

NEWS LETTER

PROJECT ACCESS

Palm Beach County Medical Society Services

Providing healthcare to the uninsured

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From the Chairperson

How Project Access Works in Real Life

I introduced myself and the Project Access program last year so I thought in this column I'd put into words how our program can work in real life. Medicine, surgery, and continuing care require teamwork and unique treatment strategies yet Project Access handles the flow seamlessly as this case report explains.

One recent patient of mine was a young, hardworking laborer who developed an inguinal hernia. He could not remember when it developed but could not relate it to any specific job function.

Lacking insurance and not being able to access care through Workers' Compensation he lived with his situation for quite some time despite the pain and the bulge, making his job more and more difficult. Eventually he ended up in the emergency room when the pain was particularly bad. As the hernia was able to be reduced and there were no other obvious health problems other than a slightly high blood glucose level, he was sent home. He was given the contact information for a resident

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The Dental Care Partnership Launches

With 2018 off to a running start, the staff and Leadership Committee of Project Access is excited to launch the Dental Care Partnership (DCP), a collaborative effort to bring critical dental care to an underserved population of Palm Beach County residents.

According to the most recent Palm Beach County Community Health Improvement Plan compiled by the Florida Department of Health and the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, there are a total of seven dental care health professional shortages within Palm Beach County. Additionally, the county has eight populations designated as medically underserved populations. According to the State and County Dental Related ED Use, CY 2015 analyzed by the University of Florida, there were 6,625 dental related visits to the emergency room in 2015 with a cost of \$12,581,242.

The Dental Care Partnership is a group effort among Project Access, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, the PBC Oral Health Coalition, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Palm Beach County Dental Hygiene Association. The DCP's mission is to not only link needy residents with volunteer oral health care providers, but through outreach and educational opportunities, teach preventative oral hygiene habits that will improve the oral health of this population and reduce the number of urgent care needs in the future.

The DCP pilot project will serve pediatric, adult and senior populations with linkages to care and is made possible through funding from the Quantum Foundation, whose focus is to foster better engagement in health, greater access to resources for health and stronger connections in the health system of Palm Beach County. The DCP is looking for volunteer oral health providers to participate in the program and community partners who would like to join this initiative. If interested please connect with Lauren Stoops, Project Access Director, at laurens@pbcms.org or 561-433-3940 x119.



FACTOID

- In 2017, Project Access served nearly 1,000 individuals with direct care through Project Access' volunteer network, health coverage screenings, diabetic health education and connections to community resources.
- Our volunteer providers donated 1000 specialty care appointments for Direct Care patients.
- Project Access launched its Community Connections service to help link patients to critical resources needed to improve their health such as transportation, medical equipment and food assistance.
- In total, Project Access provided \$1,263,249.89 of charitable care in just one year!!

Spotlight on Patients & Doctors

Meet Daniel — Another Project Access Success Story

Here's Daniel Xic's own story about how Project Access and Dr. Dedo changed his life.

"I came from Guatemala in 2011 due to difficult economic conditions, dreaming to get a better life not only for me but for my family. One day I noticed a mass in my face that started rapidly growing. My face had a dramatic change causing me anxiety, sadness, and fear for my life because the condition was getting worse each day. At that time, I was working at a fish shop doing everything from cleaning to packing fish to helping customers. I didn't have funds for treatment but the pain made me decide to find help and thanks to God I found Caridad Clinic, which referred me to Project Access where the miracle started. Dr. Douglas Dedo performed a left parotidectomy at St. Mary's Hospital with amazing success. Today I can tell that happiness came back to my life, and my self-esteem has increased in such a way that looking at the mirror I see another person — someone who was just born again! I would like to express my profound gratitude to Project Access and to the Providers involved in my case and in the change of my life. Thanks!"



Dr. Douglas Dedo and Daniel Xic.

Meet Dr. Douglas Dedo



Dr. Douglas Dedo, who is board certified in Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Cosmetic Surgery, has been volunteering with Project Access since the program began more than 13 years ago. As a former president of the Palm Beach County Medical Society, Palm Beach County Medical Society Services and chair of the Project Access program, helping individuals access medical care has always been a passion. "I volunteer for Project Access to not only answer a need in my community but also to give back to the less fortunate. While I get the glory, there are several other partners in this project from the hospitals to anesthesia to nurses, etc. who donate their time and support as well, and without whom nothing could be achieved," says Dr. Dedo.

Dr. Dedo has offices in Palm Beach Gardens and West Palm Beach at the Ear, Nose and Throat Associates of South Florida, PA. When he's not practicing medicine or volunteering, he is a "wannabe contractor" who enjoys working on construction projects with his children. Dr. Dedo received his medical degree from the Northwestern University School of Medicine in 1969 and completed his general surgery residency at St. Luke's Hospital in St. Louis, MO.

Spotlight on DCA for Health

Project Access is thrilled to be chosen as one of DCA for Health's local charities. DCA for Health is the charitable foundation of Diagnostic Centers of America (DCA), which has earned a national reputation for quality and excellence in providing superb diagnostic imaging, thoughtful patient care, and radiological interpretations.

DCA for Health was founded on the hope of making a difference in Palm Beach County local communities and helping uninsured residents obtain health care. In October 2017, DCA for Health held two fundraisers for Breast Cancer Awareness: one at Pinon Grill in Boca Raton and one at Bar Louie in Boynton Beach.

Project Access staff and patients attended the event, and Director Lauren Stoops shared the program's mission and thanked DCA for their tremendous support. Project Access breast cancer patients who directly benefited from DCA funds also shared their stories. Both events garnered a huge turnout of supporters, and \$9,000 was raised towards the Project Access Patient Care Fund. Project Access is incredibly grateful for the support of DCA for Health and proud to work with such a charitable community partner to help bring care to Palm Beach County residents in need.



At the DCA event are (l to r) Pamela Richards, Project Access Care Coordinator; Gloria Briones, Project Access Patient; Steven Shullman, President/CEO of DCA and DCA for Health; Lauren Stoops, Director of Project Access; and Karen Harwood, Director of Care Coordination Services for Project Access.

Continued from page 1

medical clinic and because he remained symptomatic he made an appointment.

The residents diagnosed pre-diabetes and confirmed the presence of an inguinal hernia. Knowing he would not be able to afford treatment on his own they contacted Project Access and the care coordinator took over from there.

Patient Screened

My patient was screened to see if he could qualify for permanent safety net insurance such as Medicaid or one of the Palm Beach County Health Care District's plans. As he was young, not disabled, and had a regular (but low) weekly paycheck he was not a candidate. He did however have an acute health issue that would need to be treated soon. He therefore qualified for the Project Access program and was matched up with me for evaluation and treatment of his hernia, and he was matched up formally with the resident medical clinic for ongoing management of pre-diabetes. He was seen in my private office just like any other surgery patient. When I

"My patient did well. He never burdened the system."

Dr. Larson

examined him and confirmed he needed surgery, I did not have to worry about whether he could afford pre-op labs, an EKG, a medical evaluation, or the anesthesia. I also knew if he had a complication and needed hospitalization this would be provided. I confidently called Project Access and a few weeks later a surgical date was provided after staff triaged his case and decided which participating hospital was in line to handle his case.

Good Outcome

My patient did well. He never burdened the system with additional emergency room visits and received his diabetes education and monitoring through the resident clinic in an ongoing fashion. Eventually, Project Access staff were able to find an Affordable Care Act program he could purchase which he now uses for his ongoing health care needs. Without the guidance of Project Access staff it is unlikely he would have discovered this resource on his own and it is very likely he would have ended up with several emergency room bills and an emergency surgical bill that would have destroyed his savings and likely bankrupted him. This is how the program works, and this is how our volunteers make a difference every day. Thank you to all of you for making Project Access possible.

Project Access Extraordinary Service Award Winners



Dr. Donald Goodwin & Dr. Walter Forman of Palm Beach Radiology.

2017 Project Access Extraordinary Service Award for Ancillary Service Provider - Palm Beach Radiology. Dr. Walter Forman and Dr. Donald Goodwin have been generous supporters of Project Access for more than nine years and provided mammograms, x-rays and ultrasounds for hundreds of Project Access patients. Their giving nature is truly inspiring, and we are grateful for their partnership!



2017 Project Access Extraordinary Service Award for the Hospital Provider – JFK Medical Center. The hospital has been an outstanding partner of the Project Access program for more than 10 years and has provided nearly \$1.5 million in charitable care to Project Access patients. Thanks to JFK for all you do for the uninsured!

Pat Burns, CEO, JFK North Campus; Andrew Larson, MD, Chair of Project Access; and Michael Dennis, MD, President of PBCMSS.

2017 Project Access Extraordinary Service Award Physician Practice Provider - Arthritis Associates of South Florida, Dr. MaryPat Clements and Dr. Steven Goodman. Combined, these two physicians have helped nearly 80 patients over the last 5 years. We are grateful for their generosity and unwavering willingness to serve!

Dr. Steven Goodman and Dr. Marypat Clements of Arthritis Associates of South Florida.



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Newsletter
Published by



Lauren Stoops

Director

561-433-3940, ext. 119

laurens@pbcms.org

Tenna Wiles

CEO

Palm Beach County

Medical Society

561-433-3940

tennaw@pbcms.org

Palm Beach County Medical Society Services 15th Annual Heroes in Medicine Awards

Alan Pillersdorf, MD – Honorary Chair

Greg Quattlebaum and Jibby Ciric, PsyD – Co-Chairs

Rendina Healthcare Real Estate – Founding Benefactor

Friday, April 20, 2018

Kravis Center, West Palm Beach

11 am to 2 pm • \$125 per person

Proceeds benefit Project Access

For information on sponsorships, tickets
call 561-433-3940 or email Jim Sugarman at JimS@pbcms.org
www.pbcms.org



**Palm Beach County
Medical Society Services**



From the Director

The Impact of Florida's Free Clinics

For the past four years, Project Access has been a member of the Florida Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (FAFCC), an organization made up of not-for-profit, community-based and faith-based organizations that provide critical health care to uninsured and underserved Florida residents. With more than 100 free clinics and networks, Florida leads the country with agencies of this kind. Their work is hugely important as more than 3 million Floridians, nearly 16 percent of the population, live in poverty and are unable to afford quality healthcare on their own. The clinics of the FAFCC work diligently to link residents with volunteer medical, dental, vision, specialty care, behavioral health and pharmaceutical care, all at little to no-cost to their patients.

In 2017, the FAFCC was granted a \$9.5 million-dollar appropriation by the Florida Legislature. With that funding, the FAFCC clinics and networks were able to serve nearly 200,000 Floridians in 45 counties and generate more than \$100 million in charitable care with the help of

12,328 volunteer providers. According to the Florida Association of Free and Charitable Clinics 2017 Impact Report: "As health

care costs continue rising, Florida's free and charitable clinics are lowering those costs for the state by decreasing indigent care at emergency rooms and reducing avoidable hospitalizations and readmissions. We're providing jobs for our communities and dignity for our patients. We're helping keep

**"the FAFCC clinics
and networks were
able to serve nearly
200,000 Floridians."**

Lauren Stoops, Director

vulnerable, uninsured Floridians healthy and working."

Project Access supports the organization's efforts in public policy advocacy, funding and resource development, knowledge exchange, data collection and research, and marketing. Through partnership with the FAFCC, Project Access is able to increase its impact here in Palm Beach County and across the state through collaboration with fellow members to improve the health of Florida overall.

