



Project Access NOW
Connecting people to health care. Today.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Linda Nilsen-Solares
Phone: 503.222.6541
Email: linda@projectaccessnow.org

LOW INCOME UNINSURED GAIN NEW AVENUE TO HEALTH
Northwest Health Foundation and Project Access NOW partner to improve access to care

Portland, Oregon, 7/31/2008 — Many of the 250,000 uninsured in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area now have a new way to access health care: volunteer physicians. The Northwest Health Foundation has partnered with Project Access NOW to improve health care access to the qualified uninsured in the region through a coordinated network of volunteer physicians and other health care providers. The \$75,000 grant through the Foundation's Access to Health Care program will boost the collaborative infrastructure that takes already existing resources and increases their effectiveness and capacity.

Elaborating on the grant award, Chris DeMars, Program Officer with the Northwest Health Foundation, said, "The Project Access NOW model is innovative and cost-effective, and helps patients address barriers to care that exist in the current health care system. The Project Access NOW project partners' commitment to effective collaboration is impressive. While the project focuses on providing direct services, it also aims to build the relationships necessary to implement health reform in the future."

More than 1,700 volunteer physicians have already joined Project Access NOW, which has streamlined access to hospital-based donated care and coordinated referrals from safety net clinics.

"Project Access allows me to do what I trained to do: take care of patients," said Dr. Katherine Morris, surgical oncologist and Project Access volunteer physician. "Together we're helping fellow Oregonians in a caring and efficient manner. Many patients need help today, and Project Access is providing it."

Project Access NOW started accepting patients in March 2008. The grant will help additional 2,000 individuals access coordinated, comprehensive volunteer medical care.

"It's a great program," said Kerrie Hubbard, a patient. "I don't know where I'd be without it."

The service is a response to the growing health care crisis. "Research shows that lack of coverage decreases access to timely, affordable and appropriate medical care. An uninsured person is almost four times more likely to delay seeking care, often resulting in the need for more acute, more expensive treatment," said Project Access NOW Executive Director Linda Nilsen-Solares. "We believe that we have tremendous resources already available to us and that we can do more by working together than working independently."

For additional information, contact Linda Nilsen-Solares, Project Access NOW Executive Director, at 503.222.6541.

About Project Access NOW: Project Access NOW is a regional nonprofit organization that facilitates collaboration for local Project Access programs in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington counties. The primary goal is to expand health care access and improve health outcomes for low-income uninsured people through recruitment and organization of volunteer physicians, securing stable funding, and wise stewardship of existing community health resources. By helping the low-income uninsured navigate the health care system, Project Access NOW can get people the care they need. Today.

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