

May 22, 2007

Access to health care increased through state grants

(OLYMPIA) -- Thousands of Washington residents will have increased access to health care, thanks to a series of grant awards announced today. Ten non-profit community-based health care organizations will receive a total of \$1.4 million under a new program administered by the Washington State Health Care Authority.

The Community Health Care Collaborative grants were established by the 2006 session of the Washington State Legislature to enhance and support collaborative, community-based efforts to deliver health care. The intent is to support innovative health care delivery systems that can serve as models to other organizations throughout the state.

“Access to health care is one of Governor Chris Gregoire’s top priorities,” said HCA Administrator Steve Hill. “These grants are intended to improve access for low-income residents who are uninsured or under-insured.”

The grant recipients were selected from among 27 applicants based on their abilities to provide access to medical treatment; demonstrate efficient use of health care resources; or improve quality of care. Other state agencies joining the HCA in the selection process were the Health Services recovery Administration within the Department of Social and Health Services; the Office of the Insurance Commissioner; and the Department of Health.

Each recipient organization will receive half of the funding in each year of the two-year grant awards. Funding from the state is to be combined with twice the amount in matching funds, primarily from the communities they serve.

Following is a list of grant recipients, the total amount of their two-year grant, and a description of how the money will be used:

1. Community Health Center of Snohomish County. \$75,000 for their Kids Get Care dental program. The program will identify and link families in need of health care with dental and medical health care homes. Emphasis will be given to families that experience barriers because of ethnicity, ancestry, or linguistic isolation
2. Free Clinic of Southwest Washington for Clark County. \$75,000 to start a Project Access of Clark County. The program will coordinate donated specialty and primary care services to low-income residents.
3. International Community Health Services in King County. \$100,000 to develop a community collaborative for culturally, linguistically and medically appropriate prevention and self-management of chronic conditions prevalent among Asian-Pacific Islander communities.
4. Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe serving Kitsap County. \$100,000 for implementation of digital technologies with focus on electronic medical records and continuity of care.
5. Peninsula Community Health Services. \$125,000 for Kitsap Partnership for Access to Health Care Services to integrate primary care and behavioral health and improve access to appropriate care.
6. Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic. \$125,000 for the Yakima County Asthma Project (YCAP). The program will provide training, education, health assessments, action plans, emergency care plans, and changes to policies in home and school environments to care for children with asthma.
7. Community Choice Physician-Hospital-Community Organization (PHCO) serving Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Grant and Adams Counties. \$175,000 to expand benefits enrollment services; introduce tele-interpretative services using video-conferencing technology; and a mobile mental health unit to work with primary care providers.
8. Spokane County Medical Society Foundation. \$175,000 for Project Access Spokane to expand the volunteer network of physicians, hospitals and medical professionals providing total healthcare to the low-income uninsured population in county-wide.
9. Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access. \$200,000 for Project Access Program to add screening and referral program for uninsured people who are referred from the hospital Emergency Department. The grant will also support donated medical care and help develop a small business insurance connector, which will focus on health insurance issues for small business owners and employees.
10. CHOICE Regional Health Network serving Grays Harbor, West Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston Counties. \$250,000 for Project Access Program to implement the Patient Access Link (PAL) initiative, which will integrate the operations of successful existing programs to increase healthcare access and implement a common community case management and information system.