

Public Testimony – DPH Budget Hearing
March 6, 2015

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Founding Member, Board of Directors
Project Access of New Haven

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

As a large urban community, there are many uninsured people in New Haven. Before the introduction of Project Access, they were being treated later and sicker, and were encountering significant problems navigating the maze that is our health care system. To the physician community, this was painful, seeing the avoidable pain and death these patients were encountering. We were reduced to begging our colleagues and the hospitals for help addressing the needs of this population. And to the health care system, the cost of treating needlessly advanced disease in the emergency department or the hospital was significant.

Project Access opened its doors in September 2010, and since then has treated more than 1000 patients with urgent medical needs and no insurance. More than 300 physicians are helping these patients in their offices and in the hospital. Bilingual Patient navigators have vetted the patients, made sure they meet our criteria for urgency, and then guided them to consultations, ensured they have had their tests done, and then needed surgery. All this with no cost to the patient.

Our records show that more than \$16,000, 000 of free care have been delivered. The results, analyzed carefully through our collaboration with the Yale University-Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars program:

- Expanded network of medical care and services for underserved Greater New Haven residents
- Increased access to timely and appropriate medical care and services
- Reduced wait times for medical appointments among PA-NH participants
- Improved show-rates for appointments among PA-NH participants
- Decreased emergency department visits and hospitalizations
- Improved patient-reported health and quality of life
- Improved patient-reported access to care and ability to follow treatment recommendations among PA-NH participants
- High patient and provider satisfaction

We have also collaborated with Gateway University in establishing a training program for Patient Navigators.

The funding supplied from the state has enabled us to expand our referrals from two to six sites.

And our model of care has shown the way to more efficient and compassionate care for underserved people. We thank you, and hope that you will continue your support.

Steven Wolfson, MD
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