

Public Testimony – DPH Budget Hearing  
March 6, 2015

**Darcey Cobbs-Lomax**  
**Executive Director**  
**Project Access of New Haven**

Department of Public Health  
Contract Log # 2012-0168  
Community Health Centers – Access Programs  
Funding Amount \$200,000 annually

Project Access of New Haven was founded in 2009 by a group of dedicated physicians who sought to address health concerns and inequities in the New Haven community. Since that time our dedicated board, staff and network of volunteer physicians have worked collaboratively to fulfill our mission of increasing access to medical care and services for the underserved in the Greater New Haven area.

The Project Access model of care coordination engages the local community to build a network of care for the underserved. More than 300 volunteer physicians donate their time free of charge to our patients and Yale-New Haven Hospital donates ancillary services along with other community partners such as Quinnipiac University (imaging), Quest Laboratories (pathology), Yale Surgical (medical supplies) and Metro Taxi (transportation). All services received are donated and free of charge to the patients enrolled.

At the heart of what we do in Patient Navigation. The bi-lingual navigation staff work very closely with patients to provide high touch care coordination designed to remove access barriers and help patients navigate the healthcare system. Our patients are prepared for their medical appointments and have improved health outcomes. As a direct result of our services, we see a decrease in Emergency Room usage, reduced wait times for appointments and our patients have an appointment no-show rate of just 3%. Since opening our doors to our first patient in 2010 we have navigated the care for more than 1,000 patients with urgent needs ranging from x-rays to cancer care. The value of the donated care to our patients from providers and community partners is more than \$16 million.

Our program employs only 9 individuals including myself and as a small organization we work collectively to ensure that our patients receive the best care possible with a small annual operating budget. The contract funds (\$200,000) from the Department of Public Health are used completely for (patient navigation) program staff salaries. Please know that we are continuously seeking funding from other sources and have an active board committee dedicated to fundraising and seeking support for the organization through not just monetary means but in-kind support as well. In 2013, for every dollar raised PA-NH provided \$9.68 in coordinated, donated, urgent specialty care services.

Despite the Affordable Care Act becoming the Law of our country, our state based exchange, and Medicaid expansion in CT, we continue to see the need for our services to the underserved. In fact, referrals to our program remain equally as high as they were prior to these newly implemented changes. Should the decision be made to decrease or de-fund this much needed program, we would be unable to continue to have the tremendous impact that we have now on the 12 town area we serve.

I thank you for your trust in Project Access of New Haven to be a good steward of your funds for the past 3 years and urge you to continue the funding of **DPH Contract # 2012-0168 Community Health Centers – Access Programs** in the amount of \$200,000.