

COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY Departments 1500 & 800
VINEYARD HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT, FY 2014: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Client Services: The Access Program's core service is connecting the Island's lower to moderate income residents with affordable health insurance and helping them to retain this coverage. We provide public benefit health care program application, enrollment and retention services; information, referral and advocacy; referrals to medical providers; make appointments and help clients manage medical debt; and we facilitate access to services like specialty care, dental care, vision care and prescription medication assistance. The Senior Assistance Program provides application assistance, benefits counseling and program navigation for low-income Island seniors. We are also a liaison agency for other public benefits including Food Stamps (SNAP), emergency cash assistance, and Social Security disability claims.

In FY2014 the Access Program provided application and enrollment assistance to **1,773** households for MassHealth and Health Connector programs resulting in coverage approval for **2,679** individuals; we provided MassHealth/Commonwealth Care related support and follow-up, including for benefit retention, **4,328** times; we helped **321** people apply for Food Stamps and/or emergency cash assistance and Social Security Disability; and we completed other medical, dental, prescription and referral assistance **2,447** times.

The **David Kurth Memorial Fund** provides emergency financial assistance to Islanders with medical-related expenses that they cannot afford, primarily prescription medication. In FY14 we added medical transportation assistance for people with medical appointments in Boston ***In FY2014, we assisted uninsured or underinsured Islanders to get 154 prescription medications and related assistance by providing \$5,448 in financial assistance.*** Contributions in FY2014 came from the Rotary Club; The Elizabeth and Peter Tower Foundation; the United Methodist Church; individual donors, and local businesses. This fund has provided over \$55,000 in financial assistance to help Islanders get needed medications since its inception.

The Access Program has been engaged in a collaborative health insurance enrollment project with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah called **KIDSWIN**, for Native American children and their families. This grant ended April 2014; however, our collaboration with the Tribe is ongoing.

We are also partnering with Island Health Care on the **MV Partnership for Health (MVPH)**, a chronic disease prevention and self-management pilot program. **MVPH** offers diabetes education, health coaching and other wellness and health promotion services (information available at vineyardhealth.org).

General program outreach is ongoing in the form of distribution of fliers, brochures and cards throughout the community; school mailings; presenting to adult education classes; networking with health and human service agencies; and newspaper advertisements. Enrollment services are provided to clients of the Dukes County House of Corrections and the Community Corrections Program.

Vineyard Smiles provides school-based mobile dental services and dental education for children in Head Start, Project Headway preschool and grades K-12; monthly dental hygiene clinics for seniors; and care facilitation for adults with unmet oral health needs. ***In SY 2014, 321 children received dental care at 450 dental visits including exams, cleanings, fluoride treatment, sealants and fillings.*** Clinics for low-income seniors were held once per month on average at senior centers and Island Elderly Housing. In FY2014 ***83 elderly and disabled patients received services.*** These services are made possible by funding from the Town Boards of Health for health promotion services.

Local and Regional Initiatives: Access Program employees have been involved in a number of additional health care initiatives including:

- The Dukes County Health Council
- The MassHealth Training Forum
- The Oral Health Excellence Coalition
- MV Partnership for Health/Healthy Vida
- Elder Care Providers Work Group

Technical Assistance and Training: The Access Program provides trainings including and MassHealth program updates and overviews to staff at MV Community Services and MV Hospital. We also offer a seminar titled “Understanding Medicare” via ACE MV.

Funding: The agreement between the County and Towns to share a portion of the program’s budget entered its last year in FY2013. In FY2014, the County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the six Island Towns for the ongoing funding of the Access Program. This MOU describes the Access Program’s governance structure; the County’s role and services provided; Town obligations; Municipal Membership Assessments; and Indemnification and Insurance.

By having agreements in place with each town, the Access Program’s funding is secured and not subject to service cuts if grant funding is reduced. When the program succeeds in obtaining grants, these will offset the Town funding in the following year. Town funding for FY14 was \$275,601.

Other FY14 funding sources included the US Department of Health and Human Services via a grant to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, United Way of Cape Cod and the Islands, and local funders including Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, the Permanent Endowment Fund of Martha’s Vineyard, Rotary Club, local businesses and individual donors.

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