

COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY
VINEYARD HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT, FY 2014: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Client Services: The Access Program's core service is connecting Island residents with affordable health insurance and helping them to retain this coverage. We provide health care program and insurance application, enrollment and retention services; information, referral and advocacy; referrals to medical providers; make doctor's 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 FY2015, the Access Program provided application and enrollment assistance for 4,025 individuals of all ages for MassHealth and Health Connector affordable insurance programs; Medicare, Medicare Part D and Prescription Advantage; the MassHealth Long Term Care and Frail Elder Waiver programs; Food Stamps and/or emergency cash assistance and Social Security Disability. We completed health insurance, medical, dental, prescription and referral assistance 9,404 times.

In August 2014, the Access Program became one of 15 programs in the Commonwealth to be part of the Massachusetts Health Connector's **Navigator Program**, which includes grant funding. The Navigator program is an outreach, education and enrollment assistance program required by the federal Affordable Care Act and is administered by the Massachusetts Health Connector. The Access Program's enrollment staff must participate in extensive training and pass an exam to become certified Navigators. As a result, we have the most up to date information about enrollment programs and systems in order to facilitate insurance enrollment and to advocate for our community.

The **David Kurth Memorial Fund** provides emergency financial assistance to Islanders with medical-related expenses that they cannot afford, primarily prescription medication. In 2014 we added medical transportation assistance for people with medical appointments off-Island. *In FY2015, we assisted uninsured or underinsured Islanders to get 124 prescription medications and related assistance by providing \$5,182 in financial assistance.* Contributions to the fund in FY2015 came from the Elizabeth and Peter Tower Foundation; the United Methodist Church; individual donors, and local businesses. This fund has provided over \$60,000 in financial assistance to help Islanders get needed medications and medical transportation since its inception.

Vineyard Smiles provides school-based mobile dental services and dental education for children in grades K-12; monthly dental hygiene clinics for seniors; and care facilitation for adults with unmet oral health needs. *In SY 2015, 252 children received dental care including exams, cleanings, fluoride treatment, sealants and fillings.* Dental hygiene clinics for low-income adults were held once per month on average at senior centers and Island Elderly Housing. In FY2015 *86 low income adults, including 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 Healthy Aging Task Force
- 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 County maintains 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.

Our total FY15 budget was \$341,242.

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 FY15 was \$208,950.

Other FY15 funding sources included Island Health Care via the US Health Services Resource Administration, the Massachusetts Health Connector Authority, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, United Way of Cape Cod and the Islands, and local funders including Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, local businesses and individual donors.

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