuable time is wasted calling other physicians, labs, and pharmaceutical reps, in the hopes they will also contribute. Volunteering shouldn't be this hard! Project Access is a solution that allows physicians *the freedom to focus on healing.*

Project Access Multnomah County (PAMC) is based on a nationally recognized model enabling low-income, uninsured people who do not qualify for government insurance programs to access desperately needed specialty care. PA pools donated medical care (physician care, hospital services, medication assistance and case management) in a manner that maximizes existing community resources and enhances coordination among all participants. Project Access will coordinate all the ancillary services and referrals an uninsured patient needs, so physicians can get back to the job of healing.

We, in Multnomah County, are thrilled to be the pilot program for the regional initiative, Project Access NOW (Northwest Oregon/Washington). We are developing strategies and processes for coordinating with the regional effort, paving the way for the other local initiatives. This transitional period is expected to continue until early 2008, when the effort will be fully operational.

Although the primary focus of Project Access is specialty care, we have 13 Coalition Clinics participating as medical homes. Some of these include Naturopathic and Chinese Medicine clinics. With the demand for primary care being pivotal in keeping patients healthy, we still need private physicians to participate in providing medical homes. We are excited to be able to offer naturopathic physicians as a primary care option for Project Access patients. Although ND's cannot obtain the limited liability protection offered by ORS 30.792, their own insurance will cover them. I can say with confidence there have been no suits brought by patients obtaining services through our volunteer referral program since its inception many years ago.

We hope we can count on the BNE's support in this effort. Attached you will find information related to the Project Access initiative. You can also find a wealth of resources and information by visiting our interim website at www.coalitionclinics.org/pamc.html. Once our marketing materials are completed we hope the Board of Naturopathic Examiners will share information about Project Access with your members.

Please feel free to call or email me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dani Leis", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dani Leis, M.A.
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The Past

The Coalition of Community Health Clinics (CCHC) has supported a "specialty referral project" for *twenty years*, most recently called DOCS, and now Project Access Multnomah County. The capacity of the program has been insufficient to meet the health needs of our community. In its current design the program provides specialty care to patients with medical homes in Coalition Clinics, but without the participation of hospitals, pharmacies or diagnostics.

CCHC has been able to leverage resources to provide **medication vouchers** and **interpretive services** for PAMC patients, thus expanding available resources.

In 2005, CCHC partnered with the Medical Society. This partnership grew into regional discussions with hospitals, health systems and other local counties trying to develop Project Access programs. **The importance of a regional approach** to coordinate with hospitals and other local Project Access entities became apparent.

The Present

Established four months ago, Project Access NOW (PANOW) is a collaborative comprised of many community partners:

- Project Access Clark County
- Project Access Multnomah County
- Project Access Washington County
- Hospitals
- Health Systems
- Foundations
- Physicians

This collaborative serves as a coordinating center for all parties and efforts dedicated to this access initiative. As well as providing a process to reduce duplication of services while maximizing the overall benefit of local resources, PANOW will serve the local initiatives in the following ways:

- Centralized Web-based Database
- Coordination of Donated Hospital Services
- Evaluation of Program Outcomes
- Marketing
- Recruitment of Donated Services
- Creating Economies of Scale
- Enabling regional entities, such as hospitals, to partner more easily

PAMC is Paving the Way

Project Access Multnomah County is the **pilot program**. PAMC will develop strategies & processes for coordinating with the regional effort, paving the way for the other local initiatives.

Coalition Clinics Serve a Diverse Population

Safety Net Clinics serve a diverse population in Multnomah County; homeless adults; homeless youth; Hispanic & Slavic immigrant families; those with mental health & drug issues; as well as the working poor. Coalition Clinics meet the needs of the special populations they serve, and members work together to share best practices, guarantee quality of care, reduce expenses & coordinate patient services between clinics.

The Future

PAMC will coordinate the donated medical care and services of:

- Specialty Physicians
- Hospitals
- Pharmacies
- Ancillary services
- Primary Care Medical Homes (Safety Net Clinics)

By providing streamlined and comprehensive health services to patients with primary care homes, patients will get the medical care they need, when they need it. Utilizing the resources that this program leverages, Safety net clinics will be able to improve the overall health care that their patients receive.

Projected Outcomes

This project is expected to show results similar to other nationally recognized Project Access programs. Expected outcomes include:

- No-show rate reduced to less than 5%
- Improved patient health
- Improved efficiencies
- Reduced avoidable repeat patient visits
- Reduction in primary care visits that should be seen by specialists
- Increase in primary care capacity.

Although it is challenging to prove a single program's impact on inappropriate Emergency Department utilization, a target outcome is to **reduce the need for emergency care** within the Coalition patient community by 20% in three years. A further outcome that we expect from this program is **increased communication between safety-net clinic providers, hospitals and the private physician community** which will lead to a more streamlined system for the coordination of patient care.

For more information

Project Access Multnomah County

c/o Coalition of Community Health Clinics
www.coalitionclinics.org/pamc

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