

Progress Update



JANUARY 2004

Welcome to Progress Update, a monthly newsletter designed to help you stay in touch with the developments of Access HealthColumbus (AHC).

Access Network Update

On December 15, AHC started the incremental enrollment of a limited number of Southside residents in the Access Network Program. Our intention is to enroll up to 100 Southside residents between now and the end of February in an effort to start-up the Voluntary Care Network and ancillary services (prescription drug assistance, transportation assistance, and medical interpretation assistance). As is the case with any new system, we are testing its components before we broaden our enrollment efforts.

To date, we have learned a great deal by enrolling the first 25 Southside residents in the Access Network and have started to coordinate referrals to specialists in the Voluntary Care Network. The first enrollees have medical homes (primary care physicians) at John R. Maloney Southside Health Center or South High Center for Primary Care.

Our goal is to enroll up to 3,000 eligible Franklin County residents in the Access Network in 2004. We recognize the ongoing challenge to match the "supply" of voluntary care (and funding) with the "demand" of low-income uninsured patients. We believe our incremental approach is the best method for balancing supply and demand; and we have started improving access to health care one person at a time.

As a reminder, eligibility criteria require a patient to be uninsured, with family incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level, and not eligible for public insurance programs (Medicaid, Medicare, VA). We are focusing enrollment for residents of zip codes 43205, 43206, and 43207 at this time.

Voluntary Care Network Update

Over 100 physicians have pledged their services to provide free care for Southside residents enrolled in the Access Network. Our goal is to have 400 physicians enrolled in the program by April 2004. Access HealthColumbus staff is in the process of training physician offices. We continue to meet with physicians and secure pledges of care from across Franklin County.

We look forward to publicly recognizing the charitable work of physicians and health care systems in future updates.

Happy New Year!

We appreciate all the community service extended to Access HealthColumbus from members of our Board of Directors and Committees, funding organizations, as well as other individuals and organizations in the community. We are privileged to work in a community with so many talented and caring people.

As we begin 2004, it is a good time to provide a status report to the community on our 2003 accomplishments and 2004 priorities.

Please find attached to this newsletter the status report to the community. Please call upon me at any time with your comments, suggestions, and questions.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Biehl
Executive Director
Access HealthColumbus

Legislative Update – Good Samaritan Amendment Passed (Senate Bill 86)

On December 11, 2003, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation which extends the current immunity provided under Ohio's Good Samaritan Statute to treatment provided by volunteer health care professionals regardless of the setting in which the treatment is provided.

Prior to the passage of Senate Bill 86, Ohio law only granted immunity to volunteer health care professionals when treatment was provided in a not-for-profit shelter or health care facility. Essentially, immunity was only available when a volunteer physician would render care in a "free-clinic" setting. Senate Bill 86 grants immunity to volunteer health care professionals regardless of the setting in which the voluntary care is provided. Consequently, a physician can provide free care to an indigent and uninsured individual in his/her own office and immunity will apply, as long as the physician qualifies as a "volunteer", the care is rendered to an indigent and uninsured patient, and the physician obtains the patient's written informed consent.

AHC believes this legislation will improve the climate for building and sustaining the Voluntary Care Network to serve low-income uninsured residents in Franklin County.

Access HealthColumbus Board of Directors Update

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Helen Evans to the AHC Board of Directors. Ms. Evans is a member of the Columbus Neighborhood Health Center, Inc. Board of Directors and is also vice-president of Gladden Community House. Ms. Evans has also joined AHC's Community Advisory Committee.

We are also pleased that R. Reed Fraley has accepted a new role on the AHC Board as an At-Large Director. As many of you know, Mr. Fraley recently accepted a new position with the Ohio Hospital Association. Fraley's previous Board role representing Ohio State University Medical Center is open at this time. Fraley will continue as Chairman of the AHC Board of Directors.

Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers (CNHC) – Appointment Scheduling System Improvements

As you may recall, AHC funded an assessment of CNHC's appointment scheduling process in 2003. Based on the assessment, AHC is pleased to announce the kick-off of a project to implement an electronic appointment scheduling system in all CNHC health centers. AHC believes an electronic appointment scheduling system will improve office efficiency, reduce delays and ultimately improve patient access. The project includes hardware and software upgrades to CNHC's computer network, training for CNHC staff, and consulting services to manage the implementation. Funding for this project comes from AHC's federal Healthy Communities Access Program grant. We estimate improvements will be completed in May 2004.

Special Thanks To.....

<p>AHC would like to thank the following for their assistance with setting up hospital billing systems to recognize the AHC I.D. card:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silva Gramlich, Children's Hospital • Karl Janetzko, OhioHealth • Harvey Rissover, OhioHealth • Jane Berkebile, Mt. Carmel Health System • Mary Jane Fellers, OSU Medical Center 	<p>AHC would like to thank the following for their assistance with developing patient projections in Franklin County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie Robbins, Columbus Health Department • Michael Banish, Community Research Partners • Libbey Hoang, Children's Hospital • Patricia McClimon, Children's Hospital • Teri Watson, Mt. Carmel Health System • Jim Wheaton, OhioHealth • John Narcross, OhioHealth • Dan Like, OSU Medical Center
---	--

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jeff Biehl, Executive Director, at (614) 884-2440 or jbiehl@accesshealthcolumbus.org.

Major funding provided by:

Additional funding provided by:



Columbus Medical Association Foundation



Osteopathic Heritage Foundations



The Columbus Foundation



Dept. of Health & Human Svcs.



Franklin County



City of Columbus



Status Report to the Community January 2004

2003 Accomplishments

Primary Care Expansion – Expanded availability of primary care physicians on the Southside (estimate 9,000 additional patient visits)

- Saturday hours at John Maloney Health Center (September/2003)
- South High Center for Primary Care (August/2003)
- OSU Primary Care Network (opening February/2004)

Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers – Efficiency Improvements

- Provided funding and coordinated assessment of appointment scheduling system
- Awarded grant to improve appointment scheduling system and technology
- Facilitated the automation of an automated phone call routing system

Primary Care Efficiency & Scheduling Improvements

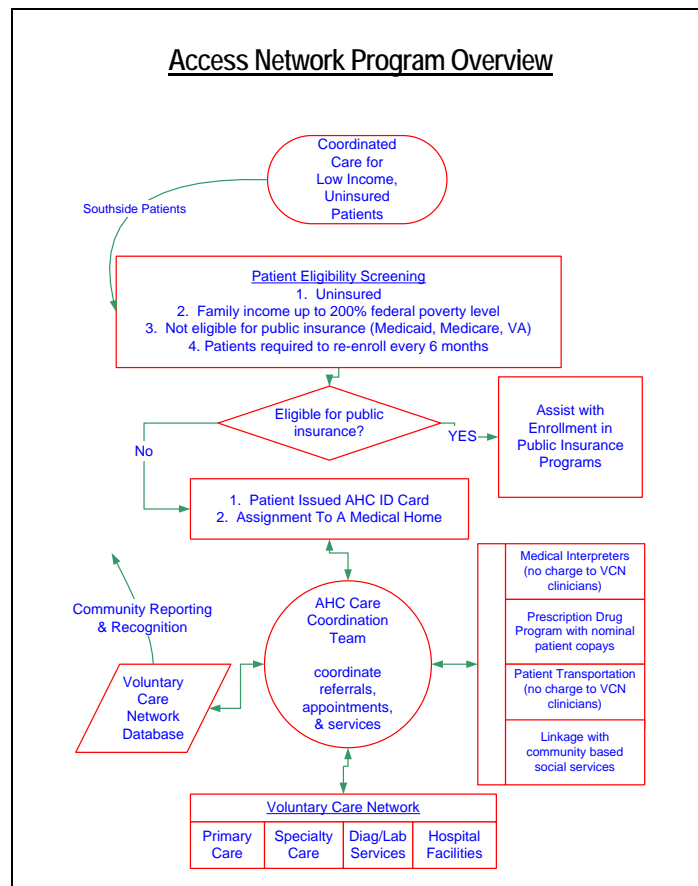
- Coordinated project and funded 10-month training program for 13 primary care practice sites
- Participating practice sites have:
 - Learned new methods for analyzing data to better manage supply and demand
 - Taken action to reduce delays to primary care services
 - Identified methods for reducing patient no-show rates and improve patient flow

Access Network Program

(also known as the Southside Pilot)

- Developed program policies and materials
- Database application acquired
- Prescription drug assistance organized
- Medical interpretation services organized
- Transportation services organized
- AHC staff hired and trained to coordinate patient referrals and ancillary services
- Organized a system to manage the enrollment of eligible patients into public insurance programs
- Voluntary Care Network recruiting initiated (currently over 100 physicians have pledged services for Southside)
- Secured pledges from all Franklin County hospitals to provide voluntary care to support referrals from the Voluntary Care Network
- Enrolled first Southside resident in Access Network Program on December 15, 2003

Provided financial support to Cultural Competency Training Academy, InterpreterAccess, Southside Case Management Collaboration, and the Ohio Family Health Survey.



Lessons Learned in 2003

Public-Private Partnership – The Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers (CNHC) provide a valuable safety-net system in the community. Access HealthColumbus believes CNHC cannot be the only solution to the uninsured problem – it is not realistic to envision CNHC, or any individual organization, serving 65,000 low-income, uninsured patients in our community. Sustainable programs which provide vulnerable people with choices and a continuum of care will require involvement from both the public and private sectors of our community. Access HealthColumbus continues to provide assistance to CNHC to help improve its efficiency and effectiveness; while at the same time engaging partnerships from across the community.

Incremental Approach - Access HealthColumbus believes there are over 65,000 low-income, uninsured people in Franklin County. Access HealthColumbus' approach to increasing access is an incremental one, utilizing resources as they are available to make progress. This approach also allows us to learn from each experience, as we link and build components of an overall system. Thus, the Access Network Program is a "pilot," targeted at an area (Southside) of high need and working with multiple resources to expand access.

Organizational Startup and Commitment to the Community – Access HealthColumbus hired its first dedicated staff in 2003 and recognizes the startup of our organization, hiring and training new staff, and implementing complex programs has taken longer than anticipated. Access HealthColumbus continues to make progress, while somewhat delayed, to accomplish our goals. We have established strong working relationships in the public-private sectors of our community. We are acting on our commitment to engage the community through the Community Advisory Committee and diverse community representation on our Board of Directors. As an evolving organization, we welcome constructive feedback at any time. Any path for improving access to health care for vulnerable people in Franklin County is full of challenges, as is any locally based health care initiative. Notwithstanding these challenges, we believe Access HealthColumbus is an organization capable of introducing and obtaining broad support for sustained positive changes that will increase access to health care for the vulnerable people that we have pledged to serve.

2004 Priorities

Access Network Program

- Expand enrollment in the Voluntary Care Network to 3,000 low-income, uninsured residents
- Focus enrollment activities on the Southside
- Pending funding, expand enrollment to near Eastside and near Westside
- Expand the Voluntary Care Network to 400 physicians by April and 800 physicians by September

Primary Care Planning for Franklin County

- Phase I - Develop low-income patient projections for primary care services across Franklin County
- Phase II – Facilitate review of low-income patient projections with community health providers
- Phase III – Conduct feasibility study of Columbus Neighborhood Health Center's facilities to identify expansion requirements

Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers – Appointment Scheduling Improvements

- Coordinate the implementation of patient appointment scheduling system, including computer network upgrades and training

Continue to identify incremental opportunities to expand and enhance access to health care in underserved areas.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jeff Biehl, Executive Director, at (614) 884-2440 or jbiehl@accesshealthcolumbus.org.

Major funding provided by:



Columbus Medical
Association Foundation

Additional funding provided by:



Osteopathic Heritage
Foundations



The Columbus
Foundation



Dept. of
Health & Human Svcs.



Franklin County



City of
Columbus