



Sallie Neillie
Executive Director

How far we've come... and the journey that lies ahead

At the start of a new year, I spend time doing all those things a small non-profit does to prepare for a new fiscal year. With this review and renewal, I am struck with both how far King County Project Access has come—and how far we still can go.

We grew by over 25 percent the number of patients referred to us from our referring clinics; more than 1,450 patients were referred to us for care in 2009. And we more than doubled (to 460!) the number of physicians and other licensed clinicians who are caring for the low-income patients we were founded to serve. We have also improved our no-show rate from an already impressive level of 7 percent to an almost unbelievable level of 3 percent.

While it is too soon to tell if the last six weeks of 2009 was an aberration or a sustainable improvement, every indication is that we have lowered the no-show rate 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 blueprint for the next several years.
- 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 sustainability challenges.
- We created a fund development plan that will take 12–18 months to implement. We now 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 all small non-profits experience.
- We recently unveiled our new look. With a new logo and strong key messages, we are leaning into 2010 with excitement and enthusiasm.
- We relocated our office space, which will allow us to expand.
- We've added an Operations Manager and two additional Case Managers.

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Outcomes yield a 3.3% no-show rate

Only 3.3 percent of the KCPA patients are no-shows to their appointments! Our no-show rate has declined from 7 percent in 2008, resulting in healthier patients and satisfied specialists. Because KCPA's participating specialty providers volunteer their time, they need patients to show up for their scheduled appointments. The providers rely heavily on KCPA's patient-centered case management to avoid the inefficiencies no-shows cause to patient flow.

Our no-show rate is directly attributable to KCPA's patient-centered case management model, in which KCPA addresses patient barriers to keeping appointments in a positive and proactive manner. The case managers assist the patients in understanding the importance of their scheduled appointments and why they need to show up on time and prepared for their scheduled appointment. The case managers place a reminder phone call to the patient and provide the support needed to ensure the patient shows up for the appointment in a prepared and responsible manner.

We're very proud of our no-show success. Many thanks to our case managers—Ian, Rachel, Martha and Katie—for all they do.

The journey that lies ahead

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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 we are beginning a year-long effort to improve our case management processes. Once this improvement process is completed, we have big goals in moving to becoming paperless, electronic faxing, etc.

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.



KCPA Partners: Group Health Cooperative

KCPA celebrates its ongoing—and growing—partnership with Group Health

This past December, KCPA recognized and celebrated its partnership with **Group Health Cooperative—Central Campus**, which serves KCPA patients who require Otolaryngology (ENT), Physician Therapy/Occupational Therapy, Orthopedics, Gynecology and Speech Language and Learning needs.

Featured speaker **Peter Morgan**, a KCPA board member and recent Group Health retiree, highlighted the partnership between the two organizations. GHC—Central Campus has been serving KCPA patients for three years, and last September KCPA began sending patients to **GHC—Bellevue Campus** as well.

"If everyone takes a little, the burden will be small but the benefit to the community will be huge," said Morgan, former executive vice president of the Group Practice. "In the past three years, Group Health has served more than 100 patients in need through this program. I'm proud that we do this."

"Group Health was one of the early leaders," reflected KCPA Executive Director Sallie Neillie. "We are incredibly grateful for its ongoing commitment and support in serving KCPA uninsured low-income patients."



(Left to right) Peter Morgan, recent Group Health retiree and KCPA board member; Sallie Neillie, executive director of KCPA; and Linda Broun, medical center administrator at Group Health's Capitol Hill Campus.

Celebrating the view

By *Katie Kalafus, KCPA Case Manager*

On the drive home from her successful cataract surgery, Janette remembers passing downtown Seattle and feeling inspired by the beautiful panorama of the city.

"It was like a person wearing glasses for the first time," she recalled. "I could see the details of twigs on trees."

Only two years before, Janette was in danger of losing her driver's license because of her poor vision. Today, she can drive her car without even wearing glasses.

It all started in 2008, when her struggle with cataracts came to a climax, and Janette suffered a horrible fall. She was leaving a building during sunset and had taken one step when the light from the setting sun connected with her eye, blinding her entirely, causing her to fall down the rest of the steps.

Recovering from this serious fall was a long process that began when **Country Doctor Community Clinic** referred Janette to KCPA for physical therapy. For two years, Janette worked with a **Group Health Cooperative–Central Campus** physical therapist to regain her mobility. In addition, KCPA referred Janette to **Eye Associates Northwest**, where she underwent cataract surgery in June 2009.

Looking back on it all now, Janette feels "gratitude beyond what I can possibly imagine" toward KCPA and its collaborators.

"I feel like I have been given my life back," she reflects. For Janette, having this surgery "returned... a feeling of liveliness" and was both "life-affirming" and "life-transforming."

Janette's story is a great example of how access to healthcare can dramatically improve one's quality of life.

In Janette's own words: "Without health, there can be no pursuit of happiness."

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

■ The **Pacific Hospital Preservation & Development Authority (PHPDA)** Governing Council recently announced a grant for \$150,000 to KCPA. The PHPDA serves as a funder and a catalyst to foster system changes to improve access to specialty care for the uninsured. This work includes directly funding programs that provide care for the uninsured as well as supporting research to identify and eliminate barriers to access. Many thanks to PHPDA for its continued support! **Visit PHPDA online at www.phpda.org.**

■ Washington state is proud to boast five Project Access operations, now in King, Spokane, Whatcom, Clark and Thurston counties. In addition, three more are in the planning phases: Pierce, Snohomish and Benton/Franklin counties.

Realizing that there is strength in numbers, KCPA invited all of the statewide organizations to a roundtable discussion in order to learn from each other, improve our processes and start to develop a voice for the population we serve at the state level. (In 2009, this included more than 3,800 patients served and over \$14 million in care and services. Statewide, this also included more than 2,000 licensed providers and 16 hospitals.)

■ KCPA recently developed new printed materials, including a new logo. We are very proud of these efforts, and we thank Kim Lambert of **Desktop Creations** and Mardie Rhodes of **Rhodes Communications** for lending their expertise in this process!

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We are a critical step in access to specialty medical care for the uninsured.

We remove the “hassle factor” for physicians wanting to volunteer.

KCPA screens all patient referrals to ensure that appropriate tests and paperwork are completed BEFORE the patient goes to see a specialist.

We remove logistical and financial barriers for patients.

Without KCPA, the patients might have to arrange their own tests, transportation and interpreter, as well as pay upfront laboratory and imaging costs. This is a tremendous barrier for the patients we serve.

We follow a model of care that works.

The Project Access model has been successful in more than 50 communities in the United States. By spreading the workload fairly, no single practice or physician is overburdened.

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We invite your comments and questions.

Visit www.kcprojectaccess.org to learn more.