

Franklin County Health Focus Group
May 22, 2007
Wilson College

- 1. What would you define as the top three emerging issues related to Access to & Availability of Health Services in Franklin County?**
 1. Lack of Qualified Caregivers
 - a. Physicians
 - b. Medical Support Staff (CNA, RN, etc.)
 - c. Dentists
 - d. Mental Health Providers
 2. Access to non-emergency care
 - a. Inappropriate use of emergency rooms;
 - b. Patients may lack a Primary Care Physician (PCP), or are unable to make appointments with their PCP
 3. Availability of behavioral health services
 - a. Very few psychiatrists and/or therapists;
 - b. Inability of patients to get a timely appointment;
 - c. Substance abuse services by Medical Assistance patients are underutilized;
 - d. Incidence of substance abuse is extremely high, as is use of wrap around services;
 - e. Reimbursement fee schedule is low
 - f. Persons living in rural and outlying areas of the County have trouble accessing services
 4. Language barrier creates access to health care challenge
 - a. growing Hispanic population
 - b. trend from migrant transitory to full time residency

- 2. Describe the most important changes in the characteristics of your current range of clients in the past three years. Has your organization experienced specific barriers or special challenges in meeting the needs of hard-to-serve populations?**
 1. Growth of Hispanic population(population data shows Hispanic population as less than 5% in the County but services data indicates more)
 2. Mix of physicians is changing – growth in foreign born physicians magnifying cultural biases (language/accents, religion, physical appearance, etc.) cultural biases can be deterrents to access care
 3. Reluctance or limitation to use government support systems
 4. Fewer dollars available and inconsistent funding creates gaps in services to the marginal patients that don't fit into a predetermined category
 5. Increasing difficulty to access PA Dept. of Aging waivers
 6. Age group 18-60 with long-term illnesses hard to serve

7. Reduced funding in Human Services Development Fund (HSDF)
8. Aging baby boomer population in need of services, but lacks knowledgeable of how to maneuver through and access health systems
9. Influx of population from Maryland and DC areas creating a large disparity between high and low income
10. Number of veterans with disabilities seeking care has tripled

3. What are the considerations in building partnerships to improve access to and availability of health services? Describe both positives and negatives.

1. Partners need to see tangible, mutual benefits as a result of partnership
2. There needs to be a common defined focus on how to best provide access and care – the more narrow the focus the greater the participation rate
3. Capacity building for smaller organizations
4. Better utilization of faith-based groups/churches and their resources to access and educate population

4. What financial, community or human resources do you need to meet the needs related to access and availability of care and services? How would you use them and why? What would be the results?

1. More physicians, psychiatrists, dentists and mid-level providers who accept medical assistance.
2. Transportation –need for sponsorship and underwriting of transportation services
3. Advocacy for public transportation services throughout the County
4. Urgent Care Centers
5. Public education campaign that will link the public and community organizations with available services

5. How can the community and its partners join together to create solutions that begin to address the challenges and opportunities discussed today?

1. Continue to cultivate collaborations initiated through “Healthy Communities Partnerships” and explore opportunities to attract new partners
2. Focus on developing stronger ties with the 5 area Chambers of Commerce and tapping into the business community
3. Expand relationship with faith-based community (community focus vs. congregation focus)
4. Identify and engage business and corporate stakeholders

5. Convene community meetings with consumers and providers – creating a communicative and educational atmosphere that can sustain the county’s growth and changing demographics
6. Explore ways to bring public attention to disparities in socio-economic status, education, etc. as a factor in having access to care