

# NEWS LETTER

## PROJECT ACCESS

*Palm Beach County Medical Society Services*

*Providing healthcare to the uninsured*

**Vol. 1, No. 1 2017**

### From the Chairperson

## Meet Dr. Andrew Larson

Andrew Larson, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.S.M.B.S., or “Andy” to friends, is a true native of Palm Beach County. Dr. Larson graduated from The Benjamin School in North Palm Beach where he met his wife Ivy, a fourth-generation Palm Beach County native. Dr. Larson joined the Palm Beach County Medical Society immediately upon starting his post residency career as a board certified general surgeon with a specialty interest in bariatric surgery. He is on staff at JFK Medical Center, JFK Medical Center’s north campus, Wellington Regional Medical Center and Palms West Hospital.

In 2008, Dr. Larson served as treasurer of the Palm Beach County Medical Society board of directors, and in 2013, he led the organization as president. Currently he serves on the board of Palm Beach County Medical Society Services and is the Project Access Chair. A member of the Florida Medical Association, a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a fellow of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Dr.

Larson is on faculty at the University of Miami as part of their affiliate teaching staff and regularly works with medical students and residents at JFK Medical Center.

Dr. Larson lives in North

*Continued  
on page 3*

## Project Access Aims to Improve Health Outcomes

Project Access’ vision is to achieve enhanced patient experiences and outcomes by way of improved access to necessary social supports in addition to physician care. For example, studies show that health outcomes are closely associated with factors such as affordable medications, nutritious diets and healthful food choices, transportation to medical appointments and assistance with rent — all challenges not readily associated with chronic disease management.

The Project Access staff on a daily basis witnesses how these obstacles impede their patients’ plans of care and efforts to improve their health; therefore, a comprehensive community resource directory was created to assist patients. Today, the staff assists patients applying for benefits such as SNAP and the Palm Tran Connection. Also, as medication costs rise, the staff helps source generic substitutes, prescription discount cards and reviews patient assistance programs.

All team members of the Project Access staff have completed the Community Health Worker (CHW) Care Coordination Training Program and expect to be certified Community Health Workers within the year. This training provides skills needed to help patients address challenges to their care and motivates them to set realistic goals.

The community health care worker field is burgeoning throughout the nation — both in interest and demand. The field also is rapidly expanding into new areas of health and community wellness as health care professionals continue to improve chronic disease management programs, health insurance enrollment, immunization drives, HIV/AIDS treatment, access to mental health services and maternal-child health interventions.

Palm Beach County Medical Society Services (PBCMSS) offers an award-winning, nationally recognized CHW Care Coordination Training Program that provides the full complement of education hours and content areas that workers need to fulfill the training requirements (30 CEUs) for the CHW certification application.

The program includes an overview of chronic disease symptoms and management; the scope of CHW Care Coordinator job responsibilities; cultural sensitivity, competency and diversity training; an understanding of professional responsibility and tools for patient advocacy; team member strategies to improve patient/client outcomes; tools to develop a comprehensive community resource directory; and motivational interviewing.

The PBCMSS model for the program was recently recognized for its innovative approach to patient care education and honored as the recipient of the 2017 American Association of Medical Society Executives Profile of Excellence.



## Spotlight on Patients & Doctors

# Meet Allison Melgar — A Project Access Success Story



Mom Sara Garcia and her daughter Allison Melgar.

Allison Melgar is a 12-year-old girl who had a tough time growing up. Allison was constantly sick with throat conditions due to severely enlarged tonsils and adenoids, making it hard for her to enjoy life as a normal kid. Simply eating ice cream was a chore — not a joy. In addition to some breathing difficulties, Allison could not enjoy swimming with her friends. Even getting a restful night's sleep was tough for Allison. Her mother, Sara Garcia, sought care for her at the Foundcare Clinic in Palm Springs where it was determined that Allison needed to be seen by a pediatric ENT specialist. Fortunately, Project Access was there to help Allison, and she was seen by one of Project Access' volunteer physicians, Zorik Spector, M.D. (*see below*). As the Director of The Center for Pediatric Ear Nose & Throat in Boynton Beach, he provided her with the critical care that she needed.

West Boca Medical Center, one of Project Access' partner hospitals, agreed to provide the surgical care for Allison who now is well and enjoying ice cream, swimming and being a normal kid again.

"On behalf of myself and Allison, we thank each of you for this noble work of helping people who would otherwise find this impossible," said Sara, "Thanks to the sincere heart of the people who invested their time and energy to help us."

## Meet Dr. Zorik Spector



Dr. Zorik Spector, M.D., F.A.A.P., who helped Allison regain her health, has volunteered his services with the Project Access program for nearly a decade. A fellowship-trained Pediatric Otolaryngologist and Head and Neck Surgeon, he is the Director of The Center for Pediatric ENT – Head and Neck Surgery in Boynton Beach, which in 2015 was awarded the "Project Access Partner Practice of the Year Award." Dr. Spector also is Voluntary Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Department of Otolaryngology, University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine as well as an Affiliate Clinical Associate Professor of Biomedical Science at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton.

Dr. Spector is an author of peer reviewed publications, a presenter as well as an honored speaker at local, national and international conferences. He continually conducts clinical research studies, which have produced significant advances in the field of Pediatric Otolaryngology. Project Access thanks Dr. Spector for his commitment to our program and for all the children and families he has helped through Project Access!

## Spotlight on Project Access

### Who We Are

Project Access links local residents in need of health care services with a network of volunteer health care providers who provide comprehensive specialty care services at no charge. The providers receive no compensation for contributing their services, and they receive sovereign immunity through the State of Florida. More than 700 physicians and other health care providers have participated in Project Access, which is one of the largest and most impactful programs of the Palm Beach County Medical Society Services. Other essential partners include federally qualified health centers, free clinics and nine local hospitals throughout Palm Beach County.

### What We Do

Project Access provides individuals with personalized care coordination services to address their health care needs. The program offers free screening and enrollment services to individuals for all federal, state and county health coverage programs. Care Coordinators also assist clients with obtaining community resources such as housing, food and transportation. To receive Project Access Direct Care — the free health care from Project Access volunteer providers — an individual must be a resident of Palm Beach County, have an income less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and have no health insurance coverage. There is no charge to the patient for any services provided. Since 2005, Project Access has provided nearly \$13 million dollars in charitable care and has served more than 12,000 uninsured individuals in Palm Beach County with accessing critical medical care they otherwise would never have been able to afford.

## Your Help Is Needed

# Project Access Needs YOU Now

Palm Beach County is renowned for its many health care professionals who volunteer their services and provide charitable care for the less fortunate residents in our community. However, without a bona fide system in place that includes support services for these patients, the process may be inefficient and ineffective, and many providers can be left feeling frustrated.

Project Access is here to help. Our unique case management process offers health care professionals an efficient way to donate their services to patients in need. Patients are screened for appropriate diagnostic testing and lab work before the patient is scheduled with a specialty care provider. Referrals are carefully managed to ensure that caring for charity patients is shared fairly across our volunteer network throughout the community. Providers are recognized for their selfless contribution, and almost all of them choose to continue participating with Project Access year after year.

To date, more than 700 of your colleagues have volunteered with the Project Access program in Palm Beach County. Even one charity case is a great service to the program, and providers always can set their own referral quota. Right now, Project Access is especially in need of Gastroenterology, Oncology and Urology providers and is always looking for other specialists as well. Call Lauren, Project Director, today for more information or to volunteer — 561-433-3940, ext. 119.

*Continued from page 1*

Palm Beach with his wife Ivy and their son Blake. His interests include boating and enjoying unique dining and travel experiences, especially those that emphasize healthful living and eating as the means to achieving better health. He works diligently behind the scenes to help Ivy with her books, videos and Clean-Cuisine.com — all of which are devoted to a healthful living style.

As a founding and continuous member of the Project Access program, Dr. Larson has provided nearly a dozen charitable surgical procedures as well as consultations to 59 Project Access patients. His contributions have resulted in impactful, life-changing events for his patients. In 2009, he was named the "Project Access Surgical Physician of the Year." Dr. Larson has played an integral role in our program's history, and Project Access looks forward to this exciting new chapter. We welcome Dr. Larson's leadership role in the years to come!



2017 Heroes in Medicine Award winners include (l to r) Dr. Kishore K. Dass, Roger Kirk for Bethesda Health, a Project Access Hospital Hero, and Dr. Eugene Shieh. The 2017 Heroes in Medicine who are not pictured include Dr. Ben H. Han and Dr. Ramin Abdolvahabi, who also are Project Access Heroes.

## Heroes in Medicine Awards - Project Access Heroes

The annual Heroes in Medicine Awards honors individuals and organizations throughout Palm Beach County that use their skills and resources in the field of health care to provide outstanding services for the people of our local, national and global communities. In addition to properly recognizing our Heroes in Medicine, this initiative serves to encourage and stimulate future heroes by promoting a commitment to community service. Proceeds from the event benefit Project Access.

Palm Beach County Medical Society Services is currently seeking your nominations of inspirational individuals, organizations and businesses throughout Palm Beach County for the 2018 Heroes in Medicine Awards, an annual luncheon that is set for April 20, 2018, at the Kravis Center Cohen Pavilion. For more information, email [heroes@pbcms.org](mailto:heroes@pbcms.org) or visit [www.pbcms.org](http://www.pbcms.org).

## Physicians Pledge Form

**Yes!** I want to sign up for Project Access:

I will:

1.  Volunteer to provide free care to Project Access patients in my office as a Specialty physician — Area of specialty:

or

2.  Volunteer at a Project Access partner clinic as a Primary Care physician. I understand I can resign my pledge at any time by informing the Project Access office in writing at the address below. I understand that my pledge will automatically be renewed at year-end unless I contact Project Access.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cut out or copy and send to Project Access, c/o Palm Beach County Medical Society Services  
3540 Forest Hill Boulevard, Suite 101, West Palm Beach, FL 33406  
For more information please call Lauren Stoops, Program Director, at (561) 433-3940 x119 or  
email her: [laurens@pbcms.org](mailto:laurens@pbcms.org)

# The Four Pillars of Success

Welcome to the first issue of the Project Access Newsletter. We are honored to bring you news and information about this very unique and special program. When people first hear about how Project Access provides pro bono health care services to PBC residents, they applaud the program, which has endured and grown in our community for nearly 13 years. In my years as the director, I've realized that it's because Project Access has been built on four strong pillars that support and nurture the program, and without any one of them — the program would crumble.

**VOLUNTEER PHYSICIANS & HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS** comprise the first pillar and are the true foundation of our program. Over the life of the program more than 700 volunteers have cared for our patients, which represents a donation of more than \$13 million in health care services.

**PARTNER CLINICS** comprise the second pillar. They include the Caridad Center, C.L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics, Community Health Center of West Palm Beach, FAU Community Health Center, FAU Medicine Resident Clinic at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, Foundcare, Florida Department of Health, Genesis Community Health Centers, JFK Internal Medicine Faculty & Resident Practice, Mission Clinic of Palm Springs, Mission Medical Center, and MyClinic.

**PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS** play a crucial role in the success of Project Access because where some see only dreams, our funders see visions that they help turn into reality. They include the Boca Raton Regional Hospital Foundation, DCA for Health, the Florida Association of Free & Charitable Clinics, Jarden Consumer Solutions Community Fund, Health Care District of Palm Beach County, Quantum Foundation, and the United Way of Palm Beach County.

**PATIENTS** and their families are the fourth pillar of success. Our Project

Access team at Palm Beach Medical Society Services is committed to and proud to serve our patients. Look for more stories on our four pillars in future newsletters.



*“more than 700 health care providers have cared for our patients.”*

*Lauren Stoops, Director*

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