

Overview of Anchorage Project Access

Although access to health care and lack of health insurance is a complicated national problem, hundreds of communities across the United States have developed plans within their communities to provide an organized network for low-income people to receive health care

One model is a volunteer health care provider network, developed by the medical society in Asheville, North Carolina. That model has resulted in a decrease in ER use by the target population by 70%, reduced hospital charity expenses by 23%, and decreased work absenteeism among those enrolled.

History of Anchorage Project Access

Brief history of organization: The highly collaborative nature of Anchorage Project Access has resulted in a unique governance and administrative structure for the project. For maximum clarity, this section will provide a brief history and introduce the Anchorage Access to Health Care Coalition, Christian Health Associates and the Anchorage Project Access Physician Leadership Team.

The Anchorage Access to Health Care Coalition initiated Anchorage Project Access. The Coalition was formed in 1998 with the purpose of improving access to health care for the medically underserved in Anchorage. In 2001-2002, the coalition convened a series of meetings among Anchorage physicians, representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, Anchorage health care leaders and other key stakeholders that resulted in the selection of Project Access in Buncombe County, North Carolina as the model for our local efforts.

In February, 2004, the Coalition released a solicitation for a lead agency to run the Volunteer Network. Christian Health Associates (CHA), the highest scoring applicant, was selected. The strong points that led to choosing their application were:

1. Experience running a medical practice
2. Credibility with community physicians
3. A 10 year history of setting up successful programs
4. A good understanding of the project, including the time commitment
5. A strong commitment to meeting the project goals

Christian Health Associates (CHA), then, serves as the project's administrator and is the recipient and manager of project funding. Project staff are housed at the CHA facility. Founded in 1994 by Dr. Brian Green, CHA Executive Director, Christian Health Associates (CHA) is a nonprofit corporation that has been providing the administrative umbrella for three different entities: Cornerstone Clinic Medical and Counseling Center, Alaska Medical Missions, and Beyond Borders. Anchorage Project Access has now joined the group as the fourth entity to reside within the administrative structure of CHA. Each of the four entities maintains its own Board of Directors, Executive Directors, by-laws, and mission statements separately from those of CHA.

In September of 2004, American Project Access Network met with CHA, Anchorage physicians, and other interested parties. At that time, a group of physicians stepped forward and agreed to lead the project, forming the Physician Leadership Team. The Physician Leadership Team, with the support of CHA, provided the design and policy oversight for Anchorage Project Access. On December 5, 2005, the Anchorage Project Access Board of Directors was formed, composed largely of member of the Physician Leadership Team. Officers were selected; this entity will be responsible for management of the project. Others will be invited to join the Board in coming months.

