

Breaking down barriers to care

Access' Patient Services address factors behind health disparities

Many factors can affect your health and well-being, and not all of them can be addressed in an exam room. Access Community Health Centers has a team of specialists working to break down barriers that keep patients from becoming healthy by focusing on factors that contribute to poor health.

Community Resource Specialists (CRS) and Interpreters in Access' Patient Services department help patients



William T. Evjue Clinic Patient Services Manager Maria Lisius with Community Resource Specialists Lindbergh Rodriguez and Jennifer Turnmire.

by connecting them to needed services and making sure that they can communicate with their care team in their preferred language. It's this connection to care that makes a difference for many Access patients.

"We help relieve stressors that are barriers to health," says Maria Lisius, patient services manager at the William T. Evjue clinic. "Having us here to remove barriers helps our patients to be healthier."

Among these barriers: not having a home or daily shelter, inadequate food, lack of employment, lack of transportation, poor or no health insurance coverage, and more. They are often caused by social determinants of health, and are a major contributor to health disparities here and across the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control, conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.

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CEO Message

Partnerships are the answer



As our community continues the conversation about how to resolve the stark health disparities around us, we often ask how we can do more. How do we get people the health care they need to be successful?

We know there is a significant unmet need in our community for the medical, dental and behavioral health care we provide every day at our five clinics.

But how do we do more? The answer is in building new partnerships in the community, and leveraging our current partnerships to reach more people.

Last year, we partnered with organizations and individuals in our community including Karen Mendez-Coller at Centro Hispano, Lisa Peyton-Caire and the Black Women's Wellness Foundation and Aaron Perry at his physical activity and nutrition program for African American men.

We also continue our collaboration with the Madison Metropolitan School District and Sun Prairie Area School District through the Celebrate Smiles school-based dental program. That program will serve children in 29 elementary schools this year with preventive and restorative care.

Of course, our ongoing partnerships with others in the health care community have been critical in helping us provide care to those who need it the most.

Each of these efforts helps us optimize health care services most effectively for our patients.

Through these partnerships, together we make a difference in people's lives and give each person the opportunity to have their own success story. Together we make a difference in the equity, and the success, of our community.

—Ken Loving, MD

Access Awarded Funds to Help Patients with Addiction

Access Community Health Centers was among the health centers awarded federal funds to improve care for patients with chronic pain, and those having substance abuse disorders. As the opioid addiction continues to be a growing problem in our community and across the nation, this timely grant will enable the organization to serve patients who need addiction services.

Within the next year, Access will expand its behavioral health team to provide support and counseling, each key elements of addiction treatment. Physical rehabilitation services with physical therapists or trainers will also be added, so that patients can get care that will help them heal faster and decrease reliance on prescription pain medication.



Dr. Elizabeth
Zeidler Schreiter

“This is an opportunity to further our mission, provide greatly needed services, and highlight the important collaboration between our behavioral health and medical staff,” said Dr. Elizabeth Zeidler Schreiter, chief behavioral health officer. “For many years, we’ve known that more resources in these clinical areas would be very useful.

As a community health center, Access works to remove the barriers to care that many of our patients experience. For those patients who suffer from chronic pain and substance use disorders, these barriers are significant.”

In addition, group visits will be added for patients who suffer with chronic pain. These groups will help participants learn from and support each another under the direction of an Access doctor.

Access was awarded \$325,000, and is one of several health centers in Wisconsin to receive \$1.7 million in funding. Other recipients of the money in Wisconsin are community health centers in Iron River, Marshfield and Milwaukee. In all, \$94 million was awarded nationally to address the rising abuse of opioids such as heroin and prescription pain medications.

About 4.5 million people in the U.S. were non-medical prescription pain reliever users in 2013, and an estimated 289,000 were heroin users. Unintentional overdose deaths from prescription pain medications nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2013, and deaths related to heroin increased 39 percent between 2012 and 2013, the federal health department said.

Thank You for Celebrating

Thanks to more than 600 people who joined us this year for Access Community Health Centers’ annual Celebration of Service dinner April 14 at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. This event, held each spring since 1999, brings together a broad and diverse community of supporters to celebrate their commitment to the people Access serves every day.

Through this event, Access is fortunate to receive a wide range of support from many organizations and individuals. A special thank you to this year’s Benefactor sponsor, UW Health & Unity. This support ensures people in our community have access to affordable, quality medical, dental and behavioral health services, as well as pharmacy services and community resources.

All funds raised from the event go to direct patient care for the more than 26,000 people who call Access their health care home.



Mark your calendars for next year’s event, scheduled April 6, 2017.

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“Our Patient Resources help address the glaring health disparities in our community, and get people the health care they need to be successful,” said Access CEO Ken Loving, MD. “The services offered by CRS staff and Interpreters speaks to who we are and what we do for patients at a basic level.”

For Community Health Centers like Access, the services provided through Patient Resources are essential. A majority – 72 percent – of Access patients live in poverty. Another 45 percent have coverage through BadgerCare or Medicare program and 14 percent have no coverage at all. And half of all Access patients are African American or Latino.

“The CRS staff has a vast knowledge of what the resources are that are out there,” said Sarah Valencia, Access director of medical and patient services. “A provider can determine what their patient needs, and the CRS is going to do everything they can to find the resources to fit that need.”

Patients needing these services can be referred by their doctor, nurse, a member of our behavioral health team or dentist and other care givers at the clinic. They can also walk in or call for an appointment.

CRS have many services to draw from, with currently nearly 200 resources available to help patients. Services include routine things such as referrals to specialty health services, navigating BadgerCare or the Health Insurance Marketplace applications, and applying for a clinic discount to social services including finding adequate housing and food. But there are also more unique and obscure solutions that a CRS can help people find – whatever a patient needs to be healthy.

“We try to encompass everything that we can and we always get asked to do things that are completely new,” said Amanda Acosta, Patient Resource manager at the Joyce & Marshall Erdman Clinic. “I always try to focus on what we can do not what we can’t do and find something that can help.”

Having one person who can handle all of these needs is efficient for patients. Each clinic has multiple people who can help, with eight CRS on staff.



Interpreters at the Joyce & Marshall Erdman Clinic.

If patients need care in a language other than English, Access has eight interpreters on staff to serve the clinic’s large, Spanish speaking patient population. In addition, we contract with multiple interpreters and offer other language services to serve patients in 32 more languages. These services allow each patient to have equal opportunity to participate in their own health care through their preferred language; to understand health information the same, be able to participate in their care by asking questions, and use all clinic services.

By providing culturally appropriate care through Interpreters and addressing factors caused by social determinants of health, Access patients get basic needs met so they can focus on their health and well-being.

BY THE
numbers

8,900

Patients using Patient Resource Services in 2015

10,331

Visits where Patient Resource Services were accessed

192

Number of resources available to patients through Patient Resource Services

24,432

Visits where interpreter services were used

5,355

Patients who used interpreter services

33

Number of languages interpreted

Donor Profile

The Evjue Foundation: A legacy of giving back

For the past 15 years, Access Community Health Centers has provided better care for thousands of people in need, thanks to ongoing support from The Evjue Foundation.



William T. Evjue, center.
Courtesy of The Evjue Foundation.

The charitable arm of The Capital Times has provided \$875,000 in support, funding many programs at Access, most of them providing care to children. In addition, Evjue was a major donor to Access' campaign to open a clinic on

East Washington Avenue, the now William T. Evjue Clinic, as well as the school-based Celebrate Smiles children's dental program.

William T. Evjue founded Madison's Capital Times in 1917 and was its long-time publisher and editor. He set up the foundation before his death in 1970 to use profits from the newspaper to help, "those without the power of wealth and station," and to give back to the community that supported his newspaper.

"Mr. Evjue was always a huge supporter of people who were struggling in life and needed an assist," explained Evjue Foundation Director and Cap Times Editor Emeritus Dave Zweifel. "Access' mission is to serve the community that's underserved and needs help. It is absolutely a perfect fit for Mr. Evjue's beliefs and why we consider Access one of our benefactors."

