

News & Announcements

King County Project Access 2009—A Year in Review

by Sallie Neillie, Executive Director

As we get this article ready to go to press, I'm also spending time doing all those things a small non-profit does at the end and beginning of each fiscal year. With this review and renewal, it is only natural that I reflect on where we were and where we are going. I am struck with both how far King County Project Access has come—and how far we can still go.

We grew by over 25% the number of patients referred to us from the community clinics, free clinics and other safety net primary care clinics. We had over 1450 patients referred to us for care in 2009. And we more than doubled the number of physicians and other licensed clinicians that are participating in seeing the low income uninsured patients to over 460! We maintained a very respectable rate of patients that we were able to serve, with less than 10% of the patients being referred to us being determined to be ineligible for services. And we have improved our no-show rate from an already impressive level of 7% to an almost unbelievable level of 3%. While it is too soon to tell if the last 6 weeks of 2009 were an aberration or a sustainable improvement, every indication is that we have lowered the bar significantly!

While these numbers are impressive, we've also done some less obvious things in 2009 that had a significant impact on

us—and that should serve us well this year and in subsequent years.

- ◆ We completed an organizational assessment with the help of Executive Service Corp. This assessment, along with our strategic plan, helps lay the blue print for the next several years. The organizational assessment recognized a need to refine our governance structure, step up our financial development skills and sharpen our external communications.
- ◆ With an affirmative vote in November, the KCPA Board of Directors made the important move to refine and expand our Board and focus its energy on strategic and financial sustainably challenges. We anticipate adding two new Board members in late February and a number of others throughout the coming year. This expansion also enables our Board to do some succession planning for the Officers on the Board.
- ◆ We have developed a fund development plan that will take 12–18 months to implement. With its implementation, we begin our move from being dependent on the largess of a small handful of committed (and wonderful!) corporate funders and individual donors to a more balanced approach that should enable us to balance the natural ebbs and flows in funding that small non-profits experience.
- ◆ We unveiled our new look with the publication of our 2008 *Annual Report* in October of 2009. With a new logo, strong key messages and a communications calendar, we are leaning into 2010 with excitement and enthusiasm.

- ◆ We outgrew our initial office space and moved from the King County Medical Society offices to the Seattle First Baptist Church. We will always be grateful for the wonderful support KCMS provided in leasing to us initially and now have the space to add staff as we grow.
- ◆ We've added much needed staff:
 - ◆ An Operations Manager who brings many years of experience in call center management.
 - ◆ Two additional case managers who each bring different and special skills that we need.

We continue to have a number of challenges ahead of us for 2010. Through an in-kind commitment from Group Health Cooperative, we have the opportunity to grow our internal expertise in process improvement and are beginning a year-long effort to improve our case management scheduling process. Our goal is to improve the transparency of our process. Once this process is completed, we have big goals to move to becoming paperless, electronic faxing, etc. Health care reform has been on the forefront of the news since President Obama's inauguration over a year ago; we know that whatever is passed will have implications for the currently uninsured and low income. We are doing our best to be ready!

We are excited about what we've been able to accomplish so far—and look forward to sharing future accomplishments with you in the months and years ahead. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at 206-788-4204 or neillies@kcprojectaccess.org. ■