

November 29, 2021



As I reflect on another year of providing care to our patients and the larger community, I am amazed at the resiliency of our patients and the generosity of our community during this challenging time. The pandemic and its effects have permeated every aspect of our lives for 18 months and that will continue for the foreseeable future.

Although the course of the pandemic has changed, it continues to deeply affect those we serve at Access. More than half of our patients identify as people of color and approximately 70 percent live in poverty. Some have battled COVID-19 and suffer from its long-term effects. Others have lost loved ones due to the disease. Many struggle with employment, housing, and lack of health insurance.

We also recognize that there were too many people in our community without a trusted health care home when the pandemic hit. They struggled to find a place where they could be tested, cared for, vaccinated, and receive reliable information.

In response, we are growing to provide more care opportunities for uninsured patients to take advantage of our medical, dental, behavioral health and pharmacy services as the pandemic continues.

The vaccine is key to controlling the pandemic and more than 6,900 have received the COVID vaccine at Access. Additionally, more than 3,900 have been tested for the virus. We have vaccinated staff, patients, and various community partners throughout the year, and recently have offered booster doses to those who are eligible. We are currently working to vaccinate children ages 5-11 who are newly eligible to receive the vaccine.

Moving forward, we will continue to inform and educate our patients and the broader community about the benefits of the vaccine. We make sure that any Access patient who has a question about the vaccine can speak directly to their medical provider. To ensure vaccine accessibility, we open our clinics on specific weekends so patients can receive the vaccine at times that are most convenient for them from providers they trust.

We continue to participate in community outreach efforts, partnering with other local health care entities to bring pop-up

vaccine clinics to neighborhoods throughout the city. We have joined in community discussion forums and have provided the vaccine to other community nonprofits.

Although sometimes overlooked among those most impacted by the pandemic, children have been significantly affected as well. Many children have been isolated from friends and activities for more than a year and witnessed their families struggle.

Last week alone, I provided care to two adolescents who had developed eating disorders during the pandemic and to another who developed an addiction while isolated at home. These are examples of issues that many of this generation will face in the coming years. Thankfully, at Access, we have our behavioral health professionals who consulted with those patients during the visit and together we planned for care and follow up. With your help, we will be there to support them in becoming healthy and productive members of our community.

The need for behavioral health care has grown exponentially since the pandemic began. Our Behavioral Health team has revamped their care process to offer more care opportunities to patients. They are available to meet and discuss when and where patients are most comfortable – whether that is in clinic, on the phone or through virtual/video appointments. This type of care will be a core aspect of our services going forward.

After an absence of more than a year, our Celebrate Smiles program is back in schools. While the absence was necessary due to the pandemic, it also left many children without proper dental care. We are now beginning to see the effects of this delay in care. A greater percentage of children are being diagnosed with tooth decay and significant dental issues and more children are being referred to our dental clinics for more urgent care.

Our Celebrate Smiles program remains an essential service to the community, and we are happy to be in the schools again to serve children throughout the remainder of the school year and in the years to come.

The pandemic has been devastating in many ways, but it has also helped us transform how we do our work. We have learned to adapt quickly to better meet the needs of our community. We have strengthened systems and further developed relationships with community organizations, all to help us become more proactive in addressing the needs of our patients.

In 2022, Access will celebrate its 40th anniversary. With your generous support, we have come a long way in the past 40 years. Much has been accomplished, but there is still so much more to do.

I hope you'll continue to support Access in the coming year. Together, we can make a real difference, especially for those who have been affected so significantly by the pandemic.



Ken Loving, MD
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. I hope you enjoy the artwork featured in this letter. The children of Midvale Elementary School, working with art teacher Meri Lau, create artwork throughout the year for our clinics, and we are proud to share their work as part of our Holiday Appeal this year.