Health Care Reform and CommunityHealth

The number of low-income, uninsured residents in need of health care has been growing across the greater Chicagoland area since CommunityHealth opened our doors in 1993. We have remained steadfast in our commitment to meeting this need by expanding our services, programs, and clinic sites. Throughout this time, we have also stayed true to our volunteer based model of service delivery, whereby no fee is ever charged to our patients.

CommunityHealth is the largest free clinic in Illinois and one of the leading free clinics in the nation, serving over 11,500 local residents through close to 30,000 visits annually. As has been the case for the past 20 years, our patients rely on CommunityHealth as their medical home for the care they so desperately need.

2014 marks the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the country’s landmark legislation that seeks to extend health insurance coverage to millions of uninsured citizens. This will be accomplished through Medicaid expansion and the availability of additional options via Health Insurance Marketplaces at the state/federal levels.

Over the past year, we have been assessing how CommunityHealth’s role in the community might change in this new era of health care reform. We looked at the question of how best to deliver on our mission to serve the uninsured by evaluating the strengths and limitations of the local safety net. We also sought the perspective of CommunityHealth stakeholders – from our patients and volunteers to our donors, funders, and institutional partners. Through this extensive process, we identified where the gaps in access are likely to be and what will be required of CommunityHealth – long recognized as the ‘safety net under the safety net’ – to help ensure that our most vulnerable residents receive care.

As the ACA rolls out in the months and years ahead, we recognize that there will still remain over 500,000 uninsured Cook County residents in 2018. To meet this need, CommunityHealth will remain true to our mission and deliver on two primary commitments as Illinois’ largest free clinic:

CommunityHealth’s Role in Filling Gaps

While the ACA will provide health insurance for millions of Americans, the reality is that many of the patients CommunityHealth serves today will still need our help. Why?

- **Immigration**: The ACA does not provide coverage for those who are undocumented, nor does it apply to those who are legal residents until they have been in the country at least five years.
- **Affordability**: Despite its name, there will be low-income individuals who will not qualify for Medicaid and who cannot afford to purchase insurance through the state marketplace, even with subsidies.
- **Transition**: People who lose health insurance (e.g., job loss) may need support until they are able to secure new coverage.
- **Coverage Gaps**: The ACA does not cover dental care, health education, and more. The newly insured population will still need access to these services.
- **Provider Availability**: The shortage of Medicaid providers will limit access to care for many newly insured patients.

CommunityHealth as a Navigator

Many of CommunityHealth’s 11,500 patients will benefit from Medicaid expansion under the ACA, while a smaller number will be eligible for subsidies through the state marketplace. To help ensure that our patients (and the broader community) have the information they need to understand and, when applicable, apply for this insurance coverage, CommunityHealth has trained “navigators” on staff to offer ACA education and enrollment as our newest core service.

The transition of our ACA eligible patients will not happen overnight. It will take months, if not years, before all newly eligible patients have enrolled and successfully accessed the health insurance available to them. As these patients transition out of our doors, thousands of uninsured patients who will not benefit from the ACA will continue to walk through our doors seeking care.
CommunityHealth Partners with LEARN Charter School Network to Encourage Healthy Eating

CommunityHealth approaches wellness from a holistic standpoint, going beyond the exam room to improve our patients’ health throughout their daily lives. This year, we have developed a new program that reaches out to entire families to encourage healthy eating habits. CommunityHealth partnered with LEARN Charter School Network to offer nutrition classes to students and families.

These classes, which are taught at a LEARN charter school, give kids and their parents interactive lessons on how to eat healthier by incorporating healthier, less-processed foods into their diet. Nutrition classes address both parents and children, in an effort to inspire the whole family to create healthy lifestyles. Each session, families are taught different choices they can make at the grocery store to prepare healthier meals, and then families work together to make a healthy snack to take home.

Nicole Tolentino, a health education intern involved with the program, says that she enjoys teaching these classes because “our work within these underserved communities empowers children and families to make healthy eating decisions every day, which will improve their overall wellness.”

Volunteer Dr. Jim Eggers Retires After 12 Years

Dr. Eggers was the first specialist asked to review appropriate results of routine medical exams to determine the correct referral, and he was instrumental in establishing strong partnerships with our neighborhood Federally Qualified Health Centers, performing colposcopies on their uninsured patients, as well.

Dr. Eggers said, “The primary reason I chose to volunteer – and the reason I continued these past 12 years – was I felt I could assist some women to have some form of medical care they could not afford or did not have access to.” Upon his departure, Dr. Eggers recognized the clinic staff and medical students for all of their collaboration and support. He encouraged us all to continue the good for our patients for many years to come.

Planned Giving: Another Way to Give to CommunityHealth

CommunityHealth is able to provide high-quality, comprehensive health care to our patients through contributions from our family of donors. One way of contributing to CommunityHealth that you may not be familiar with is planned giving.

Planned giving integrates your charitable gift with your overall financial, tax, and estate planning goals to maximize benefits to both you and a cause important to you, such as CommunityHealth. By using planned giving, you can make significant gifts without making financial sacrifices during your lifetime. Also, there are certain tax incentives that come along with planned giving.

The most common method of planned giving is a bequest through a will or trust. This is simply a distribution from your estate to a charitable organization, such as CommunityHealth, through your last will and testament. You have the ability to give both general and specific bequests based on your wishes.

Another method of planned giving available is retirement plan and IRA designations. Retirement assets are heavily taxed at death, and charitable gifts of retirement plan and IRA proceeds are one way to bypass this. By designating a not-for-profit organization, such as CommunityHealth, as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, you can avoid these taxes, and our cause benefits from your gift.

There are other methods of planned giving, such as life income plans and gifts of real estate, which may be of interest to you. When you are considering planned giving, you should always consult your financial advisor to ensure the best selection for you. Remember, your giving plans can be changed at any time as you wish.

If you have any questions about planned giving, please contact Aleta Rupert, Director of Development, at 773-969-5942 or arupert@communityhealth.org. Thank you for your consideration of a gift that will leave a legacy and continue to help so many in need.
Volunteer Holiday Party 2013

CommunityHealth is continually thankful for the more than 1,400 volunteers that embody our mission every day at our clinics. On December 6, 2013, CommunityHealth celebrated the accomplishments of our volunteers at the annual Volunteer Holiday Party. Guests gathered at the Hairpin Arts Center, where they enjoyed food, drinks, and an exciting raffle that featured prizes from a number of local businesses. We also recognized 17 remarkable volunteers with awards for their outstanding commitment and dedication to CommunityHealth and our patients in 2013.

### 2013 Volunteers of the Year

**The Ilene Goodman Clinic Volunteer of the Year**

This award is named in honor of Ilene Goodman, who was an exceptional volunteer for many years. The award is given to volunteers that go above and beyond in their service to CommunityHealth and its patients. Beverly Snelling and Marta Majcherska were honored as our Ilene Goodman Clinic Volunteers of 2013.

**Beverly Snelling** – West Town

Beverly is the #1 go-to volunteer in the lab at both the West Town and Englewood clinics. She also volunteers in triage, as a representative at health fairs, and by teaching diabetes education classes at West Town. Beverly has been an outstanding volunteer, donating over 1000 hours of her time. We are incredibly fortunate to have Beverly volunteering for us.

**Marta Majcherska** – Englewood

Marta is one of our most dedicated volunteers. She has donated over 1000 hours of her time to the clinic in triage, as Polish interpreter, in the lab, and as a teacher for Polish diabetes classes. Recently, Marta become a licensed pharmacy technician and now works in the CommunityHealth pharmacy. We are incredibly grateful to have Marta on our team.

**Primary Care Provider of the Year**

Dr. Matilde Rios

**Attending Physician of the Year**

Dr. Steven Gallo (Rush University)

**Resident Physician of the Year**

Dr. Poonam Merai (University of Chicago)

**Volunteer Specialty Care Group of the Year**

Northwestern Cardiology

**Specialist of the Year**

Dr. Laurence Gott – Urology

**Specialist of the Year**

Dr. Majia G. Friemanis – Radiology (Northwestern Memorial Hospital)

**Medical Student of the Year**

Kristen Bartucci (Loyola Stritch School of Medicine)

**Volunteer Medical Student Group of the Year**

Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine (CCOM)

**Nurse of the Year**

Kylie Noe, RN

**Pharmacists of the Year**

Nazia Babul, PharmD (University of Illinois at Chicago)

Jennifer Marcelo, PharmD (University of Illinois at Chicago)

**Pharmacy Volunteer of the Year**

Ila Salvi

**Dentist of the Year**

Dr. Celia Mimms

**Dental Volunteers of the Year**

Bara Abusharara

Omar Faraj

**Health Education Volunteer of the Year**

John Brennan

**Volunteer Youth Service Award**

Audrey Schield

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