

COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY
VINEYARD HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAM

The Access Program's core service is connecting Island residents with Massachusetts' affordable health insurance programs and helping them to retain this coverage. We provide health care program and insurance applications, enrollment and retention services, information, referral and advocacy, referrals to medical providers, scheduling of doctor's appointments and assistance with client medical debt, and we also facilitate access to services like dental care, vision care and prescription medication assistance. The Senior Assistance Program provides application assistance, benefits counseling and program navigation for Island seniors and their families.

In FY2019, the Access Program provided application and enrollment assistance for **3,977** individuals of all ages for MassHealth and Health Connector affordable insurance programs. **378 Seniors** were assisted with Medicare, Medicare Part D and Prescription Advantage, MassHealth Long Term Care and Frail Elder Waiver programs, and Disability. We provided health insurance, medical, dental, prescription and related referral assistance **6,744** times.

The Access Program is a grantee of the Massachusetts Health Connector's **Navigator Program**. The Navigator program is an outreach, education and enrollment program for health insurance required by the federal Affordable Care Act. The Access Program's enrollment staff must participate in extensive training and pass an annual exam to maintain certified Navigator status.

The **David Kurth Memorial Fund** provides emergency financial assistance to Islanders with medical-related expenses that they cannot afford, primarily prescription medication. We also provide transportation assistance for low income Islanders and for those who need help paying for travel to medical appointments off-island. *In FY2019, we assisted many uninsured or underinsured Islanders to get prescription medications and related assistance by providing \$6,594 in financial assistance.* Contributions to the fund came from the Elizabeth and Peter Tower Foundation, the United Methodist Church, individual donors, and local businesses. This fund has provided over \$65,000 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 2019, 220 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. *Eighty five low income adults received services, including elderly and disabled patients.* These services are made possible by funding from the Town Boards of Health for health promotion services.

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

- The Dukes County Health Council
- Regional Advisory Board for the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
- The DCHC's Oral Health Work Group
- Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard
- Elder Care Providers Work Group

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 FY19 budget was \$499,911.

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 FY19 was \$359,184.

Other FY19 funding sources totaling \$140,727 included Island Health Care via the US Health Services Resources Administration, the Massachusetts Health Connector Authority, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, Martha's Vineyard Hospital and local funders including the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, as well as local businesses and individual donors.

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