

Project Access Northwest now serving King, Snohomish and Kitsap counties

Partnerships and expansion are key elements of strategic plan for 2013–2017



Sallie Neillie
Executive Director

In November 2012, Project Access Northwest began serving Kitsap County residents through partnerships with Harrison Medical Center (Bremerton) and The Doctors Clinic (Silverdale).

“We’re excited about moving into Kitsap County,” says Sallie Neillie, Project Access NW executive director. “Our organization is expanding and preparing for health care reform.”

Neillie and the Project Access NW Board of Directors have been working on a strategic plan for the organization and expanding the number of patients served is a big part of it.

“Our case management services for uninsured or underinsured patients will be valuable for organizations that are suddenly seeing an influx of Medicaid patients after health care reform,” Neillie explains. “The relationships we build with clinicians are dependent, in part, on the patients blending seamlessly into the clinicians’ practice and requiring little or no more work than the general population. We have provided case management for this population of patients since our inception.”

Today more than 95 percent of Project Access NW patients keep their appointments (compared to fewer than 70 percent in typical uninsured populations) and volunteer providers cite Project Access NW’s case management services as one of the reasons they volunteer.

Project Access NW focuses on four major areas of the care continuum.

- Primary care medical referral to specialty care appointments.
- Primary care dental referral to advanced dentistry appointments.
- Care coordination for patients needing inpatient and outpatient surgery.
- Reduction in inappropriate emergency department use.

Increasingly, Project Access NW is seen as a local resource for providing case management and care coordination for the low-income uninsured and patients with state-sponsored insurance. Regardless of how the details of Medicaid expansion and health benefit exchanges unfold, Project Access NW is uniquely positioned to serve the growing population of patients needing access to specialty medical and advanced dental care and care coordination for surgery.

“Care coordination unseen, but an important part of our work” Neillie explains. “By working closely with uninsured patients and specialty providers over the past six years, we realize that we provide a valuable service in coordinating care for patients who require surgery.”

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*See our service area
map on page 4.*

SOLUTION: Volunteer support

Volunteers add expertise to Project Access Northwest

Mary Zwerling, program manager for managed care at Public Health Seattle & King County, is finishing a Health Informatics degree program with Western Governor's University and recently completed an 80-hour practicum at Project Access Northwest under the mentorship of Jane Gunwaldsen and Sallie Neillie. Zwerling anticipates the completion of her degree program in March 2013.

"At the heart of my interest in health informatics* is service to the patient," Zwerling explains. "In the midst of the complexities of Electronic Health Record implementations, data analytics, changes in reimbursement and managed care programs it can be easy to lose sight of our common goal—improving the health status of our patients. At Project Access NW, I encountered an environment that

responsibly and sensitively utilizes health information to enhance the continuum of care for the most vulnerable patients—those who are uninsured or underinsured. Project Access NW epitomizes the health informatics discipline for me—a multi-disciplinary group of health professionals coming together as a community to ensure an effective path for the patient through the specialty care process and back to the medical home. I am so impressed with the work being done at Project Access NW, from the concerned and caring attitude of the case managers to the cutting-edge quality improvements and technological advancements being implemented in this wonderful organization. Thank you for caring for the communities you serve and providing this exemplary practicum experience!"



Jane Gunwaldsen, Project Access Northwest's administrative manager, and volunteer Mary Zwerling focused on Project Access NW's health informatics during Zwerling's recent practicum.

* Health Informatics is the discipline at the intersection of health care, information science and computer science. The practice deals with the resources, devices and methods required to optimize the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information in health and biomedicine services.

LEADERSHIP: Board of Directors update

In January, Project Access Northwest said thank you to board members completing their service and welcomed four new members. Our special thanks go to **Zac Smulski**, chief design officer at Zale Transitions, and **Judy Featherstone, MD**, medical director at HealthPoint, for their support and commitment to our mission as they completed their terms on the board of directors. We also welcome the following new board members:

Pat Cooke

Pat Cooke is the chief information officer and executive director of Business Operations at CellNetix. Previously, Cooke owned a successful, Seattle-based IT consulting company, ISOsource.com. As CIO at CellNetix, Cooke has designed and overseen the implementation of a company-wide IT infrastructure and Laboratory Information System (LIS). Cooke was the winner of the Puget Sound Business Journal's 2012 Best CIO of a Private Company award.

Debra Gussin

Debra Gussin is the associate administrator for Ambulatory and Allied Care Services at Harborview Medical Center. In this role, she is responsible for the primary and specialty care clinics at Harborview along with other services including social work, interpreter services, spiritual care and the UW Medicine Contact Center, with a strong focus on improving access, efficiency and quality of care for vulnerable populations and for patients in all walks of life.



Sallie Neillie, executive director of Project Access Northwest (left), and Elizabeth Wong Pelley, board president, with Judy Featherstone, MD, as she completes her term on Project Access NW's board.

Kristina Larson, Ex-Officio

Kristina Larson is the executive director and COO of the King County Medical Society, which has been associated with Project Access NW since its inception.

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INSPIRATION: We hear from grateful patients

We are always delighted to hear from patients whose health has improved because they received specialty medical or dental services through Project Access Northwest.

For some patients, getting healthy means they can return to work:

“There are no words to express my gratitude for what Project Access Northwest does. After years of (having) health insurance, I was laid-off and my insurance immediately cancelled, right when my hip started getting bad. Without your program, I know I was not far from a wheelchair. I AM A NEW PERSON and going back to work after a wonderfully short (hip replacement) recovery time.”
—J.M.

For others, it means a beloved family member is on the road to recovery after treatment for some tough medical challenges:

“Project Access Northwest (helped provide) for my son’s cardiovascular and gastroenterological procedures and is very much appreciated in our house!”
—A.B.

And for patients receiving care through our safety net clinics, Project Access NW provides coordinated care for all points in their care.

“Thank you to my Country Doctor Clinic primary care physician and all the doctors, specialists, nurses, hospitals and volunteers that make it possible for people like me and others to be able to obtain the care and services provided by all of you for our health and recuperation.”
—A.F.

The success stories of these patients are created through the generosity of our volunteer providers and health care partners. Thank you to the volunteers, hospital systems and medical equipment providers who make this possible. In the midst of health care change, it’s important to remember that patients are at the center of what we do. Improving their quality of life helps us all feel better.

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She has held senior and executive management positions in private industry and has been a program management consultant to government, private and non-profit organizations. She has also served as adjunct faculty at Seattle Pacific University and Seattle Central Community College.

Grace Wang, MD, FACS

Grace Wang is the medical director of International Community Health Services (ICHS). Before joining ICHS, Wang was the medical director at Neighborcare Health and at Public Health–Seattle & King County. She has worked in community health for most of her career, combining her passion for social justice with her professional training in medicine and public health.

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Project Access Northwest is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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*Executive Director
Project Access Northwest*

PARTNERSHIPS: Now serving tri-county area



KITSAP COUNTY

- 1 SILVERDALE**
The Doctors Clinic
- 2 BREMERTON**
Harrison Medical Center

SNOHOMISH COUNTY

- 3 EDMONDS**
The Polyclinic—Edmonds
Swedish Medical Center—Edmonds
- 4 EVERETT**
Group Health
The Everett Clinic
Providence Regional Medical Center
Swedish Medical Center—Mill Creek

KING COUNTY

- 5 BELLEVUE**
Group Health—Bellevue Campus
Minor & James Medical—Bellevue Commons
Overlake Hospital Medical Center
- 6 BURIEN**
Highline Medical Center
- 7 ISSAQUAH**
Swedish Medical Center—Issaquah
- 8 KIRKLAND**
EvergreenHealth
- 9 RENTON**
Southlake Clinic
UW Medical Center/Valley Medical Center
- 10 SEATTLE**
Group Health—Capitol Hill Campus
Minor & James Medical—First Hill
Pacific Medical Centers—Beacon Hill
Pacific Medical Centers—First Hill
The Polyclinic—Broadway
The Polyclinic—James Tower
The Polyclinic—Madison Center
Swedish Medical Center—Ballard
Swedish Medical Center—Cherry Hill
Swedish Medical Center—First Hill
UW Medical Center/Northwest Hospital
Virginia Mason Medical Center

PROJECT ACCESS NORTHWEST SERVICE AREA

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“For example, we work on making certain the patient has a physical from the primary care provider in an appropriate time frame before surgery,” Neillie continues. “We make certain the right images are done. If there’s a joint replacement involved, we work with the artificial joint manufacturer to secure the donation. We also help patients get the durable medical equipment they require as they recover from surgery.”

In addition, through work with safety net providers, large health care systems are using Project Access NW’s services to find a health care home for patients who are regular users of emergency room services for primary care.

Watch for more details of our strategic plan as the year unfolds. We are pleased with our growth and preparation for health care reform and look forward to continuing our contributions to the health care community and the patients we serve.

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

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for its support in publishing this newsletter.*

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Call us at 206-496-1593.

We have ongoing needs for medical and dental clinicians, RNs,
case managers and other administrative support.

GO GREEN! To receive this newsletter and other Project Access Northwest updates via email, call Aileen 206-496-1593 and let her know your preference. Or just send us an email at info@projectaccessnw.org. Thanks for helping us go greener and save on postage!