

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE ACCESS:

Grantmakers Share Their Experiences

Improving access to care is a dominant theme in the work of health grantmakers. Foundations have addressed access issues with the broad array of tools available to them. Some foundation initiatives have focused on broadening insurance coverage; others have focused on overcoming noninsurance barriers and redesigning the delivery system.

Philanthropy has had some real successes: increasing enrollment in Medicaid and SCHIP, building networks of community clinics, investing in school health centers, supporting key research studies, stimulating state experimentation, producing replicable models, and keeping attention focused on access issues. The challenges persist, however.

A number of promising approaches emerge from discussions with grantmakers about their priorities, funding strategies, accomplishments, and challenges.

Supporting health reform efforts in a few key states

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation played an important role in efforts that led to passage of the state's sweeping health reform law, and plans to assume a major role in supporting the law's implementation and analyzing its impact.

- Maine Health Access Foundation has been a strong supporter of the state's Dirigo Health Reform Act – which aims to make quality, affordable health care available to every Maine resident by 2009 – and has awarded several strategic grants to make sure that it is implemented as intended.

Combining policy analysis with aggressive information dissemination

- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, various topic-specific research and analytic projects, and media initiatives are vehicles to educate policymakers, stakeholders, journalists, researchers, and the public about important health care issues and trends.
- Rose Community Foundation partnered with other funders to create the Colorado Health Institute, which is viewed by state legislators as

a neutral and trusted source of information, briefings, and meeting facilitation.

Building public support for change

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has invested heavily in Cover the Uninsured Week, a national awareness campaign intended to jump start a national debate on the access issue and encourage business, labor, health, and consumer representatives to join together and find a consensus solution.
- Universal Health Foundation of Connecticut is currently devoting all its resources to partnering with business and mobilizing consumers statewide to help shape a concrete proposal for universal coverage to be delivered to the governor and legislature by 2007.

Taking on issues related to underinsurance and medical debt

- Quantum Foundation is beginning an initiative to make hospital payments more manageable for people without insurance and with large medical debt, along with helping eligible individuals apply for charity care.

Making children's coverage a priority

- In its ambitious effort to enable health coverage for all California's children, The California Endowment launched a \$45 million, 5-year initiative focused on uninsured children, regardless of immigration status, in families with incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty guideline.
- The Rhode Island Foundation began its access work by concentrating on children, and participating in such programs as Covering Kids & Families, Rhode Island Kid Count, and the Rhode Island Oral Health Access Initiative.

Supporting the adoption of health information technology

- The California Endowment has joined with two other funders, each investing \$1.5 million, in a three-year, \$4.5 million program to speed adoption of electronic health records by safety net providers. Under this program, the funders will develop at least three support hubs that will offer technology, technical support, assistance with vendors, and other services generally outside the financial reach of community clinics and health centers.
- The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati successfully orchestrated a capacity-building project that helped 15 area community health centers develop and maintain a shared information network. Community health center staff now process and manage billing and other accounting functions through a centralized network, freeing health center personnel to devote their attention to other vital business functions. The network also may enable the centers to maximize third-party payment.
- Maine Health Access Foundation is helping to create a statewide on-line health information system that, by 2010, will give Maine providers timely patient health information, even for those who are uninsured. Such a system will help physicians and others provide better care, while guaranteeing patient privacy and confidentiality of records.
- Quantum Foundation is supporting the establishment of a countywide electronic health records system. Eventually, providers will be able to use the online system to schedule appointments with volunteer doctors and clinics and locate translators to accompany patients to medical appointments.

Focusing on care coordination

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation's Connecting Consumers with Care grant program supports community-based organizations, community clinics, and some hospital programs as they assist low-income residents to obtain public coverage; navigate the health care system; and maintain stable, ongoing relations with health care providers. The program provides support for case managers, care coordinators, and other community-based efforts to ensure that low-income residents enrolled in state-funded health insurance programs have a medical home.
- Quantum Foundation was a major force in establishing the Palm Beach County Community Health Alliance, which comprises 37 health and human services funders and providers. Modeled after a successful program in Austin, Texas, the organization is working to coordinate care better among community health centers, free clinics, the health department, and hospitals and to expand capacity among safety net providers.

Partnering with media

- The goal of Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation's Health Coverage Fellowship Program is to affect policy by helping journalists understand the complexity of health care.
- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's media fellowships and news and media entertainment partnerships reflect the foundation's deep appreciation for the contribution that media make in informing the public and the impact they have in the world in which we operate.

Supporting school-based health care

- The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati invests in 15 area school-based health centers as a way to provide comprehensive primary care and mental health services for children who face barriers in receiving these services in the community. Research funded by

the foundation on the effectiveness of these centers has shown that, when they had access to school-based services, children's assessment of their own health status improved dramatically, Medicaid costs did not increase, and children used more preventive services.

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded grants to the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) and nine of its state affiliates. The grantees work with numerous local school-based health centers primarily through local, state, and national policy changes to implement a broad array of strategies aimed at increasing the sustainability of school-based health centers.

Addressing the unique problems of vulnerable populations

- The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati has worked to reduce barriers to care for a number of vulnerable populations: Hispanics, West Africans, other immigrants, and the homeless. It has increased the number of providers willing to serve these groups, helped health centers expand services for immigrants—especially chronic disease and health management services—and works with the Center for Closing the Health Gap on ways to address problems of obesity and diabetes.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Community Voices project in Baltimore is working to improve access to health care for poor and minority men at risk for preventable diseases and poor health outcomes. Its Men's Health Center is the only clinic in the nation that provides round-the-clock, full-service primary care to uninsured men, ages 19 to 64.

Health philanthropy's main challenges in the coming years will be determining how to do thoughtful state and local work on a national problem, how the myriad incremental solutions that funders have supported over the years can be knitted together, and how to build the public and political will necessary to address these issues on a broader scale.

FOREWORD

As part of its continuing mission to serve trustees and staff of health foundations and corporate giving programs, Grantmakers In Health (GIH) has assembled this collection of profiles to tell the stories of health funders across the country working to expand access to health care.

With these profiles, we have attempted to capture the priorities, funding strategies, accomplishments, and challenges of a cross section of grantmakers, highlighting the similarities and differences in their work. It is our hope that this publication will help readers to understand the wide range of approaches foundations have taken to improving access to health care and give readers a place to look for insights that they can adapt to their own circumstances.

The eleven profiled funders were carefully selected to be representative of the field. Four were established before 1950, one was established in the 1970s, and six were established in or after 1995. Three have assets under \$150 million, three have assets between \$150 million and \$350 million, two have assets between \$350 million and \$750 million, and three have assets over \$2 billion. Three are local foundations, five are statewide foundations, and three are national foundations. Six are independent foundations, two are 509(a)(3) organizations, one is a 501(c)(4), one is an operating foundation, and one is a community foundation.

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Foundation; Barbara Yondorf, senior program officer at Rose Community Foundation; and Juan A. Figueroa, president of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut.

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