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# Health care reform to start on Capitol Hill

By [Rodrigo Reyes](#)

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Just across the street from Seattle University, a new specialty clinic on the ninth floor of the Heath building of the Swedish Medical Center is offering what could be an affordable example of a national model of efficient health care.

Swedish, King County Project Access (KCPA) and more than 140 health care professionals are teaming up to bring state of the art health care to uninsured and underinsured patients of all ethnicities and social situations.

Swedish provides the facilities and KCPA the case management. KCPA serves as intermediary between the primary health care agencies and the physicians using a case management model that makes it easier and more attractive for health care professionals who want to donate their expertise.

According to Tom Gibbon, director of the clinic, this will be life changing for the patients. For this clinic, two programs that provided specialty care for underprivileged people at Swedish were merged, orthopedics and general surgery.

The new spot includes medical specialties from cardiology to dental care all with volunteer physicians and, when possible, free medication.

The clinic also hosts a residency training program and works with the most modern technology such as Swedish's Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system.

Epic, one of the best EMR software systems in the country, brings all the information about the patients together. Primary care doctors can get the information from the specialists in real time, making the care of the patient truly holistic.

"The patients will know the team is working for them," Gibbon said.



Candace Shankel | The Spectator

Gregory Lewis (above) is recovering from surgery on his Achilles tendon at the new Swedish clinic.

The system also has safeguards built into it. For example, if incompatible medications are prescribed a red flag will appear on the patient's file and the physician will be instantly notified. The most exciting and innovative part of this project is the twist on the medical distribution model. Doctors receive patients in their own offices.

One of the co-creators of this model is KCPA executive director Sallie Neillie who four and a half years ago was part of the kick off of this non-profit organization with the goal of providing specialty health care to underprivileged populations.

"Our model is built around keeping the specialist happy, because our passion is the low income uninsured, but if they [the specialists] don't want to participate there is no project" Neillie said.

Swedish physicians in the new clinic prefer the case management model over others because it allows them to give more care in less time. "It works for both the patient and the doctor" said Neillie.

The United States medical system is not well set up for people who don't have health insurance, according to doctor Jay Fathi. Fathi, medical director of the clinic.

"It is easier for them [the patients] to have access to primary care through community clinics which are federally funded but it is much more difficult for them to get specialty care," Fathi said. "Most specialists would take care of underserved patients if there was a vehicle and a means to do so."

"It's beautiful up here," said patient Gregory Lewis about the new clinic. "Really nice people, they make me feel good about myself as a patient and as a person."

Lewis is currently recovering from surgery on his right Achilles tendon and studying for his GED tests.

The potential of this project is uncertain, but right now there are more than 600 physicians and six out of eleven hospitals systems in King County involved with KCPA, all working toward the goal of providing the best quality modern health care to low income uninsured and underinsured patients.

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