

Case Study: Community-based Planning

Two mid-western counties comprised one of the fastest growing communities in the country. The area was home to a very successful entertainment industry that contributed to a 50% growth in population during the 1990s. Since many of the jobs created in this boom period were in employment sectors that did not offer health care benefits, 20% of the area's residents were uninsured.

Both providers and area residents were impacted by this situation and Health Planning Solutions was hired by a philanthropic organization which specialized in health care to conduct a study, engage the community in a planning process, and develop alternatives to address several interrelated issues. These issues included inappropriate utilization of the local hospital's emergency department and the inability of uninsured and many Medicaid-eligible individuals to access primary care services from the private medical market.

HPS conducted a thorough historical analysis efforts in the community to address these issues, provided updated demographic and health status information, documented the number of individuals currently affected by lack of access to health care, projected the number of individuals likely to be impacted by the year 2010, and developed precise information about the areas where the uninsured population lived. HPS also conducted extensive community interviews to gauge the level of interest in developing a task force to pursue the recommended actions.

HPS recommended that a Primary Care Task Force be established to secure funding for a Federally-Qualified Health Center which would be centrally located and serve as a medical home for the target population. HPS identified the specific clinical care areas that services should be focused on including maternal and child health, dental health and chronic disease management. HPS also recommended the establishment of a medical transportation system and a communications program to increase the awareness and appropriate usage of health care services.

HPS is currently working with the Primary Care Task Force to pursue funding for this alternative in a community-wide effort to provide appropriate primary medical care for the uninsured and Medicaid participants. Health care and social service providers, the public health philanthropic communities, and public officials are all engaged in what promises to be a successful planning effort.