

# **Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network Update**

## **February 22, 2008**

The past few months have been very busy for the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network. Increased funding from the Legislature in 2007 has allowed the Network to expand the pharmacy and specialty care initiatives, and to provide direct funding to additional safety net providers (an updated map of Network participants is attached). Below is an update on each of those activities, as well as a summary of current legislative activities affecting Network members.

### **Network Update**

#### **Provider Awards**

Three groups of safety net providers were allocated direct provider funding through the 2007 legislation: Rural Health Clinics, Free Clinics and Family Planning Agencies. To access funds each provider was required to provide the following: 1) an explanation of how funds will be used; 2) how they provide assistance to patients in determining an appropriate medical home; and 3) data on their patient population and their clinic.

#### *Rural Health Clinics*

Eighty-four of the 142 Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) in Iowa requested funds from the \$150,000 available through the Network. Each RHC that applied for the funding is receiving \$1,785.

#### *Free Clinics*

Free Clinics were allocated a total of \$250,000 in the 2007 legislation. After discussion with the Free Clinic representatives on the Network Leadership Group, it was agreed that \$100,000 would be allocated for direct provider awards. Sixty thousand dollars is being used to support and expand the Volunteer Health Care Provider Program, which is administered through the Iowa Department of Public Health. The remaining \$50,000 will be distributed to the Free Clinics on a proportional basis, and use of the remaining \$40,000 will be determined between the free clinics organizations and Network staff.

All of the 29 Free Clinics in Iowa requested funds from the \$100,000 available through the Network. Each Free Clinic is receiving \$3,448.

#### *Family Planning Agencies*

Fifteen of the 18 Family Planning Agencies requested funds from the \$100,000 available. Each requesting agency will receive a proportion of the funds based on the number of patients they serve.

#### **Competitive Grants**

##### *Local Boards of Health Medical Home Capacity Building*

- ❖ Dallas County Board of Health – Dallas County (\$33,000): The grant will be used to incorporate a medical home initiative into a Building Healthy Communities in Dallas County initiative. The project will assess the current community's health care needs and gaps, facilitate conversations with the provider community and other partners, and build a framework for community and partner education.

- ❖ Polk County Health Department – Polk County (\$33,300): The grant will be used to assess the current system’s capacity to meet the needs of the medically homeless. The project will increase the knowledge base of Polk County safety net providers regarding the needs and challenges of the medically homeless in Polk County. PCHD will work in partnership with Visiting Nurse Services, Primary Health Care, Inc., Wesley Services, and the Health Access Partnership.
- ❖ Calhoun County Department of Health – Calhoun County (\$33,333): The grant will be used to expand a current medical home initiative focused on children to adults. The targeted adult population will include the following: persons without insurance; persons whose insurance does not pay for periodic screening, case management, and health education; persons with high insurance deductibles and/or co-pays (catastrophic-level insurance); persons at or below 200% of the federal poverty level; and, persons whose age indicates the need for recommended preventive health screenings

*Maternal and Child Health Centers Medical Home Capacity Building*

- ❖ Crittenton Center – Sioux City (agreement pending): The grant will be used to build on efforts underway with Mission Health and other community safety net partners to improve coordination and communication to facilitate development of a comprehensive plan to assist patients to select an appropriate medical home.
- ❖ Dubuque Visiting Nurse Association – Dubuque (\$35,068): The grant will be used to provide enhanced case management services to fully implement a current medical and dental home initiative. The project will involve expanding the relationship between VNA and the newly federally funded Community Health Center (CHC), which had previously been funded through the State CHC Incubator Program.
- ❖ Visiting Nurse Services – Des Moines (\$35,117): The grant will be used to build medical home capacity through the collection and analysis of information regarding the perceptions, attitudes, and understanding of a medical home by clients and direct service providers. VNS will work in partnership with the Polk County Health Department and the Health Access Partnership.

*Specialty Care Networks*

- ❖ Polk County Medical Society – Polk County (\$175,000): The grant will be used to continue and add capacity to an already established volunteer physician network, which will include physician recruitment, retention, and recognition. The project will track patient usage and the value of care received. The goals for the network include: more effectively coordinate physicians and uninsured clients; assist safety net providers in securing appropriate medical care for patients; and ensure availability of specialty care to uninsured patients in a timely manner.
- ❖ Primary Health Care, Inc. – Des Moines (\$75,000): The capacity building grant will be used to undertake a planning process for an alternative system for accessing specialty care, specifically mental health specialty services. PHC will work in partnership with Behavioral Health Resources, a Community Mental Health Center, to develop better and stronger relationships among specialty mental health and primary medical care.

- ❖ Healthy Linn Care Network – Linn County (\$75,000): The capacity building grant will be used to develop *Linn County Project Access*, a volunteer physician specialty care referral network, which would assist patients in determining an appropriate medical home. The network will allow individuals who seek medical care in Linn County from more than 80 surrounding communities the ability to receive more comprehensive, coordinated, and timely care. The project will specifically focus on enhancing data collection methods to demonstrate need, facilitate community conversations with the provider community and other partners, build leadership and grow community support, and secure technical assistance.
- ❖ University of Northern Iowa – Cedar Falls (agreement pending): The grant will be used to assess and establish partnerships between specialists and community safety net providers to work toward the development of a specialty care network.

### **Pharmacy Initiatives**

The Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation (IPDC) has taken the lead on the pharmacy initiatives discussed below and reports to the Safety Net Advisory Group, as well as the Iowa Department of Public Health on a quarterly basis. The IPDC is a not-for-profit, Iowa-based organization formed to assist individuals who are uninsured or underinsured in gaining access to the medications they need.

#### Drug Donation Repository

The program has grown tremendously over the last year demonstrated by the following numbers (March 2007 – December 2007):

- ❖ Units Donated: 318,427
- ❖ Donated Value: \$292,773.87
- ❖ Units Shipped: 143,232.50
- ❖ Shipped Value: \$150,574.78

Currently, nine counties are home to a local drug donation repository, including Woodbury, Page, Hamilton, Story, Polk, Jasper, Linn, Johnson, and Clinton Counties. Most of the local repositories are located within Free Clinics; however, two Community Health Centers now serve as local repositories, as does the Iowa Heart Center. The IPDC has been contacting specialists, such as the Iowa Heart Center, in order to disseminate specialty care drugs to safety net patients. IPDC also plans to expand the number of local depositories to include all Free Clinics and Community Health Centers in the next year.

#### Medication Discount Card

The Medication Discount Card is being rolled out to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) in February 2008. The program will allow patients to access discounts on a wide variety of medications ranging in cost from \$8 to \$16. The program will initially be piloted by a few RHCs and will then be expanded to RHCs statewide.

### **Program Evaluation**

The Network has contracted with Rural Health Solutions to conduct an evaluation of the Network administrative activities and initiatives.

### **Legislative Update**

Last summer and fall the [Legislative Commission on Affordable Health Care Plans for Small Businesses and Families](#) met several times to review, analyze, and make recommendations on a broad spectrum of issues relating to the affordability of health care for Iowans. Several pieces of legislation have already been – or will be – introduced this year as a result of the Commission's work.

Two bills have thus far been introduced:

- Companion bills [SSB3140](#) and [HSB636](#): Health Care for All. This bill seeks to cover an additional 25,000 children who are eligible for current state programs and 19,000 additional children would be covered by private health insurance plans. This bill also creates a new state agency, the Health Care Exchange, to move forward with mandating adult coverage. In addition, this bill includes the implementation of a medical home for all individuals who receive coverage through State programs, and the implementation of electronic medical records (EMR). Both the medical home and EMR pieces establish commissions overseeing implementation, and both include representation from the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network.
- [SF2037](#): Health Care Whistleblower Protections. This bill protects health care workers against retaliation or reprisals resulting from the disclosure of certain information.

Additional bills are anticipated on workforce shortage/recruitment and retention, insurance consumer advocate and a patient bill of rights. Ongoing funding for the Network is anticipated to be included in an appropriations bill later this session. We will continue to keep you informed as we learn more about all of these bills.

### **Save the Date!**

We invite you to join us at the State Capitol in Des Moines on **Tuesday, April 1 at 2:00 p.m.** in the cafeteria to meet with Legislators and discuss the importance of safety net providers. Watch your email for more information on this event.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions regarding Network activities, please contact Deb Kazmerzak, [dkazmerzak@ianepca.com](mailto:dkazmerzak@ianepca.com) (515-244-9610)