



Dental Demand: The good, the bad and the “ugly”

First, the good news. Starting in January 2014, individuals enrolled in Apple Health/Medicaid have basic dental coverage.

The bad news? Individuals enrolled through managed care organizations on the Washington Healthplanfinder don't have dental coverage, even if their premiums are subsidized.

The “ugly”? Even with dental coverage for basic check-ups, access to specialty dental care, including multiple extractions and dentures, is even tougher.

Dental care for adults has always been a challenge. Dental pain is one of the top five reasons uninsured adults seek emergency room care. Over an 18-month period, the Washington Dental Service Foundation estimated that emergency room dental visits resulted in more than \$36 million in charges.

Preservation and Development Authority, we're helping more than 1,100 patients annually to gain access to the specialty dental care they need.

Efficient handoffs between our care partners has made a huge difference for our patients. “Julie” was referred to Project Access Northwest after a visit to a local safety net clinic in South King County. Her provider was concerned about mouth cancer, and our case manager Sean Haines reached out to Julie. Although she was apprehensive, Julie agreed to be seen at SCSC. She was then referred and seen the next day at **Swedish Ear Nose and Throat Oncology**, where she was diagnosed with an aggressive mouth cancer that required immediate surgery. The smooth handoffs between the safety net clinic, Project Access Northwest, SCSC and Swedish allowed Julie's cancer to be caught much earlier. Today she is home and doing well with follow-up care. More than four different organizations were involved in providing treatment. We're grateful for our partners who share our mission and get the work done!

American Dental Association recognizes SCSC dental program Swedish Community Specialty Clinic (SCSC)

dental program—one of our key partners—received the **American Dental Association's 2014 Golden Apple Award**. The award recognizes SCSC's exemplary role in creating a model program for the nation. **SCSC has provided complex oral surgery for more than 1,800 low-income adults, totaling more than \$2.4 million in free care since the program began.** Project Access Northwest is proud to be part of the program and congratulates our partners and funders for this well-deserved recognition!

Learn more about the award online at: tinyurl.com/swedishCSC.



Partnerships produce better patient care

Thanks to our partnerships with **Swedish Community Specialty Clinic (SCSC)**, **The Seattle-King County Dental Society (SKCDS)**, the **Seattle-King County Dental Foundation (SKCDF)** and the **Pacific Hospital**

Dental demand continues to grow

Last year, dental services comprised nearly 22 percent of Project Access Northwest's specialty referrals, topping all other specialty services. The value of services provided was in excess of \$1.6 million, and we expect that number to increase. With the current program's growth and a new program in Snohomish County, we anticipate the value of services to exceed \$2 million in 2014.

Minor & James: Managing Medicaid specialty referrals

We're pleased to announce an innovative new partnership to help streamline the Medicaid referrals for specialty providers. Medicaid expansion is good for eligible, low-income people and for community health centers, but the reimbursement rate makes specialty care services as challenging as if one had no insurance—or worse. For specialists committed to serve this patient population, it becomes vital to do so with increased efficiency and patient engagement. That's where Project Access Northwest comes in.

We are helping some specialty practices by providing pacing and care coordination for Medicaid patients. Beginning this October, **Minor & James** is partnering

MINOR & JAMES MEDICAL



with us in this effort. The specialty practice sets its threshold—the level of new Medicaid patients the practice can afford to see—and Project Access Northwest ensures that the threshold is honored, the patients are medically appropriate, and sufficient information is included to ensure that the specialist's time is well utilized. We're excited to partner with Minor & James in this community effort and appreciate their commitment to continue to serve Medicaid patients.

Pilot project: Helping low-income patients stay insured

Low-income individuals (up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level) enrolled through Washington Healthplanfinder are eligible for a subsidy to help pay their insurance premium. For some people, however, paying the remaining premium still can be prohibitive.

For the past 10 months, Project Access Northwest has been working with some of our hospital partners to develop a **Premium Assistance Program**. With our partners' financial support, we are paying the remaining premiums for approximately 100 individuals who live at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Sponsorship programs help approximately 2,200 individuals statewide.

We will carefully monitor the results of this pilot and report known outcomes. From early feedback, we know this is making a world of difference for patients.

“It's organizations like yours that offer people in our area the opportunity to enjoy a healthy life...”

“Thank you for working diligently on the Premium Assistance Program contribution for my... health plan,” writes one of our patients. “You have the communication skills, commitment and dedication to see the funding of my plan through... You can't imagine how much that means to me! ... It's organizations like yours that offer people in our area the opportunity to enjoy a healthy life.”

MAIL CALL

In the midst of a busy workday, there's nothing like a note or call from one of our patients to make our day.

For “Doug,” partial paralysis and chronic pain led to a diagnosis of transverse myelitis (a very rare form of multiple sclerosis). After years of physical therapy and swimming, he is now able to walk short distances. However, dental infection was putting him at risk and potentially compromising his ability to manage his disease. Dental infection affects a range of medical concerns—from diabetes to kidney disease to multiple sclerosis. Through a referral to Project Access Northwest, Doug was able to have all his infected teeth pulled and eventually got dentures.

“By the grace of God, I was able to find people to help me, and the support you all have given me is so appreciated. I still have TM, I still live in chronic pain, I still have very limited mobility... but now I have a bright and happy smile.”



Honored guests at the Kitsap Celebrating our Partners Dr. Jim Baker; David Foote, executive director, United of Kitsap County; Margie and Michael Sgobba (patient) and Kitsap County Commissioner Robert Gelder.

Project Access Northwest welcomes new staff

New IT Manager Mary Zwerling has been working with Project Access Northwest for more than 10 years, but just recently joined the staff. In her previous work with Public Health—Seattle & King County, she worked closely with referral coordinators at public health clinics and recognized the challenge finding specialty care for uninsured patients.

“I talked with Sallie about this issue when Project Access Northwest was just a dream,” she recalls. “I’m delighted to be part of the team now that the dream has become a reality.”

When Mary earned her degree in health informatics, she completed her practicum at Project Access Northwest. Mary now oversees IT support and maintenance; privacy and security; and reporting.

Case Manager Jessica Serra joined us this summer to work with our Spanish-speaking patients. Previously, she was a referral coordinator with HealthPoint. Jessica wanted to learn about patient referrals and coordination from both the referral and specialty providers, so she is delighted to be part of Project Access Northwest.

“At the safety net clinics, we refer patients, but the patients are on their own to follow-up. Here, we work with all aspects of coordinating that appointment—from scheduling to interpretation. It’s more involved and more rewarding.”



Mary Zwerling & Jessica Serra

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Five events this fall celebrate our partners

Project Access Northwest hosts regional events

Our fall calendar is full with five regional “Celebrating our Partners” events, designed to bring together our donors, sponsors, partners and volunteers who make our work possible. We’ve hosted events in Bremerton and Seattle, with three more events planned in the coming weeks. (See back page for details.)

At our **Kitsap County event on October 1**, patient Michael Sgobba described how his recent hand surgery by physician volunteer **Dr. Brian P. Wicks** of The Doctors Clinic allowed him to resume his important prison ministry work. **Dr. Jim Baker**, who referred Michael to us, joined in the celebration.

Kitsap County Commissioner Robert Gelder spoke, reminding us that **Kitsap Community Health Priorities**—a partnership of **Kitsap Public Health District, United Way of Kitsap County and Harrison Medical Center**—was instrumental in bringing Project Access Northwest to the region.

Thanks to United Way of Kitsap County for providing a perfect site for our night of fine food, good friends and important conversations.

At our **Seattle event on October 15**, board members and staff welcomed nearly 50 health care leaders from **Swedish Health Services, Group Health Cooperative, Harborview, Northwest Kidney Center** and other organizations.

Patient Leticia Soto shared her story about getting help for her profound hearing loss. Leticia was initially referred to Project Access Northwest from **HealthPoint-Redmond**. She saw volunteer specialists at **Pacific Medical Center** and **Swedish**, but she did not have the financial resources for the hearing device she needed. With help from the **Group Health Hear Center** and **Group Health Foundation**, Leticia was fitted for her first hearing device. Today, Leticia can hear clearly for the first time since she was a child, thanks to the coordinated work of providers in multiple health systems and the case management work of Project Access Northwest.

We thank the Sunset Club for discounting its lovely venue for this celebration.



Case manager Jessica Serra looks on as patient Leticia Soto shares her story in Seattle.

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CELEBRATING our PARTNERS

Regional events celebrating health care heroes like you!

PLEASE VISIT US ONLINE at www.projectaccessnw.org for event details and photos.

SPONSORED BY



GiveBIG 2014: Wow!

We are thrilled to report the results of GiveBIG 2014.
We raised \$22,019.

- This tops last year's total by nearly \$6,000!
- 76 donors—including 13 new donors—helped us reach new heights!
- The average gift of \$289.72 can provide more than \$4,925 in specialty health care services.
- Our total grew even more when the Seattle Foundation added more than \$1,800 from the stretch pool.

Thank you to our donors, volunteers and staff! You're all Health Care Superheroes.

Pictured L-R: Justin Trubiani, Aileen Delansig and Linh Le



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We invite your comments and questions.
Visit www.projectaccessnw.org to learn more.

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